

# AGMARK



BY: PRAMOD MACHIMADA. A

# Introduction



- In India, several Acts and Orders are in force for implementation with a view to **protect the consumer against adulteration and unfair practices.**
- The starting point of quality control in India was the enactment of Agricultural Produce (Grading & Marking) Act, AGMARK, 1937.
- Agricultural Produce (Grading & Marking) Act, 1937 **provides for the grading and marking of agricultural and other produce.**
- The term AGMARK was coined by joining the words 'Ag' to mean agriculture and 'Mark' for a certification mark.



- The Act empowers the Central Government to make Rules for :
  - (a) **Fixing grade** designations to indicate quality of any scheduled article.
  - (b) **Defining the quality** indicated by every grade designation, and
  - (c) Specifying **grade designation marks** to represent particular grade designation.



- Grade standards notified as per the provisions of the Act are popularly called AGMARK Standards.
- These standards differentiate between quality and 2-3 grades are prescribed for each commodity.
- Different grades are prescribed based on **intrinsic quality** of the agricultural commodities and various other parameters related to cleanliness, extraneous matter, active components, etc.



- Grades help farmers/traders to get prices for agricultural commodities on the quality produced by them.
- Consumers get the produce of the quality desired by them.
- Till date, grade standards for 205 agricultural commodities have been notified.
- These include cereals, pulses, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables, creamery butter & ghee, vegetable oils, spices, honey, wheat atta, besan, etc.

# STANDARDIZATION AND GRADING OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES



- Grading provides description of the quality of the consignment and assists in the **formation of a legally binding agreement**.
- It **facilitates proper marketing** of agricultural commodities.
- It also ensures that agricultural **commodities move through the market faster and without obstructions**.
- This also facilitates transactions **without physical verification by the distant buyers**.

# Advantages of Grading



- It brings confidence between the buyer and the seller.
- It facilitates inter state and international marketing.
- Disputes in the market can be solved in a good manner.
- Stability of the price is ensured.
- Farmers can take loans easily from the banks on the basis of grades of produce.
- Arbitrary fixation of price by middlemen is eliminated.
- Brings about improvement of the crop.
- Reduces risk of producer and seller in transactions.
- Future marketing is facilitated. Grades become a commercial measure of quality.
- It also helps in implementation of contract farming.

# Formulation of Grade Standards



- Standards of agricultural commodities are **framed in a scientific way**. Basically it involves the following steps.
  - (i) Agricultural commodity for which grade standards are to be framed is **selected keeping in view national priority, necessity and demand**.
  - (ii) A sampling plan is prepared based on **the areas in which the commodity is grown, processed and traded**.
  - (iii) **Physical and chemical parameters to determine the purity and quality** of the commodity are identified.



- (iv) Samples of the commodity are collected by the field offices from growing areas, whole sale and retail markets as per the sampling plan.
- (v) The samples are analysed in the Regional Agmark Laboratories and Central Agmark Laboratory for the identified parameters.
- (vi) Analytical data obtained is statistically analysed and Central Agmark Laboratory suggests the limits of various quality parameters for different grades.



- (vii) The specifications of the commodity prescribed in Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955 and international standards viz. Codex Alimentarius Commission, ISO, etc. are consulted.
- (viii) The relevant Committee on Agmark standards discusses the draft standards with trade, industry and consumer organizations.



- (xi) Preliminary Grading & Marking Rules for the Commodity are drafted and are vetted by the Ministry of Law & Justice, translated into Hindi and published in the Gazette of India for **inviting comments and suggestions** from all stake holders.
- (x) The comments/suggestions received are considered and final notification is drafted, vetted by the Ministry of Law & Justice, translated into Hindi and published in the Gazette of India.



- Following Commodities on Agmark standards have been constituted :
  1. Food grains and Allied Products.
  2. Oils Seeds, Vegetable Oils & Dairy Products.
  3. Essential Oils.
  4. Spices and Condiments.
  5. Fruits and Vegetables.
  6. Other Commodities.

# GRADING AND CERTIFICATION of AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES



- Promotion of standardization and grading of agricultural and allied produce is one of the important activities of the Directorate of Marketing & Inspection.
- Grading is carried out in accordance with the standards notified.
- It serves a means of describing the quality of commodities to be purchased or sold by the buyers or sellers all over the country and abroad.
- This also establishes a common trade language and avoids the need for physical checking and handling at many points.



- The system of grading and certification benefits both the sellers and buyers in view of the fact that the producer get the price with the quality produced by him and consumer gets a quality product in turn of money spent
- Grading and certification activities can be broadly classified into
  - (i) Grading and Certification for Internal Trade
  - (ii) Grading and Certification for Exports.

# LABELING REQUIREMENTS ON AGMARK CERTIFIED PRODUCTS



- All products certified under Agmark should have Agmark insignia and following details printed on them.
  - (i) Name and address of the authorized packer
  - (ii) Name of the commodity
  - (iii) Grade
  - (iv) Lot/Batch No.
  - (v) Date of packing.
  - (vi) Best Before Date
  - (vii) Net Weight /Volume
  - (viii) Maximum Retail Price.
  - (ix) List of ingredients in descending order of their wt. (in case of mixed spices, etc).

# ROLE OF CENTRAL AGMARK LABORATORY & REGIONAL AGMARK LABORATORIES



Directorate of Marketing & Inspection responsible for Agmark quality control system has set up **11 Regional Agmark Laboratories [RAL(s)]**

- Mumbai
- New Delhi
- Chennai
- Kolkata
- Kanpur
- Kochi
- Guntur
- Amritsar
- Jaipur
- Rajkot
- Bhopal

The Central Agmark Laboratory (CAL) at Nagpur is the apex laboratory.



- These RAL(s) are assigned to carry out the following important functions:
  - (i) **Analysis of research samples** of agricultural commodities for framing their standards
  - (ii) **Analysis of check samples** of Agmark certified commodities for ensuring conformance with prescribed standards.
  - (iii) **Training to the chemists** of authorised packers/approved laboratories in the grading of agricultural commodities.



- The testing done across these laboratories include
  - Chemical analysis,
  - Microbiological analysis,
  - Pesticide residue, and
  - Aflatoxin analysis
- Some of the products are whole spices, ground spices, ghee, butter, vegetable oils, mustard oil, honey, food grains (wheat), wheat products (atta, suji, and maida), gram flour, soyabean seed, bengal gram, ginger, oil cake, essential oil, oils and fats, animal casings, meat and food products

# Documents to be given along with application



1. Sketch of the premises
2. Declaration regarding
  - i. Proprietorship/Partnership etc
  - ii. Ownership of the premises
  - iii. Ownership of trade brand label
  - iv. Use of good grade quality containers for packing commodities. All declarations has to given by notary public.
3. A copy of licence from Panchayat/Municipality.
4. Bank reference:- Letter from the bank regarding the transaction to the packer with the bank.
5. List of machineries.
6. Specimen signature of authorised persons attested by the proprietor/managing partner.
7. Medical fitness certificate of employee.
8. Specimen copy and sketch of trade brand label



- Consumers not satisfied with the quality of agricultural produce certified under Agmark, can make a complaint to the Agricultural Marketing Adviser giving full particulars regarding Agmark label/replica serial number, lot no., date of packing, best before date, trade brand, name and address of the authorized packer and the name and address of the seller.
- Whenever the complaint is found to be genuine, action as deemed fit will be taken against the concerned authorized packer as per provision in APGM Act-1937

THANK YOU