

Pork processing and marketing

A sunrise enterprise in Nagaland

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Nagaland is a North Eastern state of India with over 71% of its population dependent on agriculture and its allied sector. Its cultures and traditions are all symbolic to agriculture and livestock. In Nagaland, lowland rice cultivation is being followed in plain areas, whereas, Jhum farming is practiced in mid and high hill areas. Livestock sector contributes around 18% of the state gross domestic product of Nagaland. One or more species of livestock is kept by 71.14% in all Naga household. Pig rearing is being practiced by the tribal farmers since time immemorial and it is symbolic to the health and wealth of a Naga family. Pig accounts for 72% of total livestock in the state. Backyard pig rearing is characterized by zero or low levels of inputs and consequently low levels of production. Pig farming plays a pivotal role in supplementing family income and generating employment to the rural poor apart from efficient utilization of agricultural products and byproducts. Naga are known to consume highest pork in India. No meal is complete without pork in Nagaland.

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IN Nagaland the primary food item is pork, as more than 90% of the people are non-vegetarian. Naga mostly prefer fresh pork due to the taste or they preserved the pork in form of smoked meat. Each tribe has its own uniqueness for slaughtering of pig, making different cut and cooking with locally available herbs. No meat supplements Naga culinary recipe better than pork. However, pork production in the state follows an unorganized traditional production system. There are unregulated pork markets, scarce slaughterhouses, which lacks hygienic measures. Most pork sellers have no permanent structures and pork is slaughtered from time to time in open space. Hence, infestation by flies is a usual factor normally observed in these pork selling areas.

However, recently some perceptible changes are taking place in pork processing segment. With increasing income and urbanization, the demand for processed pork is increasing. In earlier times, Naga women prepared food in the Naga kitchen in the indigenous way. But now with changing times more women have occupations other than

household services, so the demand of processed pork have increased manifold. Moreover, there is high demand of processed pork of North East India in the high end restaurants in metro cities.

Pork processing results in only little amounts of waste because even low value by-products such as hoofs, fat, blood, tail, tongue, skin etc. are consumed by or utilized for utmost benefit like feeding to dogs, making pork rinds etc. In addition, there is increasing demand of fresh pork in the State. So to make it available round the year, pork processing is a good option. Processed pork is considered to be hygienic and safe by customers. Recently, an extensive range of pork products such as pork sausages, kabab, bacon, ham, salami, meat pickles etc. are



Fig. 1. Marvel: Mrs Vikani Chishi, her husband, and co-worker



Fig. 2. Processed pork in different packaging

entering into the market. So meat processing and value addition are key to the success of the pork industry.

Currently, processed pork is produced only in a very few organized unit in the State because Nagas prefer fresh pork. Few number of processing units that are functioning in the State procure its raw materials from other states because of unavailability of raw materials in the State, high market price of raw materials, and unavailability of desired pork parts. Besides, there is lack of institutional and infrastructure support. There is urgent need to support this emerging enterprise by giving government support. The entire pork production system has to be strengthened. There is urgent need to integrate the complete pork value chain. There is a dire need to modernize the meat production especially in order to meet the demand of the people as well as meet the demand of the emerging enterprises. Also there is need to spread awareness among the people regarding the scope of pork processing industry.

There is a good scope for pork processing in Nagaland with regard to the consumption patterns and change in dietary habits of the people. Although, pork processing industry is still at infancy stage in the state. Some pork processing units like Metro Meat Processing Unit, Sen Sen Products, Marvel Meat, and T.J. Foods etc. are some of the names that have entered the market in the state on a small scale. With gaining popularity of their products in the State, there is scope for expanding

exports to other States.

Future Prospects

- There is high growth rate in processed food industry. With increase in income and urbanization, this sector will grow at high rate.
- Most of the pork processing units are started by entrepreneur at their own household so space required for setting up pork processing unit is relatively smaller compared to other units.
- There is scope of employment generation for the educated young people.
- This will create demand for quality pigs which in turn help in improving the pig production system.
- Pork meat processing and value addition is the key to success of pork industry in the state.

Success Story

Mrs. Vikani Chishi is a 38 year old Graduate in Arts as well as Hospital Management. She and her husband started her company "Marvel" in 2015 (Fig. 1). The company is privately funded and mostly focuses on producing pork sausages infused with local flavours. The company was started entirely as a hobby and functions as a part time business as they are both working in the Health Care sector in Family Health Unit. The company was registered with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in 2019. Initially, she invested around seven lakh rupees. Raw materials are sourced from Khatkati Pork Bazaar, Assam where she

procures 40-50 Kilograms of pork bought at a price of ₹ 220 rupees per Kilo. The unit has coolers, deep freezers, processing machines, meat mincers, and sausage fillers that functions to make its products available in the market. The products are packed using vacuum packaging and the packaging materials are procured from Delhi. She mentions proper safety standards that are being followed like necessary aprons for all the workers, hand washes, gloves, disposable caps, washing the meat properly after purchase. The unit has capacity to produce 60 to 100 kilograms pork products. The products follow 100% original Nagaland ethnic recipe. The products are priced at ₹ 900 for 1 kg packets, ₹ 450 for 450 grams packet and ₹ 250 for 200 grams pouch (Fig. 2). The waste generated mostly consists of bones and skin, where the bones are normally fed to dogs and the skins are bought by people making it into pork rinds. She is supplying her products to Dimapur district. According to her, the demand of processed product is growing day by day more particularly in city and profit margin is around 30%. However, there are host of challenges like lack of trained manpower, absence of credit facility, fluctuation in supply of raw material etc. Her message for young entrepreneurs is "be genuine in your endeavour; food business is not easy so work sincerely and do not work on profit but patience."

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