

# Local company contracted to assess India's 'cold chain' for food shipment

Karl B. Hille, The Examiner  
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## **BALTIMORE -**

Crisp, cold lettuce from the supermarket shelf is almost a given, but not if you live in the warmer climes of India.

Establishing that chain of cold storage and shipment procedures is big business for U.S. food exports, and one Baltimore company in particular.

SPI USA Inc. just won a contract with the United States Trade and Development Agency to assess the "cold chain" in India.

The work will steer agency funds totaling a half-million in investments in improvements to that chain, company CEO Anthony Moriera told The Examiner.

"If there is a better infrastructure, there will be a better opportunity to increase exports to India," Moriera said. "Our job is going to be to define the scope of activities that should be funded by the USTDA."

Those improvements could range from installing new technology to changing the way food is handled and transferred from one cooler to a refrigerated truck or another facility.

The improvements funded by the trade agency will help Indian growers and sellers as well, he said. "Their home-grown products don't fare any better in India's climate."

Moriera's company, SPI, is a graduate of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County's Small Business Incubator. It now operates in the University's Research Park.

The federal Trade Development Agency works to promote American business interests in developing countries.

Following President George W. Bush's April visit to India three areas of aid were developed for India: agricultural biotechnology training, biotechnology patent training, and agricultural cold chain improvement.

"SPI USA has put together a highly-qualified team," said Marian Bassett, South Asia manager with the agency.

"We feel confident that with their expertise and assistance, we will achieve a strong program."

*khille@baltimoreexaminer.com*

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