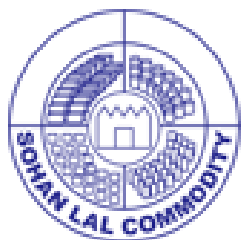


MEDIA COVERAGE REPORT



SOHAN LAL COMMODITY MANAGEMENT PVT. LTD

Interview Coverage

INDEX

Interview Coverage

S.No.	Date	Publication	Edition	Headline
1	26-Nov-2021	Digitalterminal	Online	“We Will Continue Executing Our Warehousing Contracts Using Our Expansive AgriReach Framework”

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“We Will Continue Executing Our Warehousing Contracts Using Our Expansive AgriReach Framework”

NDM Network | November, 26, 2021



MR. SANDEEP SABHARWAL
Group CEO, Sohan Lal Commodity
Management Pvt. Ltd. (SLCM)



The technological innovations happening across the verticals are praiseworthy as they have uplifted the certain sectors to new heights. Agriculture is one of the major sectors that have witnessed huge technological revolution from monitoring, warehousing to managing and selling the crops. SLCM is an integrated agri logistics player that provides a one-stop solution to the end-user with a diversified portfolio of services ranging from warehouse management, agriculture financing, collateral management, procurement to agritech. Rajeev Ranjan, Editor, Digital Terminal recently spoke to Sandeep Sabharwal, Group CEO, Sohan Lal Commodity Management Pvt. Ltd. Mr. Sandeep shared his views on various aspects in agritech industry. Read below the excerpts:

Rajeev: How do you see the transformation of the agriculture market with the adoption of new technology solutions?

Sandeep: As per the available market indices, agriculture – the primary source of livelihood for about 58% of our population – together with allied sectors accounted for 17.8% of gross value added in India, at current prices, in FY2020-21. Since March 2020 even as the pandemic-induced lockdowns took a toll on industry and services, agriculture growth of 3.1% helped sustain consumer demand.

This growth in agribusiness is being driven by rising demand, changes in food consumption habits and the need to respond to climate change. According to the UN, by 2030, India will have the world's largest population, representing 1/3 of Asia and 17% of the world. This implies a massive uptick in agricultural demand, with income growth accelerating consumption of meat, fruits and vegetables, relative to cereals. This outlook calls for a commensurate shift in output.

Application of new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), internet of things (IoT), big data, blockchain, machine vision, drones, call centres, etc., are poised to transform the sector by enabling higher productivity, superior quality, traceability and real-time visibility even while reducing the carbon footprint and increasing profitability.

Rajeev: Please brief about SLCM. How you have played a pivotal role in the development of the agri warehousing and agri finance industry across India?

Sandeep: The key differentiator that sets Sohan Lal Commodity Management Pvt. Ltd (SLCM) apart from its industry peers is our dedicated focus on scientific warehousing processes and technology rather than infrastructure creation using our unique aggregator model. As of October 30, 2021, we were managing a network of 7,335 warehouses, 36 cold storages, 106.09 million sq. ft. and throughput of 1,817.06 million metric tonnes, without owning a single square foot of real estate! During the same period, SLCM Ltd. Myanmar managed a network of 255 industrial zones and managed 6.91 million sq. ft. area by handling 525 commodities and throughput of 11.65 million metric tonnes. We are known for our expertise in commercialising any warehousing location-agnostic to infrastructure, geography, crop and geo-climatic conditions within 24 hours using our patent-pending AgriReach process management system.

AgriReach combines a series of processes, audits and real-time tracking of the facilities to give error-free results to significantly deplete the risk of crop damage. It uses techniques like geofencing for instantaneous tracking, bar-coded storage receipts to avoid thefts or pilferage and 79 internal audits along with a 'Maker and Checker' policy at every level. Simply put, it is an aggregation of defined processes that are executed sans any deviation for monitoring stored goods. This distinctive technological innovation allows SLCM to establish a new warehousing facility at one to two days' notice irrespective of the available infrastructure, weather or geography to provide a standard operational experience at all facilities even while maintaining the highest standards of quality control! AgriReach's deployment has helped substantially reduce post-harvest losses that are pegged at 10% in India to 0.5% at warehouses under our management.

In 2014, the Group forayed into agriculture financing through its wholly-owned non-banking financial company (NBFC), Kissandhan Agri Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. SLCM has redefined agricultural lending by extending finance to farmers purely against their "crop as collateral". This is irrespective of their balance sheet or net worth. To date, the NFBC has taken financial inclusion in the real sense of the word to about 5,44,088 farmers by disbursing Rs 2,344.27 crore in loans.

Rajeev: Please brief us about your diversified portfolio of services.

Sandeep: SLCM is an integrated agri logistics player that provides a one-stop solution to the end-user with a diversified portfolio of services ranging from warehouse management, agriculture financing, collateral management, procurement to agritech. Since its inception in 2009, we have worked towards building a business model where efficiencies of physical delivery are ensured through a strong technology backbone to provide an "inclusive ecosystem" of agri logistics services.

Rajeev: Who are your key investors?

Sandeep: Our key investors include renowned names like Nexus India Direct Investments, Mayfield FVCI, Everstone Capital Partners, Emerging India Fund, Creation Investments Social Ventures Fund, responsAbility Participations and agRIF Cooperatief.

Rajeev: How is the AgriSuraksha solution enabling the stakeholders to effectively monitor their warehouses?

Sandeep: AgriSuraksha is a part of our proprietary AgriReach process management system, which is also a first for India. Since April this year, SLCM has started executing its warehousing contracts using the Agri Suraksha solution that incorporates the latest internet of things (IoT)-based surveillance technology, enabling real-time monitoring as well as interaction with the personnel at the site without the use of mobile telephony. A result of years of painstaking research, AgriSuraksha enables 24x7 audio-video monitoring of produce in faraway locations from the command and control centre at the group's corporate headquarters in New Delhi. Presently, 200 warehousing facilities are tracked using AgriSuraksha. By the close of FY2021-22, SLCM expects to bring 80% of its warehouses under its coverage.

Rajeev: What are your plans to deepen your reach in the agriculture sector in years to come?

Sandeep: In the near to medium-term, we will continue executing our warehousing contracts using our expansive AgriReach framework that incorporates the latest technologies to offer cutting-edge solutions like AgriSuraksha. We are also committed to further expanding our network of warehouses in India and Myanmar.

In the long-term, we propose to continue reinforcing our technological backbone in pursuit of our vision to become a User-Friendly digitalised enterprise that not only adapts the global best practices but also establishes many firsts along the way and redefines the way agri ecosystem works.

In a first globally, we unveiled our artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning (ML)-based quality assessment app for food grains in October. Getting a quality check done through the AgriReach Mobile Quality Check App is as easy as taking an image. As it is currently being offered for wheat, just clicking the photograph of the commodity's sample and submitting it through the app gets it analysed for multiple quality parameters. The user obtains a quality report with the photographic evidence evaluated for specifications like damaged, shrunken, shrivelled or immature grains, foreign matter and a host of other physical parameters like height, length, grid, colour and pattern of the commodity.

The path-breaking app enables a 360-degree evaluation by a cross-section of stakeholders including processors, traders, exporters, importers, government agencies and financial institutions such as banks. The on-ground utilisation is expected to tremendously help to improve the fidelity of quality checks for agricultural commodities and disseminate the instantly obtained QC results in a secure and transparent environment to drastically reduce the turnaround time and costs in comparison to the task being performed manually. We are initially looking at achieving up to 90% accuracy, as compared to a lab test, with the app.

The advanced app is a result of four years of intensive research by SLCM's in-house team of experts. We had applied for a patent on it in August 2018.