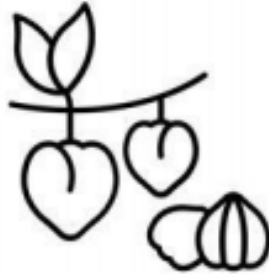




SEED CONNECT

ISSUE 16 • MARCH 2020



COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) and we support the efforts taken by the Government of India to avert further spread and its impact. In India, next three months are critical for the farmers and for the food security of the country, as the farmers are preparing for the Kharif season. The seed industry is working tirelessly to ensure that there is adequate production, processing, packing, transportation and timely supply of seeds to meet farmer's needs.

It is important to ensure that the food delivery channels, and agricultural input supply can run without disruption. Since seed is the starting point for the food supply therefore, the season for the production cannot be delayed. Farmers need to secure their living and consumers need to be fed. Therefore, it is important that the Central and State Governments ensures uninterrupted and timely global and domestic movements of farm inputs like seeds, agricultural produce and food. These products should be allowed access to quarantine checkpoints so that there is continuous production of staple and essential food items. There should be opening of 'green lanes' or special food lanes at national and state toll booths, check-posts and on highways where food and agricultural input delivery vehicles can pass unhindered and are not subjected to roadblocks which might have been put up to restrict movement of people and other materials to fight the virus. Further, all services like laboratory testing and phytosanitary certificates should remain open with a minimal workforce. These recommendations were also shared by FSII with the respective authorities in the government.

At the height of the COVID-19 crisis in China, the central and local governments issued a policy to ensure the stable supply of food products and agricultural production materials. The government also released a stimulus package to effectively support the stability of production and supply of agricultural products.

As per the European Food Safety Authority, there is no evidence to date that the Coronavirus can pass through food and seeds. Our member companies are committed to adhering and implementing national and local health directives to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are adopting the highest health precautions and hygiene measures for the health & safety of their office and factory employees. Our members are working tirelessly to ensure that farmers are well equipped, the supply is steady and that there is no surge in prices of crops and vegetables in coming months due to non-availability of seeds.

Next few weeks are crucial for us while our public health system fights to minimise the impact of COVID 19. On an optimistic note, this situation presents an opportunity for agritech to create value in the supply chain management, heighten initiatives such as traceability to promote safety and transparency and adopting science-based solutions. On a concluding note, efforts at this point should be taken towards precautions and mitigating any exponential effect.

In this newsletter we have covered several important developments on agriculture across India, globally and in the area of research. We hope you find it a good read!



Shivendra Bajaj
Executive Director
Federation of Seed Industry of India

NEWS IN INDIA

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: SEED INDUSTRY DEMANDS EASY INTER-STATE MOVEMENT (THE HINDU BUSINESS LINE)

THE HINDU
Business Line



FSII – which represents both domestic and multinational seed firms – sought government support to ensure timely and uninterrupted global and domestic movement of seeds and other farm inputs. There should be an opening of 'green lanes'/special food lanes at national and State toll booths, checkpoints and on highways where food and agricultural input delivery vehicles can pass unhindered and are not subjected to roadblocks which might have been put up to restrict movement of people and other materials to fight the virus. The special food lanes will allow smooth passage of all vehicles carrying essential food commodities and agri-inputs.

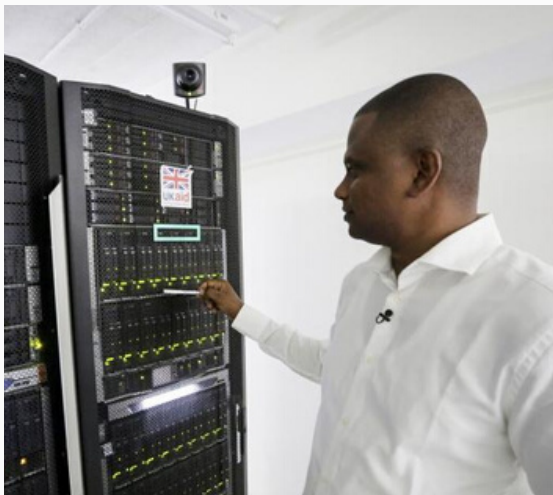
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TECH THAT COULD BE USEFUL IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE: SUPERCOMPUTER HELPS TRACK LOCUST ATTACKS IN EAST AFRICA (ASIAN AGE)

THE ASIAN AGE



A supercomputer is boosting efforts in East Africa to control a locust outbreak that raises what the U.N. food agency calls "an unprecedented threat" to the region's food security. Such technology could be of enormous use in India too where farmers struggle with pest control. The computer, a donation from Britain, uses satellite data to track locust swarms and predict their next destination. Quickly sharing the information of the locusts' movements with regional authorities is key to controlling the outbreak, as even a small swarm of locusts in a single day can move nearly 100 miles and consume the number of crops that would otherwise feed 35,000 people.

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