

# GI tag for Marayoor jaggery soon, KAU finishes groundwork

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THE famed Marayoor jaggery ('sharkara') known for its distinctive taste and colour will soon join the league of agricultural products tagged with the Geographical Indication (GI) status. The IPR Cell of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has begun steps to register the unique product with GI Registry and Intellectual Property India, with the documentation and scientific studies completed.

C R Elsy, IPR Cell coordinator, said the Marayoor and Kanthalloor panchayats in Munnar are associated with the jaggery produced using traditional methods. Marayoor jaggery's unsurpassed quality, which has withstood the onslaught of time, is attributed to the area's cold climes, nature of the soil, quality of water used in irrigation and jaggery production, traditional methods of production and the sugarcane varieties used in the cultivation. Another hallmark of the Marayoor jaggery is it is made in the jaggery production sheds located at the farms, she said.

The jaggery produced from the geographical area has greater market penetration compared to those produced in the other areas since it has a unique sweetness and taste which cannot be replicated. Extremely sweet without salty taste, high iron content, less sodium content less insoluble impurities, organic method of production and dark brown colour are the unique characters of this traditional sharkara.

Minus the colouring

agents, Marayoor jaggery will be dark brown in colour. 'Undasharkara' (ball-shaped solid form) is the main product of the area while 'paani' (liquid form), flavoured sharkara and 'powder form' are also produced in minor quantities. Nearly 6,000 tonne of Marayoor jaggery is produced every year.

The move to secure the GI tag for Marayoor jaggery started in December 2016 and it was launched by Agriculture Minister V S Sunilkumar. A meeting of the apex body constituted for the GI registration of Marayoor jaggery chaired by the minister



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C R Elsy, IPR cell

at KAU HQ on Thursday decided to submit the GI application at the earliest. An awareness meeting of sugarcane farmers and jaggery producers will be held on January 4, 2018 at Marayoor as a prelude to this, said KAU authorities.

The Agricultural varsity's IPR Cell is undertaking all efforts to secure the GI tag for the state's unique agricultural products. Until now, the cell has completed the IPR registration of seven agricultural products, including Chengalikodan Nendran banana, Pokkali rice, Wayanad Jeerakasala rice, Wayanad Gandhakasala, rice and Vazhakkulam pineapple.