

Sri Lanka needs to start producing *bran oil* out of paddy seed - Indian expert



Dr. B.V. Mehta and Prof. Nugawela



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Sri Lanka should seriously consider producing bran oil from paddy seed/husk shells as done by India said Dr. B. V. Mehta who is connected to the Indian Vegetable Oil Industry for four decades.

Having an in-depth knowledge of the Indian oil-seed sector and vegetable oil industry he said that it was unfortunate to see that Sri Lanka is virtually throwing this substance away without putting it to productive use. He opined this yesterday at a

workshop on advantages of using vegetable oils that helps towards achieving food and nutrition security and economic growth at Cosmic by Citrus, Lotus Tower, Colombo 10.

The main partner of this event organized by Nucleus Foundation was the Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries and they will host this event in collaboration with the Malaysian High Commission, Indonesian Embassy and this is supported by Solidaridad.

He said that India is using paddy

husks extensively to produce Bran oil and they are ready to follow this technology with Sri Lanka which will bring numerous benefits to the country. He also noted that Sri Lanka's productivity of coconuts is very low.

He said that one reason for low productivity in coconut is having tall trees ranging up to around 40 feet. "We have developed trees that won't grow more than 10 feet tall which are highly productive. Here again the island nation should look at acquiring

hybrid coconut technology from the Indian agro sector.

He also said that Sri Lanka should seriously and quickly look at lifting the ban on oil palm plantation. "In India the government is spending around USD 1.37 billion for promotion of palm oil. In addition India had planned to plant palm oil in 1 million hectares by the end of next year to reduce the palm oil import bill which is over USD 2 billion annually.

Emeritus Prof. Asoka Nugawela of the Plantation management Section of

the Wayamba University said that 90% of food processing companies use palm oil and also more than 60% edible products in super markets are made from palm oil.

Due to this we have a huge demand for palm oil imports which is draining millions of rupees for imports. "As no concrete evidence was found that growing palm oil results in deforestation or Sri Lanka or world over lifting the plan, oil cultivation is a very economically viable option."