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clearly to retailers down the line that the bag weight should be correct; the quality has to be correct. This is again one aspect we are very strict about. Now with P & K opened up, and Urea also coming up in the category, competition will go up. That is the good thing which will keep everyone on their toes to provide quality products to farmers.

**Is the industry really concerned? There are hardly new products or application methods developed?**

To be very frank, in the few years, innovative thinking has been very limited. A couple of years ago, when the Govt came with the new policy, the industry was glimmering for some time for having the some boronated urea or zincated urea or neem coated urea. Now govt has allowed that. But I think now with the policies evolving out, P & K are already decontrolled and I think with the flexibility of pricing coming in the market place, there will be a lot more innovation that will start happening. The industry will provide better products for farmers' gains. Urea policy is also under discussion currently and we hope we get a new policy coming up. In sugarcane planting, we have actually developed the machines in which the farmer can plant sugarcane in better way and simultaneously can apply fertilizers. This is where the application of technology comes in which is not always to provide the new products, but also how to use the existing product better. So the results are better which are cheaper to the farmers.

**How the food security be achieved on poor soil health? What is industry doing to improve soil health?**

There are two problems: one is when we don't use fertilizers over a period of time, soil gets sucked out because of nutrient loss as plant absorbs most of the nutrients from soil. I think for each crop, micronutrients play a major role by giving food to the plant. Fertiliser plays a major role of giving food to the crops. When we talk of fertiliser, we talk of NPK. But besides this, there are other twenty five micronutrients which play a key role in improving the quality of soil and eventually increase productivity. I think what is important is balanced fertilisation where one looks at NPK as well as the other micronutrients, which are needed to increase production and soil health. The excessive use of fertilizers harms a particular crop at a particular period, and this with some perseverance can be rectified.

**Does your company have any collaboration with the government institutions to serve the farmer better?**

Yes. We have worked with NCAER, CSIR and Punjab

Agriculture University. We keep on interfacing through 10,000 retailers. We have Shriram Krishi Vikas Kendras where we have agronomists based in villages. Each agronomist covers 7-8 villages and his job is to advise the farmer on increasing the productivity and yields. They don't sell anything. This strategy of ours is working out very positive. Around 400 agronomists are working with farmers. We have also tied up with IFC Washington. The biggest challenge we felt is we go and work with farmer but we were not happy with the measurement systems to measure the improvement in farmer's yield.

**What are the future plans of your company?**

We have a fertilizer plant. Around 10-12 years back, we set up a marketing and distribution network which we call farm solutions division, they on transfer pricing basis buy the fertilizers. In fertilizer manufacturing, we are keen to see what the policy brings for us and then see what we have to do. In our farm solutions division, we want to grow rapidly to provide more and more types, variety and quantity of fertilizer. We are thinking of expanding this business unit pan India.

**How do you see the effectiveness of Hariyali Kisan Bazaars viz-a-viz other retail chains say Tata Kisaan sansaars?**

Tata Kisaan Sansaars have also done a great job. Our's is a little wider. We started with agri-implements and agri services. We have grown from farmer related advisory inputs and advisory distribution chain to one stop departmental store or business hub for rural India. We have all the household products like staple foods, FMCG, Apparels available there. We have tied up with ICICI for banking and insurance and BPCL, to provide petrol pumps. We are expanding and growing. Our footfalls and sales are growing up. The objective is again- that we ensure quality. So, HKB has now become a one stop shop for the farmers and for the rural communities. We are among the first to use IT in our retail business.

**How do you see future of fertilizer sector and your company 10 years down the line?**

That depends a lot on government policies. But I think for a country like India having balanced fertilisation so that productivity of food goes up is very important. By 2050, the world will need 70 per cent more food than what is required today. My concern is with India, with our GDP growth, population growth and income levels growing up, our middle class today has been estimated as 200 million people which will go 500 million by 2050. Food habits are changing more demand for milk, eggs, vegetables and fruits are there rather than just the basic food commodities. With all that happening, fertiliser is a must. Good fertiliser on pricing, safety and quality aspects and knowledge shared with farmers to improve the productivity is the need of the hour. Organic farming cannot feed the nation. To my mind it is for rich people. One has to have balanced fertilisation, which means chemical and organic fertilizers to achieve food security.