

# CONSORTIUM OF INDIAN FARMERS ASSOCIATIONS (CIFA)

Secretary General  
P. Chengal Reddy



President  
Satnam Singh Behru

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Mr. Aamir Khan  
Flat 5, Marine Apartment  
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Union Park, Pali Hill,  
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Mumbai- 400050

Dear Mr. Aamir Khan

Greetings to you from P. Chengal Reddy, Secretary General, Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations (CIFA).

We are actively involved in advocating policy matters ideal for Indian agriculture and India.

We are sending this "open letter" to you and your select group of environmental activists who appeared in your show "Satyamev Jayate" that dealt with Indian agriculture in June 12. Sorry, we could not write to you earlier as, like millions of Indian farmers, do not watch elite discourses on Indian agriculture by environmental activists who, by and large live on foreign funds. We, therefore, missed watching your elite discourse on Indian agriculture on the day of its telecast, but did so later, after hearing about it.

We have strong reservations against your biased and unfounded allegations and ill advice. Hence this open letter to you.

- It's rather amusing to watch non agriculturalists and environmental activists giving elite sermons sitting before TV camera about farming in India. At the outset, we would like to assert that Indian farmers are in the profession of feeding the people and not poisoning them as alleged by environmental activists in your show.
- Dr.Vandana Shiva said that it's a fallacy to claim that agricultural production would be less without green revolution techniques. Ten years ago- on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2001 to be precise- we wrote an article captioned " **Fictional agriculture of environmentalists**" in The Hindu news paper. I quote certain lines verbatim from that article: " **Vandana Shiva states that organic cultivation produces more cotton....brings double benefit to farmers by lowering the costs on expensive seeds and chemicals and increasing income by producing a quality product. We welcome Vandana Shiva and other environmentalists to our villages to demonstrate what they claim in our local conditions. We will give them 100 acres in every district. Let them show us practically how organic cultivation increases yields and our income levels. Till then, please do not tell us what we, the farmers must do or use**" She has not responded to us till now. Sad, for over 10 years, she does not have the courage to accept our challenge. But here, in

*"Food security first - Farmers welfare must"*

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your show, she recklessly repeated what she said a decade ago. We expect the environmental NGOs to walk their talk.

- With due respects to your talents in your profession, we must tell you that your remarks and observations on Indian agriculture were amateurish. You want Indian farmers to follow Sikkim agriculture!

Average yield of rice in Sikkim : 1515 Kgs/ ha  
Average yield of rice in Andhra : 3680 Kgs/ha

Average yield of wheat in Sikkim : 1000 Kgs/ha  
Average yield of wheat in Punjab : 4450 Kgs/ha

(Data: KVK, Sikkim, Ministry of Agriculture and Department of A.P)

Let us put a common sense question to you. In order for us to feed 1.2 billion people, should we follow Sikkim agriculture or that of Andhra Pradesh or Punjab? Don't you think it will be suicidal to follow Sikkim agriculture?

- Organic agriculture is not a recent invention by the likes of Vandana Shiva. India was following organic agriculture until 1950s. We were then chronically short of food and begging other countries for food. Wheat shipments used to come all the way from the USA.

Thanks to intensive agriculture, today India is the second largest food producer in the entire world. The size of our agricultural economy is now larger than the agricultural economy of the USA. Now, Indian farmers are the largest producers of Milk, second largest producers of food grains, fruits and vegetables in the world. We have ensured not only food security but also nutritional security. And, in the process, we have restored our country's self dignity. We have food surplus. Last year we exported \$ 27.5 billion worth of agricultural products.

You need not complement our farmers for this significant progress and achievements. We don't expect that from you and your elite group of environmental activists. But, please desist from throwing unfounded criticisms at us.

- Organic agriculture does not permit use of Bt. Cotton. Today, India is the second largest producer of cotton in the world, thanks to introduction of Bt.Cotton since 2002.
- As regards pesticides use in agriculture , we have this to say. The pesticides used by our farmers outdoor in their farms are similar to the ones used by urban people like you to control mosquitoes, cockroaches, houseflies, termites etc. A report in Business Standard ( 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010) put the household pesticides market in India at Rs 2400 crores. When pesticides can be used by urban people in bed rooms to ensure a nice sleep free from mosquito bites, why can't our farmers use them to control insects in the farms?
- We farmers understand that pesticides (like human drugs) are allowed for use only after all possible health and toxicological tests. Do you really think

that our government and scientists will permit pesticides if they cause cancers and ill health as alleged in your show?

- What is more? Farmers use pesticides for a few days during crop season. Whereas, urban people use pesticides daily! We are yet to see environmental activists campaigning against use pesticides to control mosquitoes, cockroaches, termites etc. Use of pesticides at home is considered to be healthy habit. But use of pesticides in farms is considered unhealthy. Double standard.
- We don't want to comment on the Kerala episode involving a pesticide called Endosulfan as the matter is sub judice before the Supreme Court. However, we have just one request. One Dr.Mohan Kumar who appeared on your show from Kasargod , Kerala is said to be having 115.19 ppm of Endosulfan residues in his blood. This residue analysis was done by a Delhi based environmental NGO called Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Can you check with a toxicologist and tell us if a human being can be alive with 115.19 ppm of Endosulfan residues in his/her blood?

**Final word:**

Please desist from making allegations without data and sound reasoning.  
Under no circumstances, you must sacrifice the "Satyam" in your Satyamev Jeyate.

Rest assured, we farmers are much more informed, intelligent and responsible. We will not use any product or technology if it is not permitted by the Government.

You should know that Indians are living longer and healthier now than in 1940s and 50s.

Indian economy, including agricultural economy, is much better now than before due to Technology adoption, increased investments and free market policies. Advise your environmental activists not to spread lies and innuendos in order to win some funds from foreign sources who dislike our phenomenal progress.

Satyamev Jeyate...!

Yours sincerely,

  
(P. CHENGAL REDDY)  
Secretary General

Copy : Dr. Manmohan singh, Prime Minister, Government of India.  
Shri. Sharad Pawar, Agriculture Minister, Government of India.  
Dr. Bahuguna, I.A.S., Secretary Agriculture, Government of India.