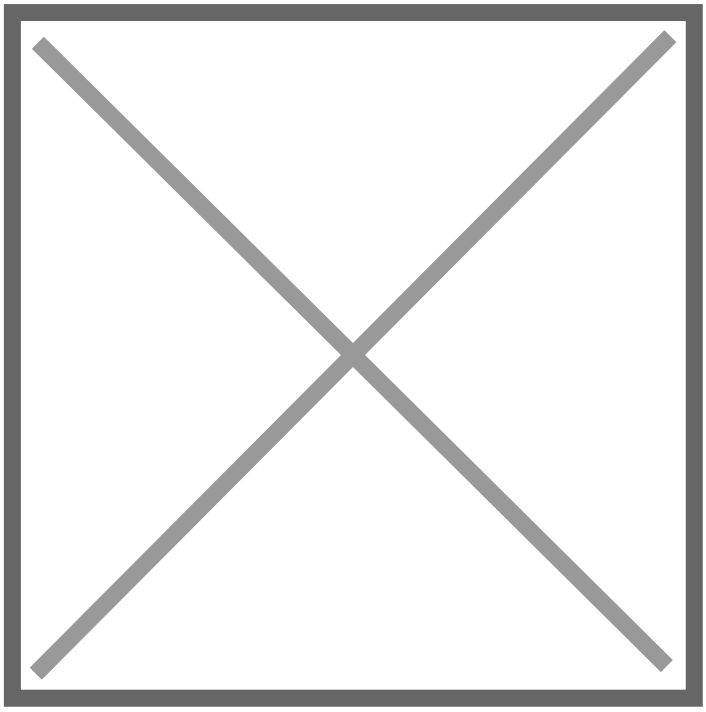
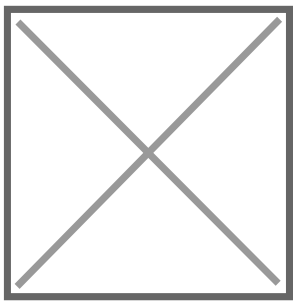
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'60 percent of our investment goes into agriculture'

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Mr Balvinder Singh Kalsi
President - South Asia, E I DuPont India

E I DuPont India, a wholly-owned subsidiary of E I DuPont, US has been fast expanding its operations in India, supported by the DuPont Knowledge Center and the DuPont Services Center. Agriculture and related segments have made significant contributions to DuPont India revenues and India is becoming a key market for the company's agriculture business worldwide.

In an interview with BioSpectrum, Mr Balvinder Singh Kalsi, president-South Asia, E I DuPont India, shares his views on the importance of the Indian market, opposition to GM technology and many other issues.

Q How strategic is the India market for DuPont?

Mr Kalsi: India is definitely of strategic importance for DuPont but our focus here is to feed the millions. The food security being a core issue, we are committed to alleviate the fear of starvation. Because of huge agricultural needs, India holds key to the development of certain technologies. Being a science and research-based company, 60 percent of our investment goes into agriculture. We have invested significantly in India on both parameters—research and capital. The DuPont Knowledge Center at Hyderabad is an example of that.

Q What is your opinion on opposition to genetically modified (GM) technology?

Mr Kalsi: It is not about the GM technology only. It is about increasing the productivity with number of other techniques. The different aspects of the GM technology must be addressed. For that, we need a scientific debate on the subject to come to conclusions. But if people close their minds and stop listening, then it is very hard to make them understand about the benefits. Then, it becomes an issue. Having said that, it is also important to know that biotechnology is just an option among other options. We must remember that the primary interest is to keep away the pests and increase the yield. We need to make sure that more food is produced.

Q Do you think that without commercialization, the investments in research of GM crops is a wastage?

Mr Kalsi: I think we need to ponder over the fact that the farmers who toil hard out there in the field do not actually reap the benefits. They must also get the benefit of the GDP growth of eight-nine percent that is being talked about so often. Back in 2003, due to non-effectiveness of agrichemicals, farmers even refused to grow cotton. Since the introduction of Bt cotton, the entire scenario changed. Today 98-99 percent of the overall cotton crop is Bt Cotton. Farmers are wise enough and know the utilization of crops for the best outcome. Going by all these facts, the investments seem to be right because it is important to develop the technologies to increase productivity.

Q What kind of growth are you expecting in the future?

Mr Kalsi: We expect a sustainable growth of over 20 percent in the next two-four years time.

Rahul Koul in New Delhi