

Bananas take the sea route to Gulf

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tiruchy

TO increase export of bananas to Gulf countries, the Banana Research Institute, Tiruchy, along with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, would be exporting Nendran and Nei Poovan varieties of the fruit through Kochi port.

ICAR-National Research Centre for Bananas was established in Tiruchy to increase production of banana and plantains.

S Uma, director, ICAR-NRC Banana, said, "The project intends to develop a sea protocol for the export of Nendrans initially, followed by Ney Poovan in the later

part. The successful venture of Nendran export through sea would provide a great impetus for the export of the varieties to Gulf countries, the UK and other European countries."

Farmers across the region who were exporting the fruit through the air route would now be able to send it by sea, said the director.

The issue of huge investment for exporting via air route, in which the capacity is also less, would all be addressed when exporting through sea route.

ICAR-NRCB scientists R Thangavelu, V Kumar, K N Shiva and P Suresh Kumar were part of this consultancy project. ICAR-NRC Banana, Tiruchy, and APE-

DA have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the export of Nendrans to Dubai in partnership with Fair Exports India Ltd., Kochi, through sea port. Exporters like Aroma Banana, Ezhilan, Madhur Banana and Dharmaraj source the fruit from farmers across the State.

Farmers from Valliyur and Mettupalayam would be the first beneficiaries who would be sending their produce to their client Lulu in Dubai.

The officials said the first consignment was expected to be taken in July with a load of at least 10-20 tonnes and the scientists would be there to monitor the quality of the products.