

BIOFERTILIZER: STORAGE AND MARKETING

Biofertilizer is the substance which contains living microorganisms which colonizes the rhizosphere or the interior of the plant and promotes growth by increasing the supply or availability of primary nutrient and/or growth stimulus to the target crop, when applied to seed, plant surfaces, or soil.

Storage

One of the biggest challenges for industrial biofertilizer production is to solve the problems related to the transport and maintenance of the inocula during periods of storage and distribution. The formulation of a biofertilizer must maximize the chances of inocula survival, providing a suitable environment for the microbial component.

Such considerations are only met when there is proper storage of biofertilizer throughout from transportation to storage room. All sample stored are placed in plastic bags, with proper labelling, and surface of bags should be wiped clean before storage. Floors and bench tops are wiped regularly, and dusting or sweeping should be avoided to prevent generation of dust.

For saving fertilizing qualities of the biofertilizer, it can be stored during a short period of time in acrylic vessel and then has to be applied in soil. Biofertilizer storage is normally done in one of the following forms.

1. Liquid storage
2. Drying and
3. Composting

However, these techniques are mainly applied on biogas.

Biofertilizers would have the key role in productivity and sustainability of soil and also protect the environment as eco-friendly and cost-effective inputs for the farmers. The commercial history of bio-fertilizer began with the launch of “Nitragin” by Nobbe and Hilther in 1895. This was followed by the discovery of Azotobacter and then Blue-green algae and a host of other microorganisms which are being used till date as bio-fertilizer.

Marketing Plan / Strategy:

Some of the marketing strategies as suggested below may work strongly in the marketing of bio fertilizers:

Market Segmentation & Product Positioning

The segmentation is primarily dividing market into various groups of buyers. First of all the organic producers will be the most important buyers as organic production without bio fertilizers will not be possible. Among nonorganic producers, the market can be segmented by “specific crop grower (Fruits/ Vegetable/Oilseed/ Pulses/Sugarcane/Cereals), institutional buyers (Cane/ Tea/ Coffee/ cotton/ oilseeds/pulses federations & research-farms, SFCI, Agro-industries etc). Bio fertilizers can be easily positioned as environmentally friendly growth enhancer manure with long term benefits such as enrichment of soils, similarly other benefits for example: (a) “Save cost through reduced dosage of chemical fertilizers”(b) “Improves resistance power against disease” (c) “Enhance sugar recovery percent in sugarcane” etc. need to be highlighted.

Pricing

Being price sensitive input, the pricing needs to be kept at penetrative level, slightly lower than the competitors. However, real advantage to the units will come from reduction in logistics costs being near to the consuming areas. Publicity & Training The POS (Point of Sales) material giving details of proper method of application must be made available to all dealer/ distributors and also needs to be ensured that product is displayed visibly. To deploy Extension Executives for promoting bio fertilizers with constant visits and developing a close connect with farmers and undertaking demonstrations with its replication in nearby villages.

Marketing Linkages

With the promotion of alternate sources of nutrition management, there is already awareness among the farmers related to bio fertilizer and becoming popular gradually. Now Bio fertilizers of many brands are readily available in the market through the regular dealer/ distributor network. Many of these are produced outside Odisha. So it is not very difficult to promote the appropriate crop specific products manufactured inside the state. Moreover these products will have added advantage of lower transportation and marketing cost. The marketing of the products can therefore be done through the existing marketing network. The farmer co-operatives and farmer groups can also be contacted for bulk selling. The Marketing linkages with Technology providers

like “Drip Irrigation” producers may be initiated as Liquid bio-fertilizers have got tremendous potential as its application through this technology. Similarly, tie-up with Export oriented crops like turmeric, ginger, spices, fruits and Vegetable growers could be undertaken as the organic products are being preferred by this segment due to compulsion of importing nation’s condition of permissible limits of chemical residues in the produce. Govt. of Odisha is also buying bio fertilizer in bulk for various crops under various schemes and the local products are given preference for the same. This market has to be tapped. There are Sugar Industries who could also be a bulk buyer for Acetobacter and PSM / Potash mobiliser or Zinc & sulphur Solubilisers.

References

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