

# Neera Turns Heads at New York's Fancy Food Show

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Indian coconut products have elicited a good response at the 60th summer fancy food show-2014 held in New York. Neera health drink (non-fermented sap extracted from coconut palms) and its byproducts like neera chocolate and cookies are biggest attraction at the stall put up by the Coconut Development Board (CDB).

The show is the largest food exhibition in the US and CDB has been participating in the event for the past four years. The stall has also received enquiries for tender coconut water, virgin coconut oil and coconut milk powder.

The response is expected to provide a fillip to CDB, which has been going all out to promote value-added products to reduce the dependence of coconut farmers on coconut oil and copra. Volatility in the prices of coconut oil and copra has been affecting coconut prices.

In the recent times, coconut prices shot up along with escalation in the coconut oil prices. Neera is expected to provide a minimum income of ₹1,000 per tree for a farmer, according to TK Jose, CDB chairman.

Several coconut producer federations in Kerala are in the process of setting up neera extraction units, which are likely to lead to a slew of brands hitting the market. They have been given licence to tap neera from 1,500 trees each by the state excise department.

Major coconut producing countries like Philippines and Indonesia are already marketing neera products successfully in the market.