

Interview

Agricultural business leaders

Sungod Agfarm



Mr. Rohit Agrawal

Q. So, what is the primary focus of the Sun God Agra farm?

A. So, basically first I would like to brief myself. So, I am a businessman, industrialist and with the experience of commissioning three manufacturing units to power generation units, one steel tank. So, post that, you know, I met Mr Ratan Tata and I had a brief discussion about the central part of India. So, he highlighted why it was famous for. So, till then I did not know that we were on such a rich fertile land, which was the central province. And I was told that the reason why Britishers came to India primarily for cotton and spices. So, all farm related, we were Agri-economy since independence and pre-

independence as well. Somehow, what diluted, like, you know, there were no reforms. The government always supported the farmers. But farming was never really supported. So, there are two things. Support farmers and support farming. So, I took up this challenge that when we have such high yielding land and weather, Why should we not try our hands on farming?

So, this real-world plant, we say how many power plants like I have steel plants like I have cement plants. So, what is a plant? A plant gives 1,000, 10,000 lacs. Whereas, what plants we really term as plants, they just change the form of energy or commodity. But the real plants are these plants. I love that analogy. I say I have commissioned three plants. Now, I can say I have commissioned thousands of plants or maybe lacs of plants. So, this dried me like, first I planted two lacs, saplings of banana. So, there were 10-gram saplings which we planted. Eventually, in 11 months, it turned out to be a thousand kg of plants. So, this kind of multiplication was like what again inspired me to take it forward. So, here at Sun, I will answer your question now. So, at Sun God Act farms, we intend to farm and then the future of farming is like a process. The farming products. Processing is the next step. So, because usually farming products are perishable in nature. So, to preserve them, we want to set up the entire infrastructure of farming, preserving and marketing. So, when these three forces are put together, a farmer will be a true industrialist. What India needs.

Q. So, the scale of the business is in terms of acres, labor and production?

A. Yeah. So, currently we are holding 400 acres of land. Through contract farming is under the land of Sun God. And around we have employed 200 people for this project since the last seven years. Okay. And I think in a short while, maybe in a couple of years, we will be able to mine farm at least 10,000 acres in our farming.

Q. And all the big plants concentrated in this region only?

A. Yeah. Primarily in weather. So, then we want to outgrow ourselves. Open up. Sure.

Q. So, like long term goals for the business like aspirations, particular aim, like other than reaching 10,000 acres?

A. Yeah. So, we want to be a company like farming for consumers. So, that's the ultimate goal. Like producing and sell it to the end consumer. And users. The user.

Q. So, any particular benefits that the farmers get from this?

A. Yeah. So, we want to create a model where now we are, we will be having a value of around 60 rupees a kg for the waste. We are in the process of putting up a biodegradable cutlery unit. So, that is already underpaid. So, whatever waste that we are generating, we will be getting around 60 rupees. Okay. So, we want all the farmers to either tie up with us or follow us. So, probably they will benefit greatly from this.

Q. So, in the last seven years since the business has been growing, what are the challenges you Faced?

A. We have faced almost all the possible challenges the farmers faced. So, right from floods to extreme heat to extreme cold to extreme rains. So, right from wild animals to electricity failures to labor shortages to mechanical problems, right from drip irrigation to whatever like machinery, harvesters and everything. So, we still face them and we try to overcome them, it is like a project. So, you know, a farm is always an eight month old baby. You will always have to keep checking. It won't tell you by itself that I have this problem. But like we are learning every time and, but I can definitely say to you. So, what we used to face earlier, the problems have decreased substantially now. And that we would like to share it with all the people, all the farmers.

Q. So, from your experience, do you have any advice when you entrepreneurs going into agricultural Industry?

A. Definitely, I would like more and more people, especially young entrepreneurs. I was allowed to speak at a BNI network wherein I focused on the same subject that is farming. So, there is a lot of scope in this. The land available is at a very good price, I would say very reasonable price when you compare two other places. And one thing I would like to tell everybody, it is often mentioned that central part of India has the maximum farmers who side it has no water. That is not the case. One thing I forgot to mention was we have done 100 crore liter water conservation on 400 acres. And as a result, the groundwater table, which was like very low in that area, now, though We are surrounded with rivers on all four sides, we don't have to draw water from the river. And this was all due to the help of our honorable then chief minister, Devendra ji, who inspired me to do Jalukta Shiva. I remember that. And now we are conserving around 100 crore liter waters every year, which has increased

the water table substantially and like we are good with water. So, every farmer and budding entrepreneur, I would request to dedicate some part of the land for water conservation in Vidarbha, as you are also born in water here, I believe. Kabi dekhai pani kam gira, but we just waste the water we get. So, if we have the habit of storing that water, water is not a problem. We are not Rajasthan or any desert, where the rainfall is scanty. God has given us enough, we need to store. So, we need to harness the water. So, that is the main thing. If everybody starts practicing this, trust me, we will be one of the best areas in the country. We can have the maximum yields from our farms.

Q. So, any innovative projects that are coming up like with Sun Gond farm?

A. Yeah, so we are coming, we have already have a steam distillation unit for essential oils that we are producing through Vidarbha, Spamarooza and Geranium. I was really impressed with your water. Did you see that? Oh, I applied for it, it's fantastic. I tell you, the Indian coach Rahul Dravid, he called me the other day, he was on the tour of this World Cup, he requested me because he visited me last year and I gifted him the bottles. So, I can show you the message from Rahul Dravid. Wow. So, he called me Rohit and he was on the tour. So, he gave me his future hotel address. And Sachin Tendulkar also called for it last year. So, this is the kind of response and like the way people are loving our products. I mean, the purity, once you start using it, you cannot go back to your sink. It's all chemical or this is so natural. We are just trying our hands on this, like it's so unique. So, we are having a bracket manufacturing unit that's mentioned. So, all the waste is being converted into fuel again. They say, I'm cotton groker, tato, cotton stock, sebricate, banana. It gives us a value of around 8 rupees per kg. Imagine that. So, probably we want to use each and every product which is being not used by farmers because they don't have enough resources, they don't have the knowledge. Probably, this sun god can be a role model for all the farmers around the country and the world one day.

Q. So, Rohit, you feel that processing is the way forward, right?

A. Yeah, going, processing everything. So, each and every process complements each other. So, if you want to have the value, you have to process it. Or someone will just... Please, you, I mean, take it and be nuts. And then, Take the advantage and like, you know, because the consumer never gets it for less. Yeah. It's all the middlemen who try to squeeze you. Neither the farmer nor the consumer is benefited. Only the middlemen are. So, if we have the right infra, I think it is the best. Hello. I have one question left.

Q. Who are your primary customers and target market?

A. So, we are now supplying our essential oils to SHK Kelkar company, which is the biggest perfumers of India. Okay. But again, as now we are mastering the cultivation process and extraction process. We are targeting a few B2B consumers and the Middle East and a lot of your European countries. And probably we'll try to hit the consumers as well in India as the popularity grows. Now, and for our other products, which are vegetables, organic vegetables and biodegradable cutlery and all the things, we'll have a B2C. And we are soon planning to open our stores first in Nagpur and probably then we'll spread out.

Q. the processing unit for the perfumers is at the same farm?

A. Yeah, at the same farm.

Okay.

So, distilleries for your whatever.

Yeah.

It's all there. It's like we have our 2 Tonne boiler. A complete industrial set up there. That's true. So, we also have 150 cows as of now. Which we don't milk right now. But soon we'll have the milk processing unit as well. So, now we just use the cow dung and cow urine. For all the medicinal purposes, we even have a gobar Gas unit which produces a cylinder of gas every day. That is from the waste. And when this is extracted, gobar Gas is extracted from the cow dung. It is very nitrogen rich. So, it fixes the nitrogen in the soil and applies it to the soil. So, we get natural bio-fertilizers through this. So, that's the whole process. We even have Vermicompost units. We have 100 tanks wherein we use cow dung. And they are mixed with thousands of worms, lacs of worms, probably, who then convert this cow dung into a complete manure. And which is used to nurture the 400 acres of soil. We'll soon be selling this as well. And from cow urine, we also make vermi wash. And a lot of products which are used to spray at the plants as disinfectants or a lot of fungicides.