

CASHEW NUT PRODUCTS

The cashew industry is a vital agro-based industry in Kerala which provides employment for thousands of workers, especially women. The cashew processing industry is concentrated in Kollam district, which is one of the regions in India where cashew processing started in the early 20th century. Considering the importance of the District in the cashew industry, Central/ State Government agencies for promoting cashew sector have located their offices in the district. Even though cashew processing is concentrated in Kollam, cashew cultivation in the state is mainly in Kannur and Kasaragod districts.

Kerala's contribution to Indian cashew industry is remarkable in the processing and exporting sectors. There are about 800 registered cashew nut processing units in Kerala employing 3 lakhs workers, of which 95% are women. Kerala stands 6th position in area of cultivation with 1.07 lakh Hectare (2021-2022) and 5th position in production among other states in India

A quantity of 6 lakh MT Raw Cashew Nut is required for the smooth functioning of cashew industry in Kerala. But our current domestic production is only 21000 MT during 2021-2022. This huge gap is now filled by the imports mainly from South Africa and Vietnam.

Kerala cashew kernels are mainly exported to the US, the EU, Japan and the Middle East, which account for more than 80% of the total exports.

Kerala needs to give more importance to the production of value-added products which can fetch higher prices and cater to different consumer preferences.