

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr. Atul Chaturvedi

President

The Solvent Extractors' Association of India

Good morning Friends,

We are very happy to welcome you all to this historical city of Ahmedabad for the 15th Global Castor Conference-2017 organized by The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) and supported by the International Castor Oil Association (ICOA), U.S.A. and Organisations connected with Castor business both in India & abroad. Ahmedabad, over the years has become the Castor Capital of India and no wonder this city has played host to 11 out of 14 Castor Conferences held so far.

We, heartily welcome our Chief Guest Honorable Purshottam Rupala, Minister of State for Agriculture, Farmers Welfare and Panchayati Raj, Government of India, and Guests of Honor Mr. Thomas Mielke, Executive Director, ISTA Mielke GmbH, Germany and Shri Pranav Adani, Director ,M/s Adani Group.

I also extend my hearty welcome to all our distinguished Speakers from India and overseas, who have specially come to Ahmedabad to enlighten us on various important subjects related to Castor. I am pleased to also welcome all the Special Invitees, Panel Members, Presidents of various

Commodity Exchanges and the Delegates to this International event and we look forward to having very fruitful sessions during the course of the day.

I am also happy to mention that this event has become truly International and over 50 delegates from various countries including from China, Japan, Thailand, USA, Netherland, U.K, France, Germany, Russia, Taiwan, Nigeria are participating in this Conference. I would like to specially welcome them and wish them a very comfortable stay in India.

SEA, with the objective of bringing the world Castor fraternity together, has been successfully Organising this international Conference for the last 14 years. The popularity of this initiative is evident from the growing attendance that we have been having year after year. The intent of such a conference has been to provide the farmers, the manufacturers, importers & exporters, technologists, equipment suppliers, surveyors and other service providers, players from the commodity exchanges and brokers from the Castor business from all over the world, an opportunity to interact with each other explore opportunities of further growth and resolve issues if any.

Friends, as you may know, India is the largest producer of Castor seed in the world and meets nearly 90% of the castor oil requirement of the world. Out of this Gujarat contributes to production and export of over 75% of the country's castor oil and its derivatives. India is currently exporting Castor oil & derivatives worth over Rs.5000 crores (US\$ 850 million) per annum. The global Castor oil derivatives market is expanding rapidly with China emerging as a major player over the last few years.

I am glad to inform you that as compared to other oilseeds, the yield of Castor seeds in the country is much higher. Thanks to sustained efforts by Agri scientists in successfully developing a large number of hybrid varieties which can give 3000/5000 kgs. Per hectare but due to poor knowledge of good agricultural practices, average yield is much lower.

In view of this, SEA this year launched SEA Castor Yield Improvement Project 2017 in two districts of Gujarat and nearly 70 model farms are being created. SEA provided to these farmers, good quality seeds, fertilizers & other inputs and also monitored these farms through highly experienced scientists and motivators who continuously guided them for pre and post good agronomic practices. Castor farmers were shown these model farms at the “Kisan Mela **Samelan**” i.e. Farmers Gatherings held at Tintisar, Aravali district on 27th January 2017 and at Palanpur in district Banas on 5th February 2017 which were largely attended by the castor farmers. The farming community was very happy with the efforts of SEA .

I am happy to mention that against normal productivity of 1500 kgs; in these 70 model farms, the productivity is much higher at 4000/4500 kgs. per hectare. We plan to extend this project next year to cover four districts of Gujarat and one in Rajasthan to boost the overall productivity of Castorseed and thereby sustain the tempo of farmers to keep growing Castorseed. It is important that the farmers continue to have interest in planting Castor or else our industry would have sustainability issues.

I would like to compliment Mr. Haresh Vyas, Project in-charge and Co-Chairman SEA Castor Seed & Oil Promotion Council and Dr. B.V. Mehta, Executive Director, SEA for their excellent work and co-ordination with Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University, Scientists and farmers for this project and particularly like to thank Shri Maganbhai Patel, Shri Prahladsonhji Champavat, Shri Kirtibhai Trivedi for their active contribution and co-ordination with the farmers.

With a view to improve yields and adopt better agronomic practices for the last two years SEA is honoring a progressive Castorseed farmer with a Cash Award of Rs.25,000/- & Certificate. I would like to congratulate Smt. Parulben Janakbhai Patel, of Sultanpur, Dist. Arvalli as a best progressive farmer for Castorseed and pleased to announce a Cash Award of Rs.25,000/- and Certificate. I also congratulate Shri Shaileshbhai Ambalal Patel, of Vadgam, Dist. Banaskantha and Shri Jayantibhai Gondalia, of Bhesan, District Junagadh and recognize their role in increasing the productivity of Castorseed through good farm practices and be awarded Certificate and Cash Award of Rs.5,000/-. I am also happy to mention that today we have invited many progressive farmers of Castorseed to participate in this Conference. I welcome them all and we are eager to listen to their views on Castorseed crop.

Friends, it is now essential to apply scientific innovativeness to value addition of castor oil. Though some progress has been made in developing castor oil based value added products, we still have a long way to go. This is evident from the fact that India still exports more than 80% of its castor

oil production in its raw form. I would urge the castor oil producers and the scientific community to work hand in hand, in a manner that India gains a position of prominence also in exports of high value castor oil derivatives. I am confident that the entrepreneurial zeal of the castor oil producers coupled with scientific backing of the R & D institutions like IICT; India would soon become a significant player in castor oil derivatives. The time is now to move from Trade to Technology.

Further, Castor meal is a natural organic fertiliser rich in the vital elements viz. Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potash and that too in the ideal percentage and ratio of N:P:K - 5:2:1, which is so essential for vigorous plant growth. The local usage for organic fertilizer is very limited and we are compelled to export castor meal. I would like to appeal particularly to the industry to promote the usage of castor meal as organic fertilizer to boost the agriculture productivity in the country.

I am also happy to announce that in line with the previous castor crop surveys, we have collected samples of Castor seed from various fields of the talukas of all the three major Castor growing states. These samples have been analyzed for its oil and moisture content. As in the past, I am sure that this data will be beneficial to the Castor seed crushers & traders. I take this opportunity to thank M/s. Geo-Chem Laboratories Limited for analyzing these samples and enabling SEA to provide this vital information to the trade & industry.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to compliment SEA Castorseed & Oil Promotion Council headed by Mr. Abhay Udeshi & Mr. Haresh Vyas, as Chairman & Co-Chairman and the entire Council members and Dr. B. V. Mehta, ED & his team for organizing this Global Castor Conference in the most befitting manner. I also specially thank Shri Mayur Mehta, Editor-in-Chief, Commodity World, for his help in organizing this Conference.

I look forward to your active participation in the Conference.

Jai Hind!!