



Businessmen and farmers from India are showing interest in Negev's advanced agriculture

The salary of agricultural worker in Israel is 20 times higher than the salary of agricultural worker in India ** Indian farmers have learned that irrigation with brackish water produces sweet tomatoes ** 18% of national GDP in India comes from agriculture in which 38% of workforce in the country is employed ** Indian agriculture is ineffective and it seeks to learn from the experience and knowledge available in Israel ** Advanced negotiations regarding a trade agreement between Israel and India raise hopes for strengthening of cooperation between Israeli agricultural companies and growers and their counterparts from India.

A delegation of businessmen and farmers from India held a professional tour in the Negev in order to learn from the advanced Israeli agriculture. The delegation members are seeking partnerships with Israeli farmers and companies on order to improve the agriculture and the level of crops in their farms. The delegation members came from three countries: Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra. It was headed by Mr. Michael Nagare, representative of AgriQuality – a company that specializes in agricultural business consulting in Israel and abroad. AgriQuality's offices are located in the Omer Industrial Park, Israel.

Among others the delegation members have visited orchards, vegetable farms, wastewater treatment facility in Kibbutz Sde Boker, R&D plant in Ramat Negev, Katif laboratories in Sdot Negev regional council and advanced nursery in Sharsheret settlement.

The Indian delegation members were surprised when they heard about the labor cost of agricultural worker in Israel and estimated that the cost of their wages is about 5% of the wages in Israel. On the other hand, they could not believe the high yield per hectare data as presented to them by the Israeli growers, which characterizes the Israeli agriculture.

Another issue that drew the attention of the Indian delegation members was the Israeli water economy and various solutions used in Israel to increase the supply of irrigation water to farmers. Some of the participants are coming from areas with saline soil and water and facing with problems similar to those of farmers in the Negev. Participants tasted different varieties of tomatoes and learned that the sugar percent in tomatoes increases when they are irrigated with brackish water.

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Pictures

- Annan Sion, tomato grower from Kadesh Barnea settlement, guides the Indian delegation and demonstrates growing quality tomatoes for export in modern greenhouse, irrigated with brackish water.



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- A workshop in the Katif Center laboratories, Sdot Negev



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- Wastewater treatment facility in Sde Boker with Gilad Shavit

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