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## CSIR-CFTRI allot space to kick-off Karnataka govt's nutraceutical park

Nandita Vijay, Bengaluru

CSIR-CFTRI has now allocated 8,000 sq. feet to set up the pilot plant for the Karnataka government's Nutraceutical Park. The research institute has already identified 3,000 sq. feet of temporary space to kick start activities of the Park with the setting up of a pilot production unit.

This facility now allows small nutraceutical companies to isolate phyto chemicals from plants. This could replace those phytochemicals sourced from shark liver. The Vitamin D & E pilot unit at our premises is now in the process of working on this, Prof. Ram Rajashekar, director, CFTRI, informs FnB News.

The Institute's Lipidomics Centre in its Bengaluru campus at Allasandra, was established to comprehend lipid or fat metabolism. Studies related to Ocimum or Tulsi and Portulaca or Doddagoni whose seeds are said to contain oils rich in healthy omega-3 fatty acids are underway.

The researchers have already documented a set of all RNA molecules of products rich omega-3 fatty acid genes which is largely found in fish. The intent is to discover a vegetarian source of the same. The Institute has already spotted 'Chia' which is a Mexican plant grown abundantly in the wild in India having high sources of omega-3 fatty acid.

The state government has now given us Rs. 5 crore an annual grant. The pilot facility has a common manufacturing unit with specialised equipment, smart packing, kitchen machines. The facility is a micro scale production unit for the small industry to test its manufacturing process before it identifies a company for technology transfer to enable large scale production, he added.

The pilot plant will be platform for marketing trials of products. Samples of the product can be manufactured for sampling to experiments success on taste and acceptance, said Prof. Rajashekar. The facility will essentially be seen as a incubation center for entrepreneurs who come up with novel ideas about the food products to increase the efficacy. It will have a provision to test develop and marketing. Farmers also will be benefitted with researches related to isolation of some active components in the products to ensure more profit, he said.

In 2013, the state government had inked a pact with CFTRI to establish the Nutraceutical Park in phases. The government was expected to chip in Rs 38.5 crore for the project, while CFTRI had set aside Rs 5 crore for setting up analytical and the essential high-end facilities.

The Park was being established at an estimated cost of Rs 42.5 crore in the first phase on 2.5 acre of land belonging to the institute at M G Halli near Kalidasa Road. But now CFTRI began to set aside 8,000 sq. feet. It has now offered the industry an area of 3,000 sq. ft to begin the activities related to the Nutraceutical Park.

In the coming years, the Nutraceutical Park will be the country's India's first academia linked research park, with complete attention given to only nutraceuticals. The industry can take up research and development activities either on a collaborative or standalone basis. In addition, the Park is largely viewed as an incubation centre for entrepreneurs, who can evolve novel concepts in nutrition.