

Press Release

PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING OF EDIBLE BAMBOO

SHOOTS IN SRI LANKA

Edible bamboo shoot processing equipment was donated to the Industrial Technology Institute, (ITI) by the International Centre for Bamboo and Rattan (ICBR) funded by Common Fund Commodities (CFC) China and supported International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR). The processing unit was formally opened by Hon. Minister of Science and Technology, Prof. Tissa Vitharana on the 28th of October 2009, in the presence of Prof. Chen Xuhe, CFC International Project coordinator/PEA/ICBR and his team who arrived in Sri Lanka in connection with the ITI/ICBR/INBAR project. This facility provides a state of the art canning and vacuum packing machinery inclusive of several other supporting machines. This processing unit which is housed in the premises of the ITI, will now be available for training of the food industrialists to process bamboo shoots.

Three varieties of edible bamboo was introduced to Sri Lanka two years ago under the same projects. These varieties include, *Dendriocalcamus latiflorus* and *Dendrocalmaus oldhami*, imported from China and *Mucana baciffera* imported from Bangladesh. The ITI works closely with the Department of Agriculture as their co-partner to implement the production of edible bamboo shoots in Sri Lanka. This is the first time that edible bamboo shoots are introduced to the country and currently seven hectares of area is under cultivation. It is found to grow well in the Gampaha and Kalutara districts, that is already under cultivation by the SMEs. Dr. Jaanaki Gooneratne, Head of the Food Technology Section of the

Industrial Technology Institute is the Project Leader for Sri Lanka in this collaborative project between CFC/ ICBR and ITI.

The equipment and other facilities can also be used for processing of other foods like fruits and vegetables during the other off seasons and this facility will be available to SMEs. The products will have a good export potential and will contribute largely to the country economy.

ITI also conducted a stakeholders meeting to coincide with the visit of the Chinese delegation. ITI invites small and large industries to invest in the production and processing of edible bamboos, that is financially very profitable. ITI also will link with the local on-going programme on cultivation of other bamboo conducted by the Mahaweli Authority to improve and popularize production of bamboo among the rural sector.



