

Agmark Certification Scheme

Directorate of Marketing & Inspection (DMI) in the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare is implementing the provisions of Agricultural Produce (Grading & Marking) Act, 1937. The Act empowers the Central Government to make Rules for (a) fixing grade designation to indicate quality of any scheduled article. (b) Defining the quality indicated by every grade designation and (c) specifying grade designation marks to represent particular grade designations. Standards notified as per the provisions of the Act are popularly called AGMARK Standards. These standards differentiate between quality and 2-3 grades are prescribed for each commodity. Grades help farmers to get prices for agricultural commodities as per the quality produced by them and consumers get the desired quality. Till date, grade standards for 222 agricultural commodities have been notified. These include fruits, Vegetables, cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetable oils, ghee, spices, honey, creamery butter, wheat atta, besan, etc.

Grade standards are framed in a scientific manner. Samples of agricultural commodities are drawn from all parts of the country - from the producing area, wholesale markets, etc. and are analysed in Regional Agmark Laboratories spread all over the country for the identified parameters. Draft standards are framed based on the analytical data obtained. While framing the standards, the existing standards in The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, Codex Alimentarius Commission, International Organisation for Standardization, etc. are considered. Trade Associations, Research Institutions, etc. are also consulted.

The DMI is implementing the scheme of certification of agricultural commodities for domestic trade and export. The Scheme is **voluntary**. For Blended Edible Vegetable Oils and Fat Spread certification under AGMARK is mandatory as per provisions in The Food Safety and Standards Act and regulations, 2006. The commodities certified under Agmark for domestic trade are spices, ghee, butter, mustard oil, wheat atta, Besan, honey, etc.

European Commission has approved the procedure of preshipment inspection under Agmark for exports of fruits and vegetables to EU countries.

Directorate General of Foreign Trade has notified DMI as inspection and certification body for exports of fruits and vegetables to EU countries. DMI is attending to inspection and certification of fruits and vegetables including grapes and onions. The inspection and certification is carried out as per the grade standards notified in the Fruits and Vegetables Grading & Marking Rules, 2004.

The certification scheme is implemented through 11 Regional Offices, 27 Sub Offices, 11 Regional Agmark Laboratories and Central Agmark Laboratory (Apex laboratory) of the Directorate. Out of twelve laboratories , 08 laboratories at Nagpur , Mumbai, Chennai ,Kochi ,Kolkata , Delhi, Jaipur and Kanpur have been accredited with the National Accreditation Board for testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) as per the International Standard ISO 17025.

Persons desirous of grading and certifying a notified agricultural commodity under Agmark can apply to the nearest field office of the DMI. The application form and list of required documents can be obtained from the nearest field office or from the DMI website <http://dmi.gov.in> by clicking the icon 'Agmark'. Persons desirous of grading and certifying a notified commodity under Agmark should have necessary infrastructure to process the commodity and have access to an approved laboratory for grading or can have their own laboratory. Such persons can apply to the concerned office of the DMI and Certificate of Authorization is granted after verification of the necessary infrastructure. The approved Chemist tests the raw material and the processed commodity before getting it packed in a suitable packing material/containers. The field officers of DMI keep regular check on the commodity graded and certified under Agmark by drawing check samples from packers' premises and market. These check samples are analyzed in Regional Agmark Laboratories and action deemed fit is taken if the graded commodity is found not conforming to the prescribed standards

Consumers may look for the following Agmark symbol and grade on the container to ascertain whether a commodity is certified under Agmark or not.



NAME OF COMMODITY-
GRADE.....

Consumers not satisfied with the quality of agricultural produce certified under Agmark, can make a complaint to the Agricultural Marketing Adviser giving full particulars regarding Agmark label/replica serial number, lot no., date of packing, best before date, trade brand, name and address of the authorized packer and the name and address of the seller. Whenever the complaint is found to be genuine, action as deemed fit will be taken against the concerned authorized packer as per provision in APGM Act-1937 and he will be is directed to give free of cost replacement to the aggrieved consumer.

Any person can also get the Agmark certified agricultural commodity analysed for its quality parameters in Regional Agmark Laboratories by paying analysis charges. Details of agricultural commodities which can be got analysed, analysis charges, etc. can be obtained from any of the Sub Offices/Regional Offices of DMI.