

MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning (E4L)" Webinar Series

Topic: "From Technology Dissemination to Value Chain Facilitation: The Kissan Agri Mall Pvt. Ltd. Approach"

Schedule:
25-11-2022, 19:45-20:30 PM

MANAGE - Center for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (MANAGE- CAEIRA)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad- 500 030, INDIA



About the Program

The MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning" Webinar Series is aimed at enhancing knowledge and professional engagement in the field of agricultural extension. The twelve-day series is structured with each day focusing on a distinct topic under a common theme, allowing participants to gain comprehensive insights into key areas of extension. The program is intended for a diverse audience, including postgraduate and doctoral students, agricultural faculty, and industry professionals. It covers broad themes ranging from entrepreneurship and sustainability to emerging technologies in agriculture.





Speaker

Mr. Venkataswami Reddy
Co-Founder & Director
Kissan Agri Mall Pvt. Ltd.
surasani.venkat@gmail.com

Venkataswami Reddy (SVS Reddy) Surasani

About the Speaker

Mr. Venkataswami Reddy, Co-Founder & Director of Kissan Agri Mall Pvt. Ltd., is an agribusiness professional and entrepreneur with over 12 years of experience in agri-input sales and marketing, commodity trading, procurement, supply chain management, pricing and branding. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science, a P.G. in Agribusiness Management from G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, and an MDP from IIM Lucknow. He has worked with organisations including NCDEX, NCML, NSL Seeds and UPL, and holds certifications in commodity trading, startup incubation and plant health diagnosis. His work focuses on strengthening farmer-oriented value chains, agri-retail, post-harvest management and efficient farmer–market linkages.

Background of Kissan Agri Mall

The startup was established as a farmer-centric agribusiness enterprise in 2019 with the objective of creating an integrated platform that provides comprehensive solutions to farmers, ranging from agricultural input supply to post-harvest support services. The concept emerged from the founders' professional experience in the agribusiness sector, particularly during their association with leading agricultural companies and extensive interactions with farmers across different regions of India.

The sectors such as healthcare and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) had largely transitioned from conventional dealer-based systems to organized retail networks, thereby improving accessibility, efficiency, and customer service. In contrast, agricultural input delivery systems continued to rely predominantly on traditional distribution channels, often limiting farmers' access to modern technologies, quality inputs, and scientific advisory services. Recognizing this gap, the founders envisioned an organized agricultural retail model that could serve as a one-stop solution for farmers.

The startup was established with the aim of enabling farmers to access a wide range of agricultural products, technologies, and advisory services through a single platform. The model sought to improve the reach of modern agricultural innovations and facilitate access to products from multiple brands and companies while simultaneously providing technical guidance for their effective use.

Footprint/ Presence of Kissan Agri Mall

The startup commenced its operations with nine retail outlets in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. During the initial phase, efforts were directed towards assessing farmer acceptance of the model, strengthening partnerships with agricultural input suppliers, and establishing linkages with leading companies in the fertilizer, crop protection, farm machinery, water-soluble fertilizer, and micro-irrigation sectors. The encouraging response received from farmers and business partners contributed to the successful expansion of the enterprise.

The startup has expanded its operations to 42 outlets across multiple districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Through this network, the startup has reportedly reached more than 1.25 lakh farmers by providing access to agricultural inputs, technologies, and advisory services. The growth of the startup reflects the increasing demand for integrated service delivery models that combine agricultural retailing with extension support.

A unique feature of the startup is its emphasis on combining retail services with field-level extension activities. Each outlet serves as a localized agricultural service centre, enabling farmers to access inputs while also receiving technical guidance on crop production, nutrient management, pest and disease control, and other farm-related issues. This integrated approach aims to bridge the gap between technology availability and field-level adoption, thereby contributing to improved farm productivity and profitability.

The startup was founded and is managed by agricultural professionals with substantial experience in agribusiness, extension, and agricultural marketing. The startup continues to focus on strengthening farmer outreach, improving access to modern agricultural technologies, and developing innovative solutions that support sustainable agricultural development.

Products and services offered by Kissan Agri Mall



Gaps in Agricultural Value Chains and the Role of Extension Services

There are several critical gaps in agricultural value chain that limit farm profitability and reduce the effectiveness of agricultural production systems. To overcome this, agricultural extension should move beyond the conventional focus on technology dissemination and input supply to address broader issues related to production efficiency, cost reduction, quality improvement, and market integration.

Excessive Input Use and Rising Cost of Cultivation

One of the major gaps identified was the excessive and often indiscriminate use of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizers and pesticides. Many farmers apply fertilizers far beyond the actual crop requirement due to inadequate technical guidance and misconceptions regarding the relationship between input use and crop productivity.

Farmers frequently apply excessive quantities of nitrogenous and complex fertilizers, resulting in substantially higher cultivation costs. Such practices not only increase the financial burden but also contribute to nutrient imbalances, declining soil health, and increased vulnerability to pest attacks. Lack of scientific advisory support often leads farmers to rely on generalized recommendations or peer practices rather than crop-specific nutrient management strategies.

Limited Access to Scientific Crop Advisory Services

Many farmers do not receive timely and location-specific technical guidance on crop management. As a result, decisions related to fertilizer application, pest management, and crop protection are often made without adequate scientific support. This advisory gap contributes to inefficient resource utilization and increased production risks.

There is a need for continuous field-level extension support to help farmers make informed decisions regarding nutrient management, crop protection, and stage-specific agronomic practices.

Weak Focus on Cost Reduction Strategies

Agricultural interventions often emphasize yield enhancement while giving relatively less attention to reducing the cost of cultivation. Significant improvements in farm profitability can be achieved through efficient resource management and optimization of production costs.

There is a need to focus on identifying opportunities to reduce unnecessary expenditure on fertilizers, pesticides, and other inputs while maintaining crop productivity. Such interventions enable farmers to achieve better economic returns without compromising crop performance.

Poor Adoption of Integrated Nutrient Management

Another important gap identified was the limited adoption of integrated nutrient management practices. Excessive dependence on chemical fertilizers has led to neglect of organic nutrient sources and soil health management.

To address this issue, the startup promotes the use of:

- Organic manures
- Neem cake
- Balanced fertilizer application
- Micronutrient supplementation
- Crop-specific nutrient schedules

These practices help improve soil fertility, strengthen crop health, and enhance nutrient-use efficiency.

Inadequate Attention to Crop Resilience and Plant Health

Many farmers focus primarily on correcting visible crop problems rather than building crop resilience through preventive management. Importance of maintaining adequate plant nutrition and balanced micronutrient supply should be considered to improve the natural resistance of crops against pests and diseases. Accordingly, strengthening crop health through scientific nutrient management can significantly reduce pest incidence and lower dependence on chemical pesticides.

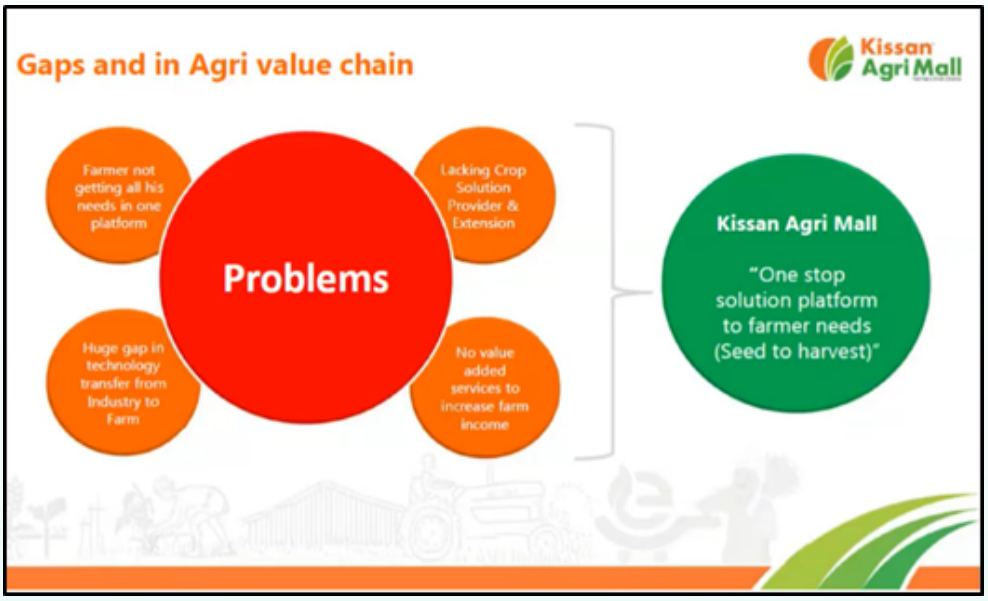
Inefficient Pest Management Practices

Frequent and indiscriminate pesticide application is another major gap in agricultural production systems. Farmers often resort to repeated pesticide sprays without proper assessment of pest incidence, resulting in increased production costs and environmental concerns.

To address this challenge, the startup promotes Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approaches, including:

- Preventive crop management practices
- Pest monitoring and surveillance
- Need-based pesticide application
- Use of effective and targeted crop protection technologies
- Scientific spray schedules

These interventions help reduce pesticide expenditure while maintaining effective pest control.



Limited Access to New Agricultural Technologies

Farmers also face difficulties in accessing newly introduced agricultural technologies, improved crop protection products, and advanced production practices. Although innovative technologies are available in the market, their adoption remains constrained due to inadequate dissemination and limited last-mile connectivity. The startup attempts to bridge this gap by facilitating access to new-generation agricultural inputs, improved formulations, and advanced crop management technologies through its retail and extension network.

Gaps in Quality Planting Material Supply

The shortage of reliable sources of quality planting material is a major constraint in horticultural value chains. Many farmers lack access to certified seedlings and scientifically managed nurseries, affecting crop performance and productivity.

To address this issue, the startup has established partnerships with reputed tissue culture and nursery companies to supply quality planting material for crops such as banana, pomegranate, mango, and sweet orange. This intervention is complemented by technical guidance throughout the crop cycle.

Weak Post-Sale Advisory and Follow-Up Support

Another significant gap identified was the absence of continuous technical support after the sale of agricultural inputs or planting material. Farmers often receive limited guidance once products are purchased, resulting in improper utilization and suboptimal outcomes.
The startup addresses this challenge through field visits, telephonic advisory services, and call-centre-based support systems. Farmers receive crop-specific packages of practices and ongoing technical assistance throughout the production cycle.

Inadequate Market Linkages and Value Chain Integration

Agricultural value chains remain fragmented, with limited coordination between production, input supply, extension services, and marketing systems. As a result, farmers often struggle to secure remunerative prices for their produce despite investing significant resources in production.

To bridge this gap, the startup facilitates market linkages, buyer connections, and buy-back arrangements for selected crops. By connecting farmers with corporate buyers and organized markets, the enterprise seeks to improve price realization and strengthen farmers' participation in value chains.

Advantages of Kissan Agri Mall

- **Organized Agricultural Retail Platform** – Provides farmers with a structured and professionally managed platform for accessing agricultural inputs and services.
- **Customized ERP System –** Enables efficient inventory management, customer management, sales tracking, and data-driven decision-making.
- **Multi-Brand Outlets –** Offers a wide range of agricultural products and solutions from multiple brands under one roof.
- **Access to National and International Brands –** Provides farmers with quality products from reputed national and international brands.
- **Competitive Pricing Mechanism –** Facilitates competitive and transparent pricing of agricultural inputs.
- **Crop-Specific Solutions–** Offers integrated, crop-specific solutions rather than focusing only on the sale of individual inputs.
- **Field Visits and Farmer Advisory Services –** Facilitates regular visits to farmers' fields to understand field-level problems and provide need-based technical guidance.
- **Entrepreneurship Opportunities –** Creates opportunities for agricultural graduates and rural entrepreneurs to establish and operate agri-retail and advisory businesses.

- **Collaboration with FPOs/FPCs –** Strengthens linkages with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) for collective input procurement, advisory services, market linkages, and value-chain development.
- **Integrated Extension Services –** Combines input supply, technical advisory, field-level support, and market linkages, thereby moving beyond conventional input retailing toward a solution-oriented agricultural extension model.

Key Highlights

- **Farmer-Centric Integrated Agribusiness Model:** Kissan Agri Mall was established in 2019 to provide farmers with an integrated platform offering agricultural inputs, technologies, advisory services, and post-harvest support.
- **Integration of Retail and Extension Services:** Each outlet functions as a localized agricultural service centre, combining input supply with field-level technical guidance on crop production, nutrient management, pest and disease management, and other farm-related issues.
- **Addressing Major Value-Chain Gaps:** The model addresses key challenges such as excessive input use, high cultivation costs, inadequate scientific advisory services, limited access to new technologies, poor-quality planting material, and weak post-sale support.
- **Strengthening Market Linkages:** Kissan Agri Mall facilitates buyer connections, market linkages, and buy-back arrangements for selected crops, helping strengthen farmers' participation in agricultural value chains.
- **Solution-Oriented Extension Approach:** By combining agricultural retailing, crop-specific solutions, farmer advisory services, field visits, FPO/FPC collaboration, and market linkages, the enterprise moves beyond conventional input retailing toward a solution-oriented agricultural extension model.

YouTube Link:
https://youtu.be/YWQuRt-c9Hs?list=PLcfEugbo2RL0&t=2798

E4L Report Prepared by:
Dr. Vavilala Priyanka
MANAGE Fellow