

ICAR-IIHR hands over fruits and veggies vending van for sale during lockdown

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ICAR-IIHR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Indian Institute of Horticulture Research) has developed a fruit and vegetables vending van. In the wake of the 21-day lockdown to stall spread of Covid-19, the institute sees that it would enable daily access to fruits and vegetables.

The Bengaluru-based institute has sold 20 such vans to the Karnataka Department of Horticulture, which are given to FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations) in 10 districts.

One such van has been given to HOPCOMS (Horticulture Produce Marketing Society) temporarily to sell fruits and vegetables during the lockdown period, according to Dr M R Dinesh, director, ICAR-IIHR.

The van was designed and developed primarily to offset the post-harvest losses of fruits and vegetables. The institute envisaged that fresh produce could be reached from farmlands to consumers.

In this regard, "20 such vans are purchased under Sujala Scheme by Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka, to give it to FPOs in 10 districts," he added.

Haryana government purchased three vans for their Centre of Excellence for PHT (Post-Harvest Technology).

According to Dr G Senthilkumaran, Principal Scientist, Agricultural Engineering, ICAR-IIHR, a subsidy was announced to FPOs to buy from IIHR authorised manufacturers. Here four firms were identified.

Kerala government, through HortiCorp (Kerala State Horticultural Products Development Corporation), a similar initiative like HOPCOMS in Karnataka, purchased one van for trial. Though KHF, Bengaluru (Karnataka State Co-operative Horticultural Marketing Federation), funded this project, it could not buy 20 vans as planned in 2018-19 due to lack of funds. Now it is going to buy four vans on trial basis this year.

"HOPCOMS, Bengaluru, has borrowed the van temporarily to sell vegetables and fruits during the lockdown period," Senthilkumaran said.

Vans which are given to different districts are selling at customers doorstep to help people during this lockdown period. These cover Tumkur, Koppa, Bidar, Bijapur and Gadag.