

**Second EU-SPF Strategic Meeting & Workshop on  
Fermented Foods, Health Status and Social Well-being**

*for the*  
Policy Makers of the Dairy and Food Processing Industries

*organized by*  
**SASNET- Fermented Foods, Anand Agricultural University, Institute of Rural  
Management, Anand and Lund University, Sweden.**

**September 8-9, 2005, IRMA, Anand, Gujarat, India**

SASNET Fermented Foods is an association of researchers, professionals, academicians, food industry personnel and all those who are interested in research, development of traditional and novel functional fermented foods for production and marketing in an industrial scale. During the year 2005, The Network is to organise a number of strategic meetings under a EU sponsored small project facility on “Fermented Foods, Health Status and Social Well-being” in association with Institute of Rural Management, Anand; Lund University, Sweden and Anand Agricultural University, Anand. Under this project, the first meeting and workshop was organized for the policy makers of R & D institutions in May 2005.

The second strategic meeting and workshop for Policy Makers of the Indian Dairy and Food Processing Industries was organized during September 8-9, 2005 at IRMA, Anand. This two-day event was attended by 52 delegates from all over the country. In all there were four technical sessions and a panel discussion. The meeting started on a formal note with an inaugural session. Prof M C Varshneya, Vice Chancellor of AAU was the Chief Guest and Dr Verghese Kurien was the President of the function.

In his opening remarks, Dr Baboo Nair, Professor Emeritus, Lund University, Sweden, who is also the present chairman of the SASNET-Fermented foods, welcomed the delegates and highlighted the significance of research and development in general and in particular in food processing industries. He pointed out that the degree of value addition in agro-food sector of south Asian countries at present is very low and that only by increased input in Research and higher education, development of novel, value added, functional fermented foods for global marketing can be achieved. This is not only a necessity but also the only way by which the productivity of the agro-food sector and through that the income of the poor farmers as well can be improved. He further urged the industry to join hands with the network to promote its objectives by becoming corporate members and financing research projects in collaboration with the network.

Prof Varshneya, in his address, stressed the importance of fermented foods in the Indian diet and brought out its significance in commercial terms. He opined that there was a huge market potential for traditional valued-added fermented foods that remain to be tapped. In his presidential address, Dr Kurien was happy that the network had sought to hold these important strategic meetings at IRMA and wished that the network continued its noble cause of creating a database of traditional fermented foods and spreading awareness of these products. He wished the network grows stronger and wished it all success in its future endeavours. The inaugural session ended with the vote of thanks proposed by Dr J B Prajapati, Project Director and the Coordinator of the Network.

The first technical session was chaired by Mr P R Patel, MD, Sumul Dairy while Dr J B Prajapati, Coordinator, SASNET-FF acted as the rapporteur. The session started with the presentation of the report of the first strategic meeting organized for the R & D institutions by Dr JB Prajapati. This gave an input to the participants about the strategy of R & D institutions towards development of fermented foods. Prof Nirlesh Kothari, visiting professor, IRMA presented a lecture on Data & Information Management. Dr Prajapati then invited the Swedish industrialist, Prof Rickard Oste and Prof Ingegerd Sjöholm from Lund University to interact with the Indian industry personnel. This generated a very useful discussion related to aspects of transferring knowledge from University to Industry, Universities policy to encourage food industry in Sweden, regulatory aspects in marketing of traditional and novel food products, IPR and patenting issues, toxicological aspects and the potential of Indian products in European market.

The second technical session had six speakers. Prof Ingegerd Sjöholm spoke on Dynamics of University-Industry with special reference to R&D Projects on Food Development. Prof Rickard Oste, MD, Ceba AB, Sweden shared his experiences as scientist and businessman of oat milk and shared information on the on-going development on fermented oat milk. This was followed by four presentations on Status of Fermented foods of North, South, West and East India by Dr D N Gandhi, NDRI, Karnal; Dr G Vijayalakshmi, CFTRI, Mysore; Dr Rekha Singhal, UDCT, Mumbai and Dr Manab Deka, Gauhati University, Gauhati. The speakers highlighted the contribution of fermented foods and the current marketing strategies of fermented foods of India. They also stressed on the need for scientific investigations to understand the technology and health claims of the traditional fermented foods. This marathon session was chaired by Dr PA Shankar, Director of Instructions, Dairy Science College, Bangalore while Ms Lata Ramachandran, Dairy Science College, Anand worked as the rapporteur.

The third technical session on the second day was chaired by Dr J M Dave, former Principal of Dairy Science College, Anand. The research experience of interest to the industry was presented by Dr R K Shah, Dairy Science College, Anand and Dr C D Khedkar, College of Dairy Technology, Pusad. Dr Shah narrated the work done at Anand on product development, characterization of cultures and nutritional and health aspects of probiotic food preparations. Dr Khedkar briefed about the work on

clinical and feeding aspects of probiotic fermented foods in Maharashtra. Mr Tansukh Jain , MD of Chr. Hansen India Ltd. spoke on customer needs and market strategy that needs to be adopted in the business of culture development and marketing. Dr Vijayalakshmi of CFTRI did excellent job as rapporteur.

Dr SS Sannabhatti, Principal and Dean, Dairy Science College, Anand chaired the fourth session and Dr CD Khedkar from Pusad acted as rapporteur. In this session, the representatives from the industry presented their experience of development and marketing of fermented foods. The presentations from MILMA, Kerala; Sumul Dairy, Surat; Vasudhara, Valsad and AMUL, Anand gave good encouragement to the other participants to enter the area of fermented milk production. This session also generated good discussion on the problems in product quality and marketing and their probable solutions.

The final session was a panel discussion, with a panel of experts comprising of Prof Rickard Oste (Chairman), Dr P A Shankar, Dr J M Dave, Prof Ingegerd Sjöholm, Dr G Vijayalakshmi, Dr Rekha Singhal and Dr J B Prajapati. The session was a highly interactive one that discussed the research needs of the industry and the market potential of fermented foods of India. The session ended with concluding remarks by Dr J B Prajapati.

The highlights of discussion are:

1. The Network should go ahead with organisation data collection covering all over South Asia and work for establishment of a data base for fermented foods as a national and international resource.
2. Fermented food is an exciting field for industry for product diversification and value addition. There was a common agreement among the participants from the Industry that there is a huge marketing potential of live probiotic culture containing functional foods in India.
3. There is need to develop stable starter cultures for manufacture of traditional foods on industrial scale. This should be made available at reasonable prices.
4. In industry, there is a need for research to enhance shelf-life of fermented milks under the conditions of storage and distribution existing in South Asia.
5. In many advanced countries, the Industry spends more than 25% on R & D, while in our domestic food industry usually it is less than 1%. Thus Indian Food Industry needs to increase the share of profit for R & D activities.
6. The industry should not keep an eye on profit only, but some R & D should be taken with a motive of service to the society.
7. This is high time for the agro-food sector to change the mind set from follower to path setter.
8. Domestic food and dairy Industry shows interest in large volume products at lower price while for global marketing, quality products with premium price are more suitable.
9. It is time for the food and dairy industry to switch on to quality from quantity. Development of High quality products need higher input of knowhow and need new knowledge which can only be obtained by R&D.

10. If the food industry funds part of the research project, it is possible to manage rest from Government agencies like MoFPI, DBT, ICAR, DST, etc.
11. Some regulatory mechanisms for novel foods/functional foods are required to be evolved, so as to stop spurious health claims.

For further details please visit [www.fermented-foods.net](http://www.fermented-foods.net)

**(J. B. PRAJAPATI)**  
Project Director and  
Coordinator of SASNET fermented foods