

## **Special Report from D. Fischer Medien & Verlag Berlin**

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### **ANUGA 2017, Host Country India: The largest democracy in the world with 1.3 billion citizens is transforming its food industry. Innovation highlights with a strong political message to Europe.**

The largest food trade fair in the world, which takes place every two years in Cologne, ended with a new record, not only because of the over 165,000 visitors and 7,400 exhibitors (of which 90% came from outside Germany), but also because of the innovations and political vision.

The highlight was the partner country India, one of the world's largest producers and consumers of food, which was represented by the Minister for Food Production Harsimrat Kaur Badal, a truly charismatic personality. Not only through her appearance, but also through her speech during of the official opening of ANUGA led by the Mayor of Cologne, Henriette Reker, along with the North Rhine-Westphalian Minister of Environment, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection, Christina Schulze-Föcking. All three ladies had strong political messages as they appealed to the decision makers in the food industry to consider their social and sociopolitical responsibility for the environment, the education of the youth, and the health of the citizens through better food.

The strongest message came from Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal. She reminded the representatives of the food industry, politics, and media not only that India is largest democracy in the world with 1.3 billion citizens—more than double the population of Europe—and one of the largest producers of food, but also one of the largest markets and consumers of food.

It is the duty of every country in the world to put a halt to the waste of the approximately 40% of food produced.

"If we ended this waste, we would end world hunger and not let 1 million children die day after day," the Minister stated, followed by the applause and standing ovation of the entire auditorium.

At a personal interview on the India Pavilion with altogether 111 vendors from every Indian province, the Minister expounded on how direly India suffers from climate change due to storms, floods, and drought, which often arise at the same time. Associated with high CO2 emissions during

production and removal, food waste is therefore not only a social and economic problem, but also an enormous burden on the environment. Thus we come to the population growth of circa 1.2% and a much younger target group with an average age of about 27 and with an annual gross national product of approximately 7%.

To my question regarding the meaning of ecological agriculture in India and the danger of dependence on agriculture companies which promote the reliance on seeds and pesticides, which has resulted in crop failures and consequently thousands of suicides by farmers, the Minister confirmed that the correct solution is to promote ecological agriculture.

What is more, this has to do with a master plan to reform and transform Indian food production and to promote innovations and modern technology through the establishment of technological food clusters. "Over 60 clusters have been planned, and 42 have already been established. Furthermore, we are promoting this through international congresses such as the World Food India Conference ([www.worldfoodindia.in](http://www.worldfoodindia.in)), which takes place from 3 until 5 November 2017 in New Delhi. The clusters and congresses should build synergy and technological exchange between the agriculture field, production, and trade.

"Europe's food and agriculture industry is invited to take part in the transformation process. There is financial and organizational support made available through the government," continued the Minister.

Concerning my question whether the caste system, with its "untouchables" and other cultural peculiarities, could hinder otherwise clearly positive developments, the Minister answered that the caste system was forbidden by law, there have been rather successful entrepreneurs from the lower castes, and India has rapidly moved beyond this historical system.

A further innovation presented at ANUGA by [www.ifoam.bio](http://www.ifoam.bio) and its CEO Markus Arbenz was the new Food Standard EcoWellness.

Markus Arbenz: "Since India is the partner country of ANUGA 2017 and we have our IFOAM World Congress from 9 until 11 November this year in New Delhi, shortly following the India World Food Forum with thousands of participants and fulfilling the criteria of the EcoWellness Standard, the requirements of our concept, and the model BIO 3.0, it pleases me to be able to present this seal of approval. The connection of the EcoWellness Food Standard to India, to Ayurvedic medicine, and to other Asian medicine schools of thought, as well as the preventative orientation of this Standard and the personalization according to types enables a very innovative transformation. From the field to the physician."

The Consumer Choice Study from GfK Nuremberg presented at ANUGA 2017 corroborated the trend toward personalized, functional food which is more than just "organic."

Or as the outgoing president of the Nestle Corporation Peter Brabeck-Letmathe sums it up:

The refrigerator has become a home pharmacy.