# Matco Foods Limited pushing boundaries for diversification and value addition in food exports

By Faizan Ali Ghori

MATCO Foods Limited (Matco) is a leading company in the global agri-business industry and is known for exporting a wide range of high-quality products. This was a special year for us as we celebrated our 60 years in the field and 25 years of our brand "Falak" which is now an established household name. Over the years, Matco has emerged as one of the largest exporters from Pakistan for basmati rice, rice glucose, rice derivatives, corn starches, pink salt and other products to over 70 countries across the globe.

Matco's flagship brand, "Falak" is now available in more than 50 countries, underscoring the company's dedication to excellence. This extensive market presence reflects Matco's robust global reach and adaptability in meeting varied consumer preferences.

**Matco's path towards value added exports**

The key to Matco's success in "exports to the world" lies in its belief to focus on the customers' needs, innovation and agility to bring quality products to the market, and to continuously invest in our staff — the biggest asset of the company. The company offers an array of products, including basmati rice, known for its unique aroma and long grains, and organic rice, which includes basmati rice, long grain rice, and broken rice, aligning with the growing demand for organic food products. We also provide rice syrups, rice proteins, rice maltodextrins, and rice dextrose monohydrate; high-quality products tailored for both food and feed applications. Our corn starch products – produced in our state-of-the-art facility in Faisalabad – are provided to the customers in the food, textile, paper and corrugation, and also to the animal nutrition industry. Under the Falak brand, we provide quality consumer products such as pink salt, spices and herbs, gluten-free flours, pastes, recipe mixes, and dessert mixes.




For many years, Matco has consciously made an effort to expend its exports geographically to 70 countries around the world and also diversify its products to more value added products from its traditional roots of basmati rice exports.

**Pakistan's potential for diversified and value-added food exports**

In recent years, Pakistani exporters have done a tremendous effort to augment Pakistan's food exports from the traditional sectors of rice, fruits and vegetables, fisheries and meat to add additional export revenue streams from corn exports and sesame seed exports.

However, focused effort is required to enhance the "value added" export potential and move higher up in the value chain from basic food commodity exports. For instance, Pakistan, this year, is likely to achieve export of almost 1.5 million tons of corn at an average price ranging from US $200-220 per metric ton (MT) without any value addition. Even low hanging fruit in the value chain such as making steam flaked corn (SFC), a product that is in high demand for dairy and meat sector of the middle east, or making more corn grits for snacking industry would definitely add greater export revenue for the country. Corn based derivatives such as citric acid, lysine, and ethanol are also an area to explore for the country's exporters — they not only offer import substitution but also high export potential.

Similar potential exists for potato as a crop. As we cross 8 million tons of total crop size for this crop, the crop surplus exceeds the country's demand for household consumption and the snacking industry. Potato derivatives potentially produced in Pakistan such as flakes, dehydrated powder, and potato starches could have the potential to be globally competitive.

Sesame seed exports from Pakistan are also predicted to cross US $300 million with over 150,000 MT of exports. Potential exists to offer higher value added sesame seed oil to the export markets of China and Japan which are currently buying whole sesame seed only.

Finally, as though leaders in Pakistan continue to highlight concerns about water security for the country, it is likely that regional, provincial and national mandates for water usage for grain and animal husbandry will emerge similar to the Australia model. The value for food export crops will not be looked in isolation but as a part of cubic meter of water consumed. New export champions may emerge, such as olives and olive oil which have had good success in the arid regions of Punjab, Balochistan and KPK, and many other horticultural products. Exporters of food products from Pakistan need to keep an eye out on this potential development. ■

> Over the years, Matco has consciously made an effort to diversify its exports geographically to 70 countries around the world. The target is to add more value added products to the overall corporate portfolio.

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## Asia is a potential trading market for Pakistan