

KARNATAKA

Solar-powered vegetable vending vans come in handy during lockdown



B.S. Satish Kumar

BENGALURU, APRIL 06, 2020 17:08 IST

UPDATED: APRIL 06, 2020 17:17 IST

The hi-tech vans designed by IIHR keep vegetables fresh for two days with the help of evaporating cooling technology

At a time when people are living under lockdown in the wake of COVID-19 threat, a solar-powered vegetable and fruit vending van designed by the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) has come in handy for them to buy fresh vegetables near their houses in a few districts where such vans are deployed by the Horticulture Department.

The van is designed to keep vegetables and fruits not only dust-free and hygienic, but also fresh for two days with the evaporating cooling technology, says G. Senthil Kumaran, Principal Scientist at the IIHR's Post Harvest Technology and Agricultural Engineering Division, who designed the van in 2017-18.

Many facilities

The van has facility to keep trays for storing vegetables, leafy vegetables and fruits with a cooling chamber. In the backside, it has a LED TV for displaying the prices of produce. The TV can also be used for disseminating social messages and crucial information to farmers on horticulture, points out Dr. Kumaran. An audio system too has been fitted to provide for announcements. An electronic weighing machine with computerised billing facility too has been provided.

"Except for running the vehicle, all other systems on the vehicle such as its cooling chamber, TV and audio announcement system are operated by solar power. It also has a battery that can be charged for emergency usage. It is also GPS-enabled so that its whereabouts can be tracked," the scientist said. So far, the IIHR has developed 20 such vans for operating in 10 districts.

IIHR Director M.R. Dinesh says that the vehicle is ideal for maintaining hygiene of vegetable produce. "We have given one of our vans to HOPCOMS to deliver services to the people of Bengaluru a few days ago."

The Karnataka Horticultural Federation (KHF) Director Kokare Bhimsen says the van was designed after KHF approached the IIHR for a concept. "The idea is to link farmers and consumers directly through sales units. Presently, it is costing ₹ 11 to ₹12 lakh for putting all these features including the cost of van. But the cost is bound to reduce when mass produced," he says.

Two such vans were pressed into service in Vijayapura about 10 days ago. Santhosh Inamdar, Deputy Director of Horticulture for Vijayapura, says the new system evoked good response with all the produce being bought up within a few hours on the first day itself. “We had to fill up each van twice with vegetables in a day following huge demand,” he says, while pointing out that each van registered a business turnover of ₹14,000 on the first day itself. Two such vans that are operating in Koppal in the last few days have got good response too with each reporting a daily business of about ₹18,000.

Haryana, Kerala too buy

The solar-powered vegetable vans have caught the attention of other States too with Haryana government buying three such vans while Kerala has bought one. Haryana has also announced a subsidy on those from its State buying such vans, according to Dr. Senthil Kumaran.

Why you should pay for quality journalism - [Click to know more](#)

Printable version | Apr 6, 2020 9:19:51 PM |

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/solar-powered-vegetable-vending-vans-come-in-handy-during-lockdown/article31270932.ece>

