

GREEN REVOLUTION AND PUNJAB COOPERATIVES

It is a matter of pride for the Cooperatives of the Punjab State that today the Chief Minister, Mr. Parkash Singh Badal, is inaugurating the Fertilizer factory set up by the Markfed in collaboration with Deccan Sales Limited. The Markfed has played a key role in bringing about the green revolution and in assisting the rural population in its economic betterment. The green revolution is essentially a revolution of inputs. As a Ford Foundation study put it "Dr. Borlag produced the seed in Mexico and the first developing area to produce the administrative ability

By

M. S. GILL,

Chairman,

Markfed



for supplying fertilizer and water would reap the benefits." Punjab has been the fortunate one to have achieved this combination. By bold administrative decisions the State was able to organize its supplies of inputs quickly and efficiently. No wonder we took a lead over all other States and were the first to achieve a breakthrough. In this effort the Cooperatives in general and the Markfed in particular played a key role.

The Cooperatives boldly adopted the new crop loan system and it is due to this effort that the short term credit consumption has risen from Rs. 18.53 crores in 1966-67 to 65.68 crores in 1968-69.

Without this credit, massive doses of fertilizer and requirement of water could not have been made available. The Markfed, on the other hand, took over the responsibility of procuring and distributing the large amounts of fertilizers needed by the farmer. It set up over 4,000 depots in the State and the efficiency of its service can be judged by the fact that the fertilizer sale rose from 0.27 lac tonnes in 1956 to 9.00 lac tonnes in 1970. Fertilizer cannot go without water. It was necessary to augment the water supply of the State. In this too the Markfed played a key role by distributing diesel engines through the District Wholesale and Marketing Societies. Over the period 1967 to 1970

REVOLUTION IN FERTILIZERS

By Gurcharan Singh Giant

The Punjab Marketing Federation's balanced fertilizer factory at Ludhiana, is a big step towards great revolution in the use of fertilizers by Punjab farmers.

With the supply of fertilizer from this unit, the Punjab farmer will be saved of the lot of botheration. He will now be getting complete fertilizers in granulated form just like multi-vitamin. This balanced fertilizer is a dire necessity of the day and many more factories of this type are needed to meet the ever-growing demand of the country.

We congratulate the Punjab State Marketing Federation on this auspicious occasion for giving us lead in the production of complete balanced fertilizer for farmers. We are also contemplating to set up another factory of this type in Northern India.

30,000 diesel engines have been distributed.

Thus it is quite evident that the Markfed has played a vital role in increased wheat production by supplying the important needs of fertilizers and water through the credit given by the Cooperative Banks. It is necessary to recognise the role played by the Cooperatives in Punjab green revolution. New seeds would have failed or would have taken much long to produce results if the Cooperatives had not been ready with all the inputs required by the farmer. In fact, this perhaps has been the reason for the slow progress in the high yielding varieties programmes in many other States in the country.

The Markfed has also turned its attention to the setting up of agro-industries. The Cooperative Canneries in Jullundur will help the production and marketing of vegetables. The Khanna Solvent Extraction and Ghee plant will help process the groundnut area. One or more factories are being set up shortly to process the grape crop and thus stabilise its marketing. Other projects such as cattle feed, dairying, egg powder etc. are being actively considered. It is the aim of Markfed to ensure a proper market and therefore a proper price to the farmer by setting up such processing units.

Small Farmers

The Cooperatives no doubt have played and are playing a significant role in the development of this primarily agrarian State. There is one aspect which, however, needs greater attention. There is an impression that the benefits of Cooperative Credit etc. are going mostly to the bigger farmers. We are now, therefore, devoting attention to devise means to make these benefits available

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to the small farmers also. To this end the rules and procedure of the State Cooperative Bank and Land Mortgage Cooperative Bank are being revised and liberalised so as to make the smaller man also eligible for the Cooperative loans. It is our desire to do this, particularly in the Land Mortgage Banks, so that with lesser security the farmer may be able to avail of the facility of buying tractors, engines etc. Instructions have already been issued to make available loans up to Rs 3,500 by the Cooperative Banks for engines with two simple sureties only. It is hoped that with this relaxation and simplification of procedure small farmers will be able to benefit more from cooperatives.

It has also been decided to set up small farmer's development agencies in the Districts of Ferozepur, Amritsar, Sangrur and Patiala. Rs. 3 crores have been provided for schemes to benefit farmers having holding generally below 7.5 acres. It is hoped to gradually increase the loans from cooperatives to such farmers in these districts under this new scheme. Special concessions and even subsidies will be given to small farmers for meeting their irrigation needs, setting up dairying and poultry societies and in devising other schemes to increase their income and make them self-supporting and viable members of the community.

The Cooperatives are determined and anxious to increase their service to the small man in the State. They are also anxious to push the green revolution in a steady upward curve. To this end it is essential now that the farmer should use combined fertilizer and not concentrate on nitrogenous fertilizer only. Experts have told us that nitrogenous fertilizer used without the phosphate and potash content can produce no results. We are, therefore, anxious to promote the use of combined fertilizer. It is to this end that the factory at Ludhiana has been set up. This factory will produce combined granulated fertilizer for use by the Punjab farmers. Therefore it is an important link in the chain of units being set up by the Markfed for the service of the State of Punjab.