

Godrej Agrovet's crop protection business launches pilot to reach out to cotton growers

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Godrej Agrovet's crop protection business unit has launched a pilot project, Sankalp, to reach farmers in every nook and corner to supply its products, the unit's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) NK Rajavelu has said.

The company is planning to come out with a complete digital programme from cotton farmers partnering scientific communities and "like-minded" seed companies this year, and launch a farmer-friendly app by next cotton season. "Today, when I go to the market, I can find a Coke bottle in rural villages but not agro-chemicals. The need of the hour is to reach agro-chemicals to every nook and corner of a village," Rajavelu told *business-line* in an online interaction. With this in view, Godrej Agrovet Limited (GAVL) re-

cently launched the Sankalp programme. "This programme is to ensure that my distribution network is capable of reaching the last farmer in the rural village. We just started a pilot and we have operated in Vidarbha, Marathwada and Khandesh in Maharashtra from January onwards," the crop unit CEO said. Initial feedback showed the company got an "overwhelming" response, which gave the assurance the quality products are in demand, he said. GAVL's crop protection business unit is trying to connect with farmers through various digital methods. "We are connecting to provide them with the right information. Plus, we also make sure that they can call us back and seek some information. We call it the information sharing centre," said Rajavelu.

The crop business unit will enable a complete digital programme from this coming kharif season. "We are partner-



NK Rajavelu, CEO,
Crop Protection Business
Unit, NK Rajavelu

ing with several scientific communities and working out several programmes to see what the best solutions are. So we not only will support today's problems but work on medium to long term solutions," he said.

GAVL, which has a good relationship with Japanese companies such as Nissan and plans to launch several new Japanese molecules in the country, is working on another 2-3 new solutions for cotton. These will

become available over the next 3-4 years and help farmers get multiple choices. Stating that the crop protection unit has roped in 12.4 lakh cotton farmers through Whatsapp and call centres, it is trying to increase it to 20 lakh in the next one year.

INTEGRATED SYSTEM

The GAVL's arm, a leader in providing solutions to protect the cotton crop particularly weeds, has made a survey and plans to work on a farmer-friendly app that will provide growers with information. Currently, the company has an integrated system where farmers are connected directly on a daily basis to provide crop advisory.

"We will have some frequency to contact farmers and it will depend on the need. The sowing season is important. When farmers purchase seeds and the monsoon is about to set in, we look at the situation and advise them," Rajavelu said.