

# USSEC, Ananda Group hold Nutrifish in Hyderabad to promote fish eating among people



Office Bearers of USSEC

**Hyderabad:** Have you ever tried a fish samosa? Or fish kachori? Visitors at 'Nutrifish 2013' festival, held at Jal Vihar on Necklace Road on 08 September 2013, had the opportunity to relish the tasty food items and other fish recipes.

The event was organised by the US Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and Ananda Group aqua-farming company, to create awareness about fish consumption. Around 3,000 people attended the day-long event.

## Misconceptions

"India is the second-largest producer of fish in the world but fish consumption here is very low. It is basically due to the misconceptions attached to fish and the festival aims to clear them," said P.E. Vijay Anand, India Director of the USSEC.

Visitors not only got to taste fish recipes but also got first-hand information on aqua-farming – including fish farming, distribution and storage aspects and cooking.

"With processed fish, a few fish recipes and snacks can

be prepared in just three minutes.

"It is possible because fish can easily be sliced into thin pieces," explained Kasi Viswanathan M., executive chef at the Bangalore-based The Atria Hotel.

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## Chefs roped in

The organisers also roped in chefs from popular hotels and professors from the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies to help create awareness about fish. A powerpoint presentation, short skits and interactive sessions were also conducted as part of the event.

India is a protein and energy deficient country in terms of nutrition. "Modern Growing India" needs more protein in different forms to cater diverse cultures, food habits and nutritional expectations.

Fish for some reason has not become as popular like

chicken eating. Affordability of buying meat has increased in India due to better incomes but yet we don't see fish being as popular as chicken. Dr P.E. Vijay Anand (who heads India's animal feed, aquaculture and soy meal programs

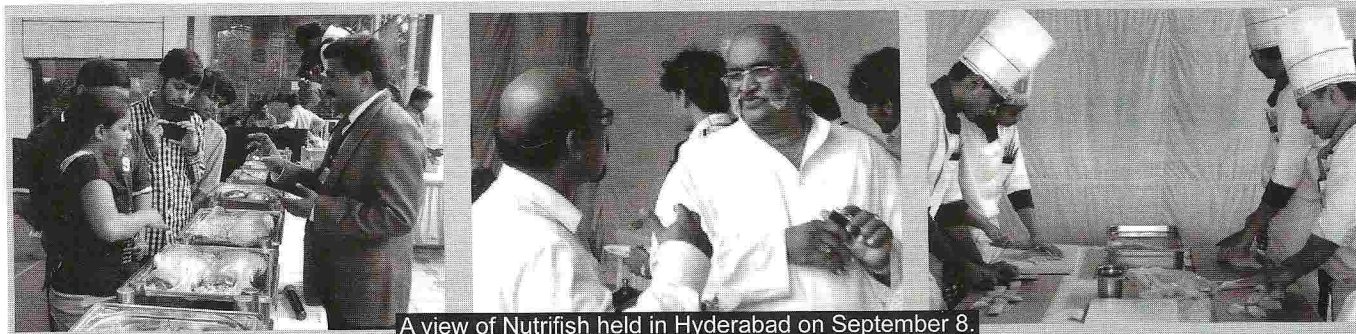
provide knowledge and spell out the benefits of fish as a fabulous protein source. It was conducted on the 8th September 2013 at Jal Vihar, Necklace Road, Hyderabad. In addition to this the advantages of processed and value added products of fish were also demonstrated at the event. By saying NUTRIFISH – the organizers (USSEC and the Ananda Group) wished to re-state that fish is nutritious; nutrition is also through fish or fish as a source of nutrition.

Dr. Vijay strongly felt that low fish consumption in the country is due to misconceptions that people might have about fish, the quick perishable nature of fish, improper preservation methods, unhygienic

for USSEC) coined and created NUTRIFISH 2013 as a unique event to help promote fish consumption at the fag-end of the value chain and create customer opportunities. He said that this focused pilot event was targeted to popularize fish consumption in general, dis-spell misconceptions,



Guest of honour delivering a speech



A view of Nutrifish held in Hyderabad on September 8.

disposal and handling of the product, smell of fish, lengthy preparation and procurement time, supply, availability and distribution constraints.

Mr. Vishwanadha Raju (CEO, of the Ananda Group, Bhimavaram) felt that all these factors were posing bottle necks in the value chain of fisheries/aquaculture sectors of the country and they need to be addressed quickly. At NUTRIFISH 2013, the team educated the public and cleared their doubts, assuring them that fish is available in convenient forms and comes from technology driven state-of-the-art processes.

Mr. Umakanth (who manages the Aquaculture program for USSEC) said that lack of awareness about the development or progress in the fisheries/aquaculture industry is yet another factor we assign to fish being less popular. It should be noted that in the recent times - science, technology and entrepreneurship has changed the way fish is produced and marketed. A lot of modernization has gone into farming the fish; they are fed with nutritious feed which uses material like soy, wheat, rice derivatives, corn, vitamins, minerals etc.

Dr. Vijay added that today there are better and more varieties of fish one can

choose from. There are diverse forms in which fish are processed and made available as boneless, ready to cook, easy to cook or ready to eat products and products that taste great. At NUTRIFISH 2013 we strived to demonstrate these facts and possibilities.

The USSEC team (Dr. P.E. Vijay, Mr. Umakanth, Mr. Gopal Pillai, Dr. Pawan Kumar, Dr. Yadu Nandan, Mr. J.B. Sastry), Mr. Anand Uddaraju (Director of the Ananda Group), Dr. Shiv Kumar (Professor, Aquatic Biology - College of Fisheries Mangalore) and Dr. V. Suryaprakash Rao (Executive Vice-President; West Coast Frozen Foods Pvt Ltd, Gujarat) assessed from the available data that about 7.5 million tons of whole fish available in India yields 3.75 million tons of available fish meat. This translates to a per capita consumption of 3.12 kg fish per person/per year. Available chicken meat in the country is 3.4 million tons and this yields a per capita consumption of 2.8 kg/person. Lack of distribution infrastructure, poor handling and preservation techniques and low demand for processed/value added fish are constraints that explain disconnect between chicken meat and fish meat transformations.

Dr. Vijay was very positive that India's population size, desire to eat fish which is healthy, increasing employment, willingness to pay and a rapid cultural/life style are to huge opportunities. He also felt that the country has a greater distribution and supply opportunity in catering to new regions with less fish consumption. In addition to this, the overall supply, distribution and infrastructure - if improved will drive a greater demand and customer opportunity. At NUTRIFISH 2013 the professional team demonstrated and discussed such great opportunities.

In this special type of event, about 800 selected audiences comprising of public, Government officials, institutions, entrepreneurs, investors, traders, distribution firms, hotels and caterers attended. In addition to this audience, USSEC and Ananda Group invited about 70 press persons from print and electronic media. The media interviewed a wide cross section of participants at event in order take the message to more people. The Ananda Group, which operates an integrated aquaculture project with an annual turnover of Rs. 500 Crores, partnered USSEC in this effort. Among the important resource people were experts from the

Culinary Institute of India, Hyderabad and Epicurus who demonstrated that fish can be cooked and presented in different forms suiting different expectations and tastes.

The event was designed in a very creative manner where participants were walked through different activity stations. In all there were six stations, namely, a knowledge station comprising of presentations, discussions and videos; a tactile station for touching and smelling fresh, well-handled, uncooked and well-preserved fish; three different fish cooking and tasting stations that demonstrated different forms and styles in which fish can be presented. The final station was for test marketing where the audience were educated about preservation techniques, prices, cost benefit and distribution / availability of processed value added products. The event was kept open from 11 am to 9 pm to allow continuous flow of participants. USSEC and Ananda Group hope that this event can be used as a model to scale up the promotion for fish consumption and should be used by all aquaculture /fisheries stakeholders in the interest of market development for the aqua sector.