

## **Welcome address by Srivatsava Ganapathy, Sesameinformation.com**

Good afternoon to all delegates from India and Middle East, a very good morning to delegates from Africa, Europe and the Americas and a good evening to all delegates from Asia Pacific region.

Ladies and gentlemen, a warm welcome to all of you to the virtual edition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Sesame Convention 2020. Hope all of you and your families are safe and in good health. This edition is presented to you by sesameinformation.com with the support of industry associations from across the sesame value chain. My name is Srivatsava Ganapathy, vatsa and I would be your host over the next two days.

I take this opportunity to remember and place on record our sincere condolences to Mr. Hakan Bahceci, the founder and CEO of Hakan Agro DMCC, who left us at a young age on May 26, 2020. Mr. Hakan Bahceci was instrumental in shaping this platform and delivered the keynote at the inaugural edition in 2019. May his soul rest in peace.

The year 2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges. Covid is the main reason. It exposed the vulnerabilities of a long and fragile supply chain such as sesame supply chain. There were also other challenges such as floods, political instability, financing, port access, demand destruction and so on. The industry has faced most of these challenges bravely and is evolving workable solutions within the given constraints. I congratulate each and everyone of you for your efforts in finding solutions.

I do believe that a couple of years from now, we would remember 2020 as the year of disruptions and innovation. Change is palpable all around us- some miniscule and insignificant, while some are really systemic and structural. Likewise, receptivity of people to changes has increased. Every rule of the pre-covid era is being challenged and transformed. I am very confident that sum of all these changes would be hugely beneficial and positive for the sesame industry in the years to come, far outweighing the pains that we all endured during the last 11 months.

The programme agenda outlined for today and tomorrow, is similar to the physical conference format. Today, we would focus on global sesame crop scenario, individual country sesame crop situation and supplychain challenges and ways to overcoming these challenges. Tomorrow, December 10, we would focus on whats going on in key sesame consumption markets and discuss new

developments in technology and value-addition in sesame industry. We have 29 experts and market practitioners who would provide their perspective on the chosen subject. It would be fascinating to listen to them. Equally, thanks to technology and virtual format, it would be exciting to engage in a purposeful discussion with them. I encourage all of you to use the Q/A option to post-your questions. We will try and address them as much as possible within the constraints of time.

Outside of the conference sessions, we have virtual display booths of 22 sponsors. Other than picking up their e-brochures, you can engage in a chat with them or meet them in a private video call, which is completely confidential. You can book a meeting schedule with any of them in advance and make the most of your time. Should you face any issues with technology, please contact 'registration' desk. Our virtual support team would help you.

We had amidst us, over 610 delegates from 61 countries. We welcome each one of you and hope that you would have a very good time over the next two days. The virtual edition would not be possible without the support from 22 sponsors, five supporting bodies, a strategic partner and a media partner. I deeply appreciate their gesture and express my sincere gratitude.

With these words, I welcome you all to the virtual 2<sup>nd</sup> World Sesame Convention 2020. Thank you all and best wishes.