

Parax Development International Inc. signed a memorandum of understanding to work with Specsime Engineering Pvt. Ltd. of Mumbai on a variety of projects in Canada and India, including the processing of by-products used in the ethanol industry to create fibres for breakfast foods and other items. This MoU was signed during the Team Canada trade mission in January 1996.

FOOD PROCESSING BIOTECHNOLOGY

Food processing biotechnology is broadly defined as the use of biotechnology to develop products for agricultural productivity, food safety and nutrition, human and animal health care, environmental improvement and/or sustainable development. It plays a key role in food production and processing. It has been applied to the food industry to improve colour, scent, and taste; readjust the nutritive composition; raise quality and grade; prolong the shelf-life of food products; or to perform certain functions in processing operations. Canadians have long been among the world leaders in agricultural and food research, and recently have demonstrated leadership in several key branches of biotechnology. India is a ripe recipient for this technological sophistication as it looks to improve yields and agro-based products. For instance, biotechnology promises a new revolution in the dairy industry. Potential areas of application include improved dairy starters, cultured milk products, food grade biopreservatives, production of dairy enzymes, acceleration of cheese ripening, biological stabilization of dairy wastes and efficient whey utilization. Biotechnology's contribution to sustainable agriculture in India includes tissue culture for multiplication of bananas, cardamom, forest trees, gradual replacement of chemical pesticides by biocontrol and biopesticides, use of biofertilizers that enhance nitrogen fixation, new vaccines for animals and embryo transplants for production of superior calves. To increase milk production, the Government's emphasis has been on replacing indigenous low yielding buffaloes and cattle with high yielding cross bred ones through artificial insemination.

FROZEN FOODS

Inadequate refrigeration and cold storage facilities are the key reasons for the under-development of this sector of the food processing industry in India. Canadian companies might wish to investigate opportunities for furnishing equipment and expertise in these areas. Two of the major producers of frozen fruits and vegetables in India are Terai Foods Ltd. and the National Dairy Development Board.

Ice cream

Per capita consumption of ice cream is just 0.1 litres, compared with 5-8 litres in Scandinavian countries and 22 litres in the USA. Most ice cream is consumed in ice cream parlours and restaurants, partly because many Indian homes lack refrigerators, but mainly because ice cream is still too expensive for most to eat regularly. Many companies rely on regional marketing and franchised ice cream parlours to overcome infrastructure inadequacies. However, the recent entry of multinational corporations such as Lipton and Baskin-Robbins, should see the market increase dramatically.