

"The primary objective of our existence will always remain to be the cutting edge organization in the field of Agri Business in Sri Lanka in terms of technology, human skills development, management and business practices"

JAGATH FERNANDO

Sri Lanka in the spotlight in global agri - business



One hundred percent natural sparkling red strawberry juice!

The icy cold liquid created a sensation at a recent reception attended by a galaxy of captains of industry in Colombo. The guests were connoisseurs of food and beverage. They turned away from the choicest liquor that was on offer as they were lured by the ambrosia that came from the juicy strawberries.

Strawberries of the highest quality have hit the shelves of Sri Lanka in recent years. Transform them into a tart, use them to top a crispy meringue, bottle them in jam, have them fresh with cream.

The list of possibilities with strawberries is endless. A closer look at the package brings a surprising revelation. These strawberries are not imported from far corners of the world. They have been grown in Sri Lanka. Jagro (Pvt) Limited has brought Sri Lanka into the spotlight in the global agri- business arena with strawberries.

Launched in 2003 by versatile businessman Jagath Fernando, Jagro remains a 100% Sri Lankan owned Company today. The Company has registered its trade mark "JAGRO" and its brands "Strawberry Fields" and "Sun Grown" in Sri Lanka and selected overseas markets.

The fruit is graded according to size and shape. Berries are packed to specification in punnets ranging from 125 grms-250 grms. The Company also processes strawberry jam and strawberry dessert topping made from whole fresh strawberries, and these are available in 450 gms. and 300gms jars. Jagro is preparing to launch yet another exciting strawberry product- frozen strawberries.

Jagro Farms are located in the highlands of Sri Lanka. After devoting a great deal of effort to research and development during its early years, Jagro today adopts the world's most modern technology and new strawberry farming techniques to produce rich, sweet and aromatic berries with perfect colour, texture and unforgettable taste –

the premium berries behind the "Jagro" brand.

"Strawberry cultivation is extremely challenging. Every stage in the cycle of strawberry cultivation and marketing needs a great deal of care and attention - like nurturing a baby!" declared Indira Malwatte, Director of Jagro.

Malwatte a former Director of the Export Development Board states that Jagro maintains the highest standards of professionalism and offers a model for Sri Lankan exporters in the agricultural sector.

The main part of production takes place in greenhouse conditions with drip irrigation.

"We are a year-round supplier. However due to weather conditions and depending on the season, output/availability is greater during some months of the year than at others", she explained.

The Company operates its own pack house, cold rooms and reefer trucks completing the cold chain from the field right up to point of export where the produce is transported directly from our pack house to the airport.

To compete successfully in the increasingly demanding and sophisticated market for agro-industrial products and demands for a "differentiated" product, the Company became the first Agricultural entity in Sri Lanka in the food sector to obtain the EurepGAP (GlobalGAP) certification. The Company is also ISO 22000 certified.

"We adhere to highest standards of hygiene in the production process in keeping with international norms. We also invest in the development of our staff and focus heavily on their welfare", explained Malwatte.

Currently Jagro exports to the UK, Europe, Far East, India and the Maldives. Jagro plans to expand its' markets overseas as well as increase the quantum of supplies locally.

The success of Jagro with a product that is not traditional to Sri Lanka, offers rich lessons on the potential for developing niche markets products that can compete in international markets.