

Jain Irrigation ties up with Finnish co

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KEMIRA Agro, part of the \$ 2.1-billion Finnish giant Kemira Oy, is setting up a 50:50 joint venture with Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd., called Jain Kemira Fertilisers Ltd (JKFL).

JKFL is setting up a 25,000 tonnes a year plant for the manufacture of water soluble liquid fertilisers and a 6000-tonne plant for the manufacture of water soluble solid fertilisers in Mohadi village in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra.

This will be India's first project to supply crop and region-specific nutrients which will dissolve in water and can be supplied to vegetation through drip irrigation. This practice is called fertigation.

Conventional fertilisers contain insoluble impurities. They are administered twice or thrice a year. Because of bulk application, a great deal is wasted due to leaching and evaporation. Some quantity gets transmitted beyond the active root zone. The effective utilisation in many cases is less than 50 per cent

of the fertilisers applied.

Fertigation makes possible the supply of nutrients and crop protection agents at predetermined times according to the developmental and physiological stage of the crop. It is designed to supply both water and nutrients directly to the roots creating a wet zone at the site of the greatest root activity.

"What we will offer is custom-made fertilisers to suit the requirements of different soils and crops," Mr Anil Jain, managing director of Jain Irrigation, said. "It will change the way the Indian farmer looks at fertilisers." The company is targeting various horticulture crops.

The technology is not so much in mixing as in crop-specific agronomic packages. Kemira's agronomists have taken soil and water samples and commercial production is expected to begin next year, Mr Jain said. Market seeding among grape growers in Nashik region has confirmed that farmers can save as much as 30 per cent of fertiliser inputs with the added benefit of faster and uniform plant growth, he claimed.