

समुद्री उत्पाद निर्यात विकास प्राधिकरण

(वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)

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PRESS RELEASE

MPEDA launches India's first Aquafarmers Call Centre in Vijayawada

Aquafarmers can call for guidance 24x7 on toll-free number 1800-425-4648

Kochi/Vijayawada, Dec 16: In a first of its kind initiative, the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has launched a multilingual call centre for aquafarmers at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, which will address their technical issues and impart knowledge about efficient farming methods by domain experts round the clock.

Launching the call centre through video conference on Tuesday, MPEDA Chairman Shri K S Srinivas said it would help the aquafarmers in Andhra Pradesh to seek advice by experienced experts for addressing their concerns and following Best Management Practices (BMPs) to boost production and ensure quality and of the produce.

“I request the aquafarmers to make use of the toll-free number **1800-425-4648** with IVRS (interactive voice response system) facility established at Vijayawada to clear their technical doubts from the experts and not to fall in the trap of quacks. It will also help them in seeking information about the various support schemes extended by the field offices of MPEDA,” he added.

The call centre is primarily aimed to cater to the aquafarmers of Andhra Pradesh, the state that contributes more than 60 per cent of marine products export basket. However, it can also handle calls in English and Hindi.

India produced 7, 47,111 MT of shrimps last year, of which more than 68 per cent had come from Andhra Pradesh alone from its over 52,000 shrimp farms covering a water spread area of 75,000 Ha.

“Viewed in this context, it demonstrates the enormous importance of the call centre in the state,” the MPEDA chairman noted. “It also underlines the fact that MPEDA has remained at the forefront in taking up initiatives to augment seafood exports from the country by extending all possible help to farmers.”

In his welcome address, MPEDA Director Dr. Karthikeyan said the small-scale aquaculture farmers are encountering problems in getting proper guidance and technical support, especially during the culture period of farming. “It forces them to seek advice from inexperienced consultants and feed/input suppliers who hold sway over majority of small aquaculture farms. This often leads to crop failures and quality issues,” he pointed out.

“The call centre will assist the aquaculture farmers of Andhra Pradesh in dealing with the issues of day-to-day farming activities and provide useful aquaculture-related information which can be utilised efficiently,” he added.

Appreciating MPEDA for its unique initiative, Shri Kanna Babu, Commissioner of Fisheries, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, assured full support of the state government in this regard.

Dr. U. Jogi Ananda Varma, Member, MPEDA, exuded confidence that the services offered by the call centre would help the farmers to manage their crops in a better way and give a fillip to the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* scheme announced by the Prime Minister.

Shri Bala Subramanian V, General Secretary, Prawn Farmers Federation of India, members of National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA) and other stakeholders also participated in the online function.

Shri K. Sivarajan, Deputy Director, MPEDA Regional Division, Vijayawada, proposed a vote of thanks.