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Respected Sir,

The Ministry of Home Affairs vide Order no.40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 15th April, 2020 has issued detail guidelines for containment of Covid -19 during extended period of lockdown till 3rd May, 2020. However, to mitigate hardship to the public, select additional activities will be allowed w.e.f 20th April, 2020 subject to strict compliance to the existing guidelines to lock down measures. Exemption is inter-alia, granted to Agricultural, Horticulture, Aquaculture, Animal Husbandry related activities. Details of exempted activities for Fisheries and plantation sectors is quoted below along with approved manpower for carrying out such activities:-

a) Fisheries – The following activities will be functional

- i) Operation of the fishing (marine and inland)/ aquaculture industry including feeding and maintenance, harvesting, processing, packaging, cold chain, sale & marketing
- ii) Hatcheries, feed plant, commercial aquaria
- iii) Movement of fish/shrimp and fish products, fish seed/feed and workers for all these activities

b) Plantation –The following activities will be functional

- i) Operation of tea, coffee, and rubber plantation with maximum of 50% workers.
- ii) Processing, packaging, sale and marketing of tea, coffee, rubber and cashew, with maximum of 50% workers.

The Ministry of Home Affairs vide Order dated 16th April, 2020 has further exempted some additional products in the consolidated guidelines. These items include Minor forest produce and non timber forest produce under Agricultural & Horticulture activities and Bamboo, coconut, Arecanut, Cocoa, spices under plantation sector.

Meat is an essential commodity and is exempted during lock down period. The Govt. has also given priority to resume manufacturing for exports so that we do not lose our export markets permanently. In agro sector, India is a large exporter of buffalo and sheep meat but the shipments have come to a standstill because of lock down. India's export of meat to the world is valued at around USD 4.0 billion. The Govt. is keen to restart export of agro commodities which will boost farmer's income during these troubled times.

A similar exemption may kindly be considered by the Govt. for Animal Husbandry sector comprising the meat processing industries to meet domestic as well as export demand. Almost every Indian farmer has livestock and he need to sell them routinely to supplement his income. Grant of exemption to livestock meat production industry is essential in the larger interest of the rural farmers, domestic consumers, exports and employment.

All meat processing units essentially have cold storages and refrigerated warehouses which are already exempted under clause 14 (vii) of Ministry of Home Affairs Order dated 15.04.2020. These cold storages and refrigerated warehouses are required to be operated on a continuous basis 24 x 7. Though some of the District Administration has given permission to operate these facilities but the strength of workers permitted is so meagre (15 workers in a factory against the regular worker strength of 3000) that it has become difficult to run the operations. Moreover, such permission is restricted for few days only with several conditions.

The meat processing plants are following strictest standards for food safety and hygiene and these plants are registered with APEDA, Ministry of Commerce & Industries. In addition, the plants are monitored regularly by the FSSAI and the Veterinary Department of concerned State Govt.

The Government may therefore, consider to include operation of Animal Husbandry sector comprising meat processing industries in the exemption list under MHA Order dated 15.04.2020. A suggested draft Addendum is placed below:

Subject: ----- Addendum to the consolidated guidelines annexed to the Ministry of Home Affairs Order no. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 15.04.2020

(.) Operation of the Animal Husbandry sector comprising the meat processing industry, based on sheep, goat, buffalo and poultry livestock, including the transportation from farms and markets leading to processing, packaging, cold chain, sale & marketing by APEDA registered abattoirs, meat processing factories, rendering plants, ETPs and workers for all these activities.

The Government may therefore, consider to issue the addendum as mentioned above for exempting the operation of Animal Husbandry sector comprising the meat processing industry during the lock down period.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
Khalid Ansari
ED-IMPAR