## Stakeholders stress on need for quality to export vegetables

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Stakeholders have urged farmers to produce vegetables as per the requirements of the country importing the produce to boost exports.

Speaking at a national workshop on 'Export Potential of Vegetables', they said that vegetables have a high demand in India, Bangladesh and the Middle East countries and Nepal could export a huge volume of vegetables if the country is able to meet the requirements of importing nations.

"A huge volume of vegetables from Nepal goes to the Indian market every day through the informal channel, which shows that there is a high demand for Nepali vegetables in the southern neighbour. We noticed that up to 3,800 kilogram of vegetables is supplied to the Indian market daily from Kakarbhitta border alone," said NeeluThapa, programme coordinator at South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE).

Informing that consumption of vegetables in India has almost doubled to around \$4,022 million in 2015-16 from \$1,970 million in 2011-12, Thapa said that Nepali vegetables have high export potential in the Indian market. Similarly, she also informed that Bangladesh could be another market for Nepali vegetables as the country has been importing vegetables worth \$535 million from European countries every year.

According to former commerce secretary PurshottamOjha, though vegetable production in Nepal is increasing, the country is lagging behind in vegetable export as Nepali products fail to meet the quality standards set by importing countries in terms of use of chemical fertilizers, among other issues. "Thus, if we are to export vegetables to India, Bangladesh and other Middle East countries, we should produce vegetables meeting their standards," he said during the workshop organised by SAWTEE.

Ojha also informed that India has placed different procedural hassles on the import of food items from Nepal because of which farmers are not being able to effectively export and brand Nepali vegetables in the Indian market.

Speaking on the occasion, PradipMaharjan, chief executive officer of Agro Enterprise Centre of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), said that private sector has been facing problems in exports due to various non-tariff barriers that need to be addressed to boost export of agricultural produce from Nepal.