

PRESS RELEASE

Syngenta launches I-SAFE initiative to train 10,000 farmers and spray men in Yavatmal

Certified professional spray men to promote responsible use and curb negligent pesticide exposure incidents

July 3, 2019: Farming in Maharashtra faces numerous challenges - Vidarbha region of Maharashtra is considered as an area of 'multiple exposures' as it faces simultaneous challenges every season. Farmers in this drought-prone and agriculturally stressed region are in constant need of handholding and support to improve their adaptive capabilities. Keeping this fact in mind and pursuing its commitment to farmer's health and safety, Syngenta India designed and conceived an innovative health & safety program I-SAFE (Inculcating Safety Awareness for Farmer Empowerment).

I-SAFE is a first-of-its kind initiative to instil among Yavatmal farmer's awareness on health & safety and equipping them with tools and techniques, Syngenta India launched I-SAFE (Inculcating Safety Awareness for Farmer Empowerment) program. It aims to enable more than 10,000 farmers and spray men competent in the use, spraying and handling of agro-chemicals and to train them to become Spray men Entrepreneurs.

The program was announced at a special event organized by **Syngenta India** in association with **Department of Agriculture** and **Yavatmal District Administration** to celebrate **Maharashtra Agriculture Day**. The program was attended by about 150 farmers and spray men from across Yavatmal.

I-SAFE is a Syngenta CSR initiative in collaboration with Syngenta Foundation India and is guided by the vision of Agriculture Department, Government of Maharashtra. The goal of the project is to train 100 young people as spray men entrepreneurs who will train 500 more spray men. Syngenta is working closely with the Government on farmer's health and safety programs in Yavatmal and Satara districts.

Shri Jalaj Sharma, IAS, CEO - Zilla Parishad Yavatmal lauded Syngenta's concept of spray men entrepreneurship and said that the model will create employment for rural youths and, at the same time, will foster agriculture development by improving safety and decreasing the misuse of agro chemicals in Yavatmal District. Shri Sharma also spoke on the importance of spray men training and why it was critical. Shri Navnaat Kolapkar, District Superintendent Agriculture Officer, Yavatmal, Shri Pankaj Barde, Agriculture Development Officer also graced the occasion.

Dr K C Ravi, Chief Sustainability Officer, Syngenta said, "One of the key issues that led to the unfortunate pesticide exposure incident in 2017 in Yavatmal was the indiscriminate mixing of chemicals and lack of adequate precautions undertaken during spraying of crops. This initiative of Syngenta under its' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), is to create professional certified spray men who would take all the safety measures while spraying. We are privileged to collaborate with the Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra and the Yavatmal District Administration and NGOs, to ensure that agriculture is undertaken in a healthy, hygienic and most importantly, in safe manner to avoid any untoward exposure incidents".

Dr. K C Ravi added, "While we have been conducting farmer training activities, personal health and hygiene and safe use campaigns, doctor training programs and operating the Syngenta Wockhardt Mobile Health Clinic in Yavatmal District since 2017-18, I-SAFE further strengthens our actions, activities and commitment to the farmers of Yavatmal District".

As part of the launch of the I-SAFE Initiative, **Sou Madhuri Tai President, Zilla Parishad and Shri Shyambhau Jaiswal, Vice President, Zilla Parishad & Chairman Krishi Vishay Samiti, Yavatmal distributed spray pumps and personal protection equipment (PPE) kits to the spray men trained by Syngenta.** Sou Madhuri Tai flagged off Syngenta Wockhardt Mobile Health Clinic and handed over certificates to the spray men who have successfully undergone training on spraying, conducted by the local Krishi Vigyan Kendra. During the experience sharing session, the trained spray men shared the advantages regarding the use of safety gear, the importance of right dosage and the grave consequences of preparing concoctions of different chemicals during spraying.

Spraying of pesticide is an integral extension activity in agriculture and it is very important for spray men and farmers to have practical knowledge of all the related agricultural operations including proper storage, use, handling and disposal of the agro-chemicals and containers and related responsibilities. In order to move these trained spray men towards agri-entrepreneurship, as a requisite, Syngenta has incorporated certification.

Syngenta company along with Syngenta Foundation India (SFI), Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Sagroli, Nanded and ASPEE are involved in the training and certification of the spray men. This process will ensure greater confidence and serves as a mark of quality for both spray men and farmers. This forward thinking and progressive approach will help put farmers at ease since they are assured that the spray men have practical understanding of application technology and pest management methods associated with their agricultural operations.

During the program, a session was conducted by the Syngenta team on effective use of agro-chemicals and application technology. The program ended with a live demonstration of how to utilize spraying equipment and wearing PPE Kits.

About Syngenta:

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities.

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Syngenta has its spokesperson available for any further clarification

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