

Horticulture

8.25 The horticulture sector which includes a wide variety of crops such as fruits, vegetables, spices, plantation crops, floriculture, medicinal and aromatic plants, cashew etc. is recognised as an important sector for potential diversification in agriculture. India accounts for 10 per cent of world production of fruit crops. Mango, banana, citrus, apple, guava, papaya, pineapple and grapes, account for the bulk of fruit production. In dryland areas, ber and amla have become popular.

8.26 India is also the largest producer of vegetables, next only to China with an annual estimated production of 85 million tonnes in 1998-99, including potato production of 23.5 million tonnes.

8.27 India produces a wide variety of spices like black pepper, cardamom, ginger, garlic, turmeric, chillies etc. Pepper production in 1998-99 is estimated at 70,000 tonnes. The export earnings from spices have increased from Rs. 1231 crore in 1996-97 to Rs. 1650 crore in 1998-99 (Table 8.13). As a result of

Crops	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99*
Fruits	42.50	44.00	49.50
Vegetables	75.05	75.00	85.00
Spices	2.78	3.03	3.14
Cashew	0.43	0.36	0.41
Arecanut	0.31	0.33	0.36
Coconut**	12988	13088	14600

* Provisional ** Million Nuts

focused attention on diversification new coconut products namely, coconut cream, coconut tetra pack, tender coconut and desiccated coconut are now commercially available. Arecanut and betelvine are the important commercial crops grown in Assam, Kerala and Karnataka. The annual turnover of betel leaves is estimated to be worth Rs. 800 crore. There is potential for export of betel leaves to the neighbouring countries.

8.28 It is believed that adoption of drip irrigation has led to increase in the productivity of mango by 51 per cent, grapes by 81 per cent, citrus by

42 per cent and coconut by 116 per cent. More than 80000 hectare of land is expected to be brought under drip irrigation in different states during current plan period (1997-2002).

8.29 Horticulture products are highly perishable and suffer heavy damage and deterioration in quality during post-harvest handling. Post-harvest handling accounts for 37 per cent of the losses at different stages of storage, grading, packaging etc. The National Horticulture Board is the nodal agency for establishing post-harvest infrastructure, an essential aspect of which is cold storage capacity creation and cool transportation of perishable fruits and vegetables. Special effort at creating new cold storage capacity through financial incentives is being pursued actively during 1999-2000.

8.30 Value addition in perishable products is possible through processing, preservation and cool transportation. The current installed capacity of fruit and vegetable processing industry is very limited (Table 8.14). The

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Capacity	14.02	17.60	19.10	20.40	20.80
Production of Processed Products	6.76	8.50	9.60	9.10	9.40

capacity of the industry excluding dried and sun-dried fruit and vegetable products was 7.08 lakh tonnes as on January 1, 1990 which has now increased to 20.8 lakh tonnes at the beginning of 1999. The utilisation of current processing capacity of fruits and vegetables works out to approximately 1.80 per cent of the total production of fruits and vegetables in the country.

8.31 It is estimated that by the end of 1999, the installed capacity will be around 21.5 lakh tonnes and the output will be in the range of 9.8 lakh tonnes as new units will go into production. Installed capacity for processing is still very low and its utilisation is even lower and needs to be augmented. Over the last few years, there has been positive growth in ready-to-serve (RTS) beverages, fruit juices and pulps, dehydrated and frozen fruits and vegetable products, tomato products and processed mushrooms.

