

'As fewer people want to work in farms, tech adoption will happen'

Yield will also increase, says John Deere India MD

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John Deere India, the wholly owned subsidiary of American multinational Deere & Company, which manufactures and sells tractors, harvesters and implements in India, is focusing on repression technology to grow its base. The firm's MD Satish Nadiger says the company is poised for faster growth. Excerpts:

Are you satisfied with your performance in India?

■ One can never be satisfied in performance. In the last 3-4 years, we are growing very well. There were times when we did not do well in the early years when the industry went down and when we did not have all the products needed for the market. But now, we have the right product offering starting from 20 HP to 120 HP. Now, we think we can grow faster.

Your next 20-year horizon?

■ We will grow at much faster rate than the past 20 years. We want to make sure that we are offering the right technology for our custom-

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ers. We have been the technology leaders and that is something we want to be always. We will offer the right technology at the right price. We want to be known as technology leaders offering innovative products to paddy and potato farmers in India. We want to grow at much faster pace.

Apart from tractors, implements, harvesters what other kinds of equipment are you likely to introduce?

■ We are into everything, from land preparation to harvesting. We have introduced balers for post harvest. We have harvesters for paddy, wheat and all other small grains. We are looking at providing solutions to our customers which means they have the right implements that will provide more value to them. So, we can bring in more precision implements where the depth and spacing are taken care of.

What is the future of farming in India?

■ Technology adoption will happen, because we see labour availability is going down, particularly for farming.

Today, people do not want to do this hard labour in farms. So, we do expect mechanisation to go to the next level which is beyond tractors. And, we will look for more and more technology adoption. The yield will go up. Farmers

will go for diversification into dairy, vegetables, orchards and this is the way farmers' income can be augmented.

Is there scope for contract farming in India?

■ There are some big contractors in Punjab and other places. In the rest of India, it is yet to pick up at a fast pace. Contract farming is still 10 years away.

There have been discussions on emission norms and their likely impact....

■ It is going to be challenging for the farmers, because the prices will go up for tractors above 50 HP from April 2021. Common rail technology will make products expensive.

What is your expansion plan in India?

■ We already have capacity to produce 1,32,000 tractors. So, in the next couple of years, we will invest as we grow. I will not be able to give any exact numbers now.

What is your investment road map?

■ We are continuously investing in India. We have increased our production from 30,000 tractors to one lakh tractors. Now, we are also investing in our engine capacity to augment tractor production. For exports, we are getting more and more products from our main base which could be manufactured out of India.

It helps us export more out of India and it is also helping us in getting newer technologies to India, which we are continuously doing. Some of the tractors manufactured here are high-end and are exported to Europe where customers are very demanding. If we can be successful in those markets, we can be successful anywhere.

