

Export Opportunities in Agriculture: India's Growing Global Footprint

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ABSTRACT

India's agriculture sector is not only vital for domestic food security but also holds significant potential in the global export market. With its diverse agro-climatic zones, vast production base, and a growing emphasis on value-added products, India has emerged as a leading exporter of commodities like rice, spices, tea, marine products, and increasingly, organic and processed foods. This article explores the evolving landscape of agricultural exports from India, highlighting key commodities, emerging trends such as organic produce and millet-based superfoods, and the role of government initiatives like the Agriculture Export Policy (2018), APEDA support, and District Export Hubs. It also presents success stories of farmers and farmer-producer organizations (FPOs) leveraging global markets. With the right combination of policy support, capacity building, and market intelligence, India's agricultural sector can transform into a powerful driver of rural prosperity and sustainable development through exports.

INTRODUCTION

India's agricultural sector stands as a cornerstone of its economy, not only feeding its vast population but also serving

as a significant contributor to global food markets. With a diverse range of climates and soils, India produces an array of agricultural

commodities that are in high demand worldwide. This article explores the current landscape of India's agricultural exports, emerging opportunities, government initiatives, and inspiring success stories that collectively highlight the nation's potential in the global Agri-trade arena.

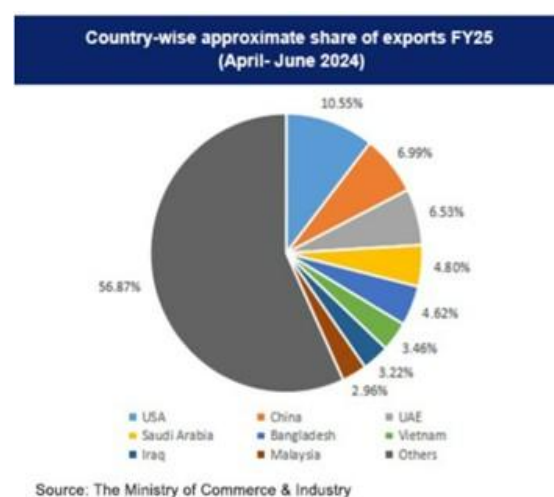
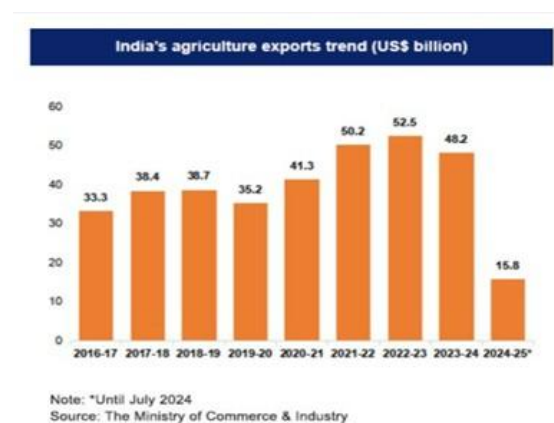
Importance of Agri-exports in India

1. **Enhances Farmer Income:** Export markets offer better prices, especially for premium and organic produce.
2. **Stimulates Rural Economy:** Creates jobs in farming, processing, packaging, and logistics.
3. **Boosts Foreign Exchange:** Agri-exports contribute significantly to national income—over \$50 billion in 2022–23 (APEDA).
4. **Encourages Value Addition:** Promotes agro-processing industries and reduces post-harvest losses.
5. **Improves Quality and Standards:** Drives adoption of global best practices, certifications, and innovation.
6. **Supports Crop Diversification:** Encourages cultivation of high-value crops like spices, millets, and medicinal plants.
7. **Empowers Farmer Collectives:** Strengthens FPOs and cooperatives to access export incentives and scale.

India's Agricultural Export Landscape

India has established itself as a leading exporter of several key agricultural products. According to the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the country is among the top exporters of rice, spices, and seafood. In the fiscal year 2022-2023, India's agricultural

exports were valued at approximately \$50 billion, reflecting a steady growth trajectory.



Top Exported Commodities and Their Destinations:

- **Basmati Rice:** Predominantly exported to Middle Eastern countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- **Spices (e.g., turmeric, chili, cardamom):** Major markets include the United States, European Union, and Southeast Asia.
- **Tea and Coffee:** Exported to countries like Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.
- **Marine Products:** Key destinations are the United States, China, and Japan.

Emerging Opportunities in Agri-Exports

Several trends are shaping new avenues for India's agricultural exports:

1. **Organic Produce:** With increasing global awareness about health and sustainability, there's a rising demand for organic fruits, vegetables, and grains. India's adoption of organic farming practices positions it well to cater to markets in the EU, USA, and Canada (IFOAM, 2022).
2. **Processed and Ready-to-Eat Foods:** The convenience food segment is expanding, with Indian curries, snacks, and ready-to-eat meals gaining popularity, especially in the Middle East and North America (FICCI, 2022).
3. **Superfoods and Millets:** Recognized for their nutritional value, millets like quinoa and amaranth are seeing increased demand in health-conscious markets globally (FAO, 2023).
4. **Floriculture and Medicinal Plants:** The global wellness industry's growth has spurred interest in medicinal herbs and exotic flowers, presenting opportunities in European and North American markets.

Government Initiatives Supporting Agri-Exports

The Indian government has launched several schemes to bolster agricultural exports

- **Agriculture Export Policy (AEP) 2018:** Aims to double agricultural exports and integrate Indian farmers with the global value chain. The policy focuses on boosting high-value and value-added agricultural exports, including perishables.
- **Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA):** Provides financial assistance for the international component of freight and

marketing of agricultural produce, helping mitigate the high transportation costs.

- **Districts as Export Hubs Initiative:** Identifies products with export potential in each district and promotes them in international markets, fostering decentralized export growth.
- **Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS):** The FAS, launched by APEDA under the Finance Commission Cycle (2021–26), aims to support exporters in infrastructure, quality, and market development. Financial aid ranges from ₹5 lakh to ₹5 crore (approx. US\$ 6,500 to US\$ 650,000).
- **Commerce Ministry Schemes:** The Department of Commerce promotes exports through schemes like TIES and MAI, enhancing trade infrastructure and global market access. Exporters also benefit from boards like APEDA, MPEDA, Tobacco Board, Tea Board, Coffee Board, Rubber Board, and Spices Board. To ensure quality, NMR testing is mandatory for honey exports to the USA.

Steps for Farmers to Engage in Exports

Farmers and agripreneurs can consider the following steps to access global markets:

1. **Product Selection:** Identify crops with high export demand and align production accordingly.
2. **Quality Standards:** Adhere to international quality and safety standards, obtaining necessary certifications like Global GAP or Organic Certification.
3. **Registration with APEDA:** Registering with APEDA facilitates access to market intelligence, training, and financial assistance.



4. **Market Research:** Understand target market preferences, regulatory requirements, and competition.
5. **Networking:** Participate in trade fairs, exhibitions, and buyer-seller meets to establish connections with international buyers.

Challenges:

While opportunities abound, challenges such as **non-tariff barriers**, **stringent quality standards**, and **logistical bottlenecks** persist. Adopting **digital traceability**, ensuring **certification**, and improving **cold chain infrastructure** are vital steps forward (ICAR, 2021). With sustained policy push, rising global health trends, and farmer integration into export-oriented value chains, India is poised to enhance its agri-export footprint. Initiatives like **One District One Product (ODOP)** and **District as Export Hub (DEH)** are enabling local agri-entrepreneurs to access global markets (Invest India, 2023).

CONCLUSION

India's agriculture sector holds strong potential in global trade. With government support, adherence to quality standards, and market alignment, Indian farmers and agripreneurs can expand their international footprint. To boost exports, the Government of India has organized **17 Virtual Buyer-Seller Meets (V-BSMs)** with key countries, promoting **Geographical Indication (GI) products** and processed foods. These meets

have included nations like **Kuwait, Indonesia, Switzerland, Belgium, Iran**, and focused sessions with **Canada (organic), UAE, USA, Germany, Australia**, and others.

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