

Growth trends in area, production and export of onion from India -An economic analysis

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ABSTRACT

The onion is an important vegetable and has been grown in almost all the parts of India for thousands of years. The onion is regarded as a highly export oriented crop and earns valuable foreign exchange for the country. The quantity of onion exported from India to different countries has increased from 106.89 million kg in 1960-61 to 1163.47 million kg in 2010-11 with an increase in the export value from Rs. 26.53 crores to Rs. 1741.55 crores. The study utilizes the secondary data collected from different sources like Export statistics for Agro and Food products, APEDA 2010, Department of Horticulture, Bangalore and the information was also accessed from the official websites of Agricultural Processed Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). The data collected pertained to the period 1978-79 to 2010-11. Tabular analysis was used to work out the percentages for easy comparison. The growth rate and instability analysis was used to study the growth in area, production, productivity and export of onion. The share of export in the production has also increased from 7.27 per cent (343.26 thousand tones) during 2000 to 12.45 per cent (1664.92 thousand tones) in 2010. India is presently exporting onion to mainly Gulf countries, Far East countries, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka where there is not much scope to increase the quantity as some countries have also started their own production. The scope, however, exists for diversifying the market to European countries and Japan as these countries do not prefer strong and pungent onions. In these countries, yellow onions having mild pungency, bigger bulb size with thick fleshy layers are preferred.

KEY WORDS : Onion, Growth trends, Production and export

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Onion (*Allium cepa* L.) is a major bulbous crop among the cultivated vegetable crops and it is of global importance. India has varying climatic conditions and

provides an opportunity for growing a large number of horticulture crops including vegetables. The onion is an important vegetable and has been grown in almost all the parts of India for thousands of years. The onion is regarded as a highly export oriented crop and earn valuable foreign exchange for the country. Though India produces a significant quantity of onion it is not regular and sufficient enough to meet the demands for both domestic requirement and exports.

In India it has been grown in 1012.10 thousand hectares with the production of 14835.70 thousand tones (2010-11). India being a second major onion producing country in the world has a productivity of 14.71 MT/ha only (Anonymous, 2008). The reasons for lower productivity of onion in India could be attributed to the limited availability of quality seed and lack of development of hybrids in onion is the major limiting factors among the others.

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