



LEAF

Farm Fresh Vegetables

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TURNING A NEW LEAF FOR A HEALTHY CHOICE

IN THIS ISSUE

Our mission is to bring farm fresh vegetables to neighbourhood shops

Anyone who has driven past the picturesque Nilgiri range of hills to reach the Queen of Hills Ooty will not miss the fresh and colourful vegetables and fruits growing alongside the mountain road fields.

The Nilgiri hills are known as ideal place for growing exotic vegetables, flowers and fruits.



Ooty carrots are as famous as the boat ride for tourists. Nilgiri accounts for about 100 ton a day of carrots alone. Ooty farmers haul their harvest to Mettupalayam mandi, pay broker fee, and sell the produce at market

rate. But broker fee hits them hard as they discount for bad produce, upto 30 per cent. Surely, farmers are at the mercy of brokers.

That is when I decided to structure a business around this which could also benefit farmers. Along with R Manoharan, an established carrot farmer, I came up with a plan to collect harvested carrots from farmers, pay them on the spot, clean and segregate the produce, pack them in clean bags and transport them in refrigerated trucks to retail stores.

With likeminded professionals, we formed Lawrencedale Agroprocessing India Pvt. Ltd.

The beginning wasn't easy. For last 4 years, we have been convincing farmers of the benefits of this mechanism. Now, LEAF works with 1,500 farmers; many own just one or two acres. We share farming techniques, assist farmers for better yields, help increase per acre harvest and provide full value for their labour. And we don't discount for bad produce.

Deepak Vasu, who supplies to LEAF for last 3 years, confirms: "We need more entities like LEAF to better equip us and encourage us to carry on farming. Not only we get a fair price, we don't pay any commission at mandi. And, we save on transportation costs. They show transparency in arriving at prices."

Today we're proud to launch our first newsletter. On this occasion, we thank our valuable connect: the farmer, distributors, employees, and the consumers. We look forward to receiving your continued support.

- **Palat Vijayaraghavan, CEO, Lawrencedale Agroprocessing India Pvt. Ltd.,**



LEAF Founders speak

Palat Vijayaraghavan, CEO of LEAF, along with his co-founders, talk about how they want to improve the lot of farmers and also offer vegetables to buyers for a quality choice.



Farmer's Corner

How does selling to Leaf benefit farmers? What difference does Leaf make to their lives?

Community Farming by LEAF

LEAF has invested considerably in Ooty. Horticulture is the dominant activity in the Nilgiris and produce from Ooty has always commanded a better value. The British introduced many vegetables which had its origin in Europe but soon these exotic vegetables and fruits caught the fancy of the Indians.

Realizing the importance of horticulture to Ooty, LEAF offers farm-related knowledge to farmers and shares best practices with them. This has not only increased their yield per acre through optimum utilization of resources, but has also increased the number of crop cycles, reaping richer harvest.



The micro-farm community of India has more than 400 million people who own small parcels of farmland, in most cases, less than two acres each.



LEAF offers 24 x 7 support to farmers through its services team.

The company engages hundreds of farmers for its community farming of produce.

Community based agriculture programme helps small farmer to restart farming and to utilize their full capacity.

At LEAF, there're only selected crops which are being offered to the farmers under community farming that include carrots, potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower and strawberries. The crops used for contract farming is hand-picked and packed with international standards to ensure freshness, every time, with the right level of maturity for that right degree of taste and crunch.

The key to the success of fresh produce export & domestic operations is the post-harvest management; it is here that the company has invested heavily in setting up a state-of-the-art pack-house with Cold Storage to ensure that the product is maintained at the right temperature to retain the quality.

In addition to the 24 x 7 support to the farmers through an extension services team, Lawrencedale Agroprocessing India Pvt Ltd., is also committed to social responsibility to benefit the local community. Besides, consumers will also have the choice of getting produce with quality assurance.

Upcoming Events

LEAF to launch 'Namma Thottam' in Coimbatore



Namma Thottam is all set to enter Coimbatore

Namma Thottam - 'Our Garden' – a unique programme conceived by LEAF, is all set to come to the textile city of Coimbatore in December. LEAF's Perimetro project, the first of its kind to come up here, is being

launched in Coimbatore in partnership with the Tamil Nadu Government.

Under this project, LEAF will buy the harvest from the farmers in and around Coimbatore and retail the produce at various places across Coimbatore in partnership with the Tamil Nadu Government. It is rightly named as '*Namma Thottam*', as consumers can expect to receive their own garden of vegetables at these outlets. Wait for more details in next issue of LEAF.

Whitefield in Bangalore to turn a new LEAF soon

As part of its expansion plan, LEAF is soon to launch its operations at Whitefield in Bangalore. Whitefield, which had remained a quaint little settlement till the late 1990s, is now a major part of Greater Bangalore. When the IT boom of Bangalore spread to

this place, it also spearheaded a number of branded retailers besides local kirana shops. It's also renowned for Sathya Sai Baba's ashram Brindavan and remains a haven for a number of multinational information technology companies. Now Lawrencedale Agroprocessing India Pvt. Ltd. is all set to storm Whitefield retail stores soon.



Whitefield today boasts a good number of retailers and plenty of kirana shops.

FARMER'S CORNER



Ooty Vegetables taste well!

For those driving up the picturesque Nilgiri range to Ooty, eating crunchy and juicy 'Ooty Carrots' on the way is a must.



LEAF builds trust with farmers

Convincing the farmers of the benefit of this mechanism was the first milestone. Now, LEAF works with over 1,500 farmers, mostly those with one or two acres.

LEAF FACTS

160

Total Employees with LEAF

1500

Farmers currently engaged with LEAF

WHAT LEAF DOES...

Touches 250 modern retail stores daily across Bengaluru, Mysuru, Coimbatore, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kerala.

Next plan is to tap neighbourhood shops and standalone retailers and kirana shops. They get high quality, graded and cleaned vegetables.



LEAF P Vijayaraghavan is keen to improve the lot of farmers. LEAF collects harvested vegetables from farmers, cleans and grades them, transports them to retail stores.

How LEAF helps farmers

We talk to a farmer at a farming village in Ooty. He tells us how LEAF has made a difference in a farmer's life in the Nilgris. He tells us LEAF's Agri Support Team is always there to help him and other farmers. Most of them are small vegetable farmers from Badaga tribe in the Nilgris.

Q. How has selling to LEAF benefitted you?

It's made life easier for us. We get assured payments from LEAF immediately. There are times when we get better rates from LEAF when market rates are way less.

Q. What difference did you see before and after LEAF?

Besides buying from us immediately, LEAF's Agri-Support Team helps in every front-from soil testing to crop health, pest control and other technical concerns.

Q. Do you also receive farm related consulting, advice from LEAF?

Yes. Agri team is always present at selling time just like a doctor to save our crops.

Q. Do you focus more on farming now as LEAF is helping you in marketing?

True. We don't need to run around for enquiring in the open market anymore. We know we can get better price in Ooty itself. We also save on transport and labour for lifting our produce to the plains. Many times we lose our produce for dirt rates. Merchants also don't weigh properly and we lose. With LEAF, we see the real weight of our produce on big computer screen and get billed right immediately.

Q. Has your cost come down now?

Definitely. Money saved on transport and labour to lift the produce to the plains has, in fact, reduced our overall cost. This, in turn, has resulted in better than market price now. Also, we receive our payment on the spot. Merchants delay payments and some don't pay at all despite repeated follow up.

Q. What new varieties of vegetables do you intend to grow now?

Carrots, beetroot, potato, and some English vegetables too.

Q. Do you plan to grow better graded produce now?

Yes; we've started to use better seeds and follow advice from LEAF's Agri-Team. Good quality attracts better price. So we hope to improve quality of our produce.

Q. Any plan to increase your output?

It requires capital and labour investment. Labour cost increases every season. We plant together as a community and there's a limitation in arable land.

Q. Tell us more about Ooty vegetables? How superior are they?

Vegetables grow here well because of good climate. Their taste is amazing too. For potato and carrots, there's no comparison for Ooty varieties.



"Stars of the Month"



Shankar Shahare



Babu



Rajneesh Tiwari

LEAF recognizes the contribution made by its employees towards work goals. One of the main factors of 'Stars of the Month' systems that make them unique is the criteria used to work out who is the "best" worker for a given month. Stars of the Month Selection Criteria suggests the two main criteria are "quality of work standards" and "attitude standards".

Stars of the month is usually based on performance, quality, attendance and many other determining factors from previous month(s) based on the associate's role. The "best" worker is then rewarded the following month with the title of "Stars of the Month".

From clockwise top right: Stars of the Month: Mahesh Nambiar, Karamada, DC Operations; Swamynathan, "Best Driver"; Sai Aravind Kunapareddy, Bangalore, DC; Rajneesh Tiwari, Palada Plant; Babu, Carrot Sourcing, Ooty; Shankar Shahare, Hyderabad, DC.



Mahesh Nambiar



Swamynathan

Sai Aravind
Kunapareddy

LEAF Founders speak...

Palat Vijayaraghavan, CEO, Lawrencedale Agroprocessing India Pvt Ltd., an end-to-end fresh vegetables supply company chain company from Nilgris, saw an opportunity to market the region's produce by improving local farming practices through engagement with farming communities. By this, he wanted to boost post-harvest management of crops. This led him to establish LEAF in 2009 together with other professionals: **R Balakrishnan, Co-Founder & Director-Finance, Lawrencedale; K P Nair; L K Narayan, Co-Founders.**

Together, they've created a business that engages directly with farmers and processes and packs fresh vegetables and supplies them to buyers in Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Coimbatore, and Kerala under LEAF brand. LEAF has now ambitious plans to expand its base to rest of India.

R Balakrishnan, Co-Founder & Director-Finance, Lawrencedale, says: "Our products carry our message. Each one of us contributes to a consumer's total experience at the table when he or she opens a packet of LEAF carrots and bites into it.

"Right from the time the carrot comes from the farm to the time it reaches the table of our customer, every one of us has in some way contributed along the way. Honesty in what we do, an everyday betterment in how we do makes for the difference between success and failure," says Balakrishnan.

"Leaf started in a business where there were no precedents, no success stories. The simple vegetables and fruits have given each of us a purpose," adds Bala.

K P Nair, Co-Founder, Lawrencedale, joins: "The core objective of LEAF is to free the farmer from being at the receiving end of the entire chain: after toiling hard, the farmer has to take the produce to mandi-only to sell at whatever price the broker fixes. We felt the farmer was being exploited. So LEAF stepped in. Today farmer is at the epicenter of our business.

"LEAF was conceived when we saw an opportunity to supply farm fresh vegetables in hygienic / graded manner to consumers. We told retailers that we'd take back defective product-something unheard in the vegetables and fruits industry," Nair adds.



Vijay has turned a new leaf for farmers and buyers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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