

Sector Brief of

DATES



D A T E S



**Sindh Board of
Investment**
Government of Sindh



INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is known for producing some of the most delicious fruits in the world. Pakistan produces approximately around 13.7 million tons of fruits and vegetables. The export trade in Pakistan is \$168.7 million of which fruits account for \$128 million comprising mainly of mangoes and dates. Pakistan, especially Sindh has been blessed to be a major grower and exporter of dates due to its soil and season. It is one of the largest commercial fruit of Pakistan. There are more than 300 varieties of dates produced in Pakistan. Out of these varieties, Begam Jangi of Balochistan, Aseel of Sindh and Dhakki of Dera Ismail Khan are much sought after due to their exotic taste. Sindh contributes around 50% of dates produced in Pakistan of which Khairpur has a share of 90% in the province.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The projected target of dates export from Pakistan for the year 2009-10 is 145,000 tons worth \$52.0 million. The major countries importing both fresh and dried dates from Pakistan are India, USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Malaysia and Indonesia.



Pakistan has the capacity to supply greater volume of high quality dates and by-products such as pitted/un-pitted whole dates, press dates bricks, dates syrup and dates paste. Dates for export are mainly sourced from Khairpur/Rohri (Sindh) and from Turbat (Baluchistan).

At present, exporters of

Pakistan are getting a price of about US\$ 660 per ton for fresh dates and US\$ 350 per ton for dried dates where as Israel, France and Tunisia are earning US\$ 4480 per ton, US\$ 2502 per ton and US\$ 2008 per ton of their dates respectively which depicts a large price differential. Pakistan, despite being a major dates producing country, has not realized its export potential. This highlights the vast potential of value addition in the dates sector by making appropriate technological interventions in post-harvest management and processing.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Out of the total 262,000 tons production in Sindh, a large portion is processed into dried dates which sell at a much lower rate than the preserved dates. The potential of dates sector of Pakistan presents an excellent opportunity for investment in dates processing for value addition.

DATES PROCESSING UNIT



Stuffed date with mousse and chocolate sauce

There have been tremendous advancements in date processing. At a typical processing factory, purchasers bring graded dates in trays/crates of uniform size to the plant; these dates are inspected for quality and weighed prior to entry in the plant. Next, dates are fumigated in completely sealed chambers. For fumigation, usually methyl bromide, hydrogen phosphate, aluminum phosphide or carbon tetra chloride is used. For further process-

ing, dates are transferred to feeding line elevator and automatically dumped over a shaker for preliminary washing. These are then passed over a conveyor for manual sorting and grading. Hot air blast is supplied to remove excess water. Some dates are also pitted to stuff certain dried fruits. These are then packed as per available orders. Inferior quality dates are usually further processed into different products such as syrup, paste, alcohol, vinegar, etc.



Date Cake



Fruity bite-size Snacks

The common stages involved during the processing are as under:

- a. Grading, selection and procurement
- b. Storage and fumigation
- c. Sprinkling/washing, cleaning & drying
- d. Heat treatment
- e. Sorting and grading
- f. Pitting and stuffing (if applicable)
- g. Weighing and/or pressing
- h. Packing and storage

DATES SYRUP

There are several value added date products with strong demand and established market in the Middle East, Europe, North America and Japan. Dates Syrup is one of the most growing products extracted from Dates and contains iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium as well. It is also called the sugar substitute of the future. The extract is concentrated to a total solid content of 70% by weight and contains no additives or preservatives. Its high sugar content (over 64%) acts as a natural preserving agent and, when protected from moisture and extraneous contaminants, the syrup has an almost indefinite shelf life.

More than 54 date processing units are working in the country. The major processors are Panama Impex Agency, Karachi, Pak- Iran International (Pvt) Ltd, Syed International Sukkur, Prime Dates Product (Pvt) Ltd and others.

CERTIFICATIONS

1. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification
2. Seed Analysis Certificate



Sindh Board of Investment

is the primary investment promotion agency of the province positioning Sindh as an attractive destination for investment.

SBI strives to find new avenues for public private collaboration, develop investment opportunities for large, medium and small investors and facilitate investment projects.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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