

Australian nutrition farming therapy gains traction

OUR BUREAU

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To counter the challenges faced by farmers in the form of costly inputs and hardening of soil, an Australian agronomist has introduced a system of nutrition farming for Indian agriculture.

After 23 years of research, Australian agronomist Steve Capeness and his Queensland-based company Nutri-Tech Solutions have developed a holistic farming protocol for soil and plant health and physiology.

Speaking to *BusinessLine*, Capeness said that the therapy helps create nutrient-dense crops that have a high level of resilience and can exhibit better tolerance to ex-

ternal attacks such as pest or disease.

"We provide our protocol on two principles of soil balancing and plant therapy. This applies to all kinds of food and non-food crops, including horticulture crops. Soil enhancement and balancing process is a 3-5 year process, while plant therapy is a nutrition programme that goes on every season," said Steve, who is visiting Ahmedabad for the 8th Agri Asia expo, from September 7-9, at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar.

Promoting the concept of zero-residue farming, Capeness said Indian agriculture has a great potential to tap nutrition farming for key

crops such as cotton and horticulture crops. Such practices have had positive implications for soil structure and enhanced its productiv-

ity and softness, which is often missing due to excessive use of nitrogen-based fertilisers and DAP on most Indian farms.



Steve Capeness at a date-palm farm in Bhuj, Gujarat

Sharing details about a project undertaken in Bhuj, Kutch, on a 250-acre date-palm farm, Capeness said: "Nutrition farming is grabbing attention from a variety of people, mainly because it helps the plant reach its genetic potential. This gives better yield and increases the productivity of soil."

After successful implementation in parts of Gujarat, Nutri-Tech is aiming to bring similar technology of seed coating. "A liquid solution, which will be affordable for farmers, will be used to coat seeds before planting. This reduces the requirement of pesticides and insecticides," he added.