

MASL - India's Largest Grape Exporter

Mahindra agri aims to be among top 3 global grape firms in 5 years

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Mumbai, March 28

Tasting success with grapes exports, Mahindra Agri Solutions plans to familiarise farmers in Maharashtra with new varieties of grapes to open up new export markets.

While Thompson seedless remains the most popular grape variety grown in Maharashtra, farmers are also trying out Redgrove and Blackgrapes to diversify and cater to emerging export demand.

Ashok Sharma, MD, Mahindra Agri Solutions said the company has set up demo cultivation farm on 25 acres to grow new grape varieties using latest technology.

"We have increased exports to China from five containers (of 12-17 tonnes each) last year to 40 containers this year after helping farmers to grow grapes that meet Chinese requirements," he added.

The company is also helping farmers in Maharashtra to grow new grape varieties that can be exported in October and November to new markets. Currently, India has a unique advantage with very few competit-



Ripe A grape farmer in Nashik, Maharashtra

ors when it export grapes between December and March.

Farmers' income will not only grow manifold by extending the export window but they will minimise their risk by entering new markets, said Sharma. Europe, China and the US are the largest consumers of grapes, while South Africa, Peru, Egypt and India are the largest producers.

Fresh Investment

Mahindra will soon set up a packing house in Nashik with an investment of ₹20 crore.

"With the target to become one of the top three global grape companies by 2022, we ac-

quired Netherland-based OFD Holding BV to focus on China and Europe. Our ability to export more grapes from India will increase with the market expansion," he said.

Kapare Dada, President, Grape Exporter Association expects grapes exports from India to increase 20 per cent this year to 90,000 tonnes on good demand in Europe.

As on date, the country has exported about 68,000 tonnes even though the average realisation has come down to ₹40-50 a kg from ₹70-80 a kg last year, largely due to competition from China, he said.

Sitaram Agade, a Nashik-

based farmer, feels the cost of cultivation has gone up to ₹2-2.5 lakh an acre with the increasing labour cost.

"We employ about 50 people through the year going up to 80-90 during peak harvest season. With a yield of 10-12 tonnes per acre, the average realisation is about ₹3.5-4 lakh but there are some farmers who get a yield of 20 tonnes an acre and realisation of ₹6-7 lakh," said Agade, who owns 30 acres in Nashik.

Banana next

The company is now planning to replicate the grape model to export bananas. India is the largest producer of bananas but exports are negligible because of quality issues.

"We have our own banana cultivation in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and are working with farmers to grow good-quality banana for the export and domestic market," said Sharma.

India can easily target West Asian countries for banana export as they now import from Philippines and Costa Rica, while Gujarat is next door for them, he said.