

## Growing Ag-Biologicals segment in the APAC region: Challenges and ways forward

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According to the data from UNFPA, 60% of the world population, or over 4.3 billion people, live in the Asia and Pacific region, which is home to China and India, the two most populous nations on earth. As we go forward, it is anticipated that this number will rise even further. This indicates that in order to properly feed the region and the entire world and keep up with the growing demand for food, agricultural practices must be made more productive and sustainable. One key method that has emerged as the cornerstone of organic agricultural methods and sustainable agriculture globally is using biologicals for agriculture, and the

APAC region is not an exception.

According to research by Precision Business Insights, the ag-biologicals market in the APAC region stood at \$3.8 billion in 2022. Furthermore, the market is poised to grow at a CAGR of 8.6% by 2029. The market is fuelled by the rising demand for organic food, growing awareness pertaining to health, and the surging trend of sustainability. However, there are some restraints that are making the market participants concerned and are likely to hamper the growth of the industry if not addressed soon.

### **Potential restraints**

Currently there are few potential restraints which are stated below:

#### **R&D investment:**

In order to expand the market for their exclusive products and enhance the strength of their agricultural biological portfolios, industry stakeholders in the agribusiness sector must invest in R&D in the sector. Currently there are only few companies who have their own R&D and Production facility. More efforts are needed for evaluation of new generation biological products  
Government regulation: In last few years governments of few countries like India, have taken several steps which promote adoption of biological products. Further governments must also implement strict guidelines to ensure farmer gets quality products, and incentivize farmers who shift towards biological products. Regulatory ecosystem should be feasible for commercialisation of agri biological products.

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#### **Method of usage:**

Traditionally farmers use synthetic pesticides, which often exhibit quick response or show rapid knockdown on pest, by directly affecting the nervous system. While biological alternatives employ living organisms or their by-products for targeted pest control. These biologicals products may need to be applied differently at different time. Farmers need to be aware of this methodology as this comparison is crucial for selecting effective and environmentally friendly solutions in agriculture. These solutions bring us to some of the potential opportunities that market players can explore in a bid to grow the ag-biologicals segment in the APAC region.

#### **Significant opportunities**

As the market for ag-biologicals is surging, the economies in the APAC region are anticipated to come into play. Here are some of the opportunities market players can explore.

#### **Consumer awareness on safe food:**

A thorough awareness of the food production process is the need of the hour to raise consumer awareness of safe food, with a focus on environmental sustainability, health, and ethical sourcing. The market players can encourage people to look for items devoid of dangerous chemicals, pesticides, and additives. This knowledge can enable customers to make deliberate decisions, bolstering the market and demand for products that help produce safe food. Right to safe food should be implemented.

#### **Impact of digital revolution:**

The digital revolution has significantly enhanced the adoption of biological products in agriculture, fostering a more sustainable and eco-friendly approach. Advanced technologies enable precise monitoring of soil health, optimizing the application of biologicals for maximum efficacy. Digital tools facilitate real-time data analysis, empowering farmers to make informed decisions on bio-input usage. This synergy between digital innovation and biological solutions contribute to increased crop yields, reduced environmental impact, and a more resilient and productive agricultural system.

#### **Impact of social media:**

Social media plays a pivotal role in promoting awareness and knowledge about the benefits of biological products in agriculture, connecting farmers and researchers globally. Platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn facilitate the exchange of success stories and best practices, encouraging widespread adoption of sustainable farming practices. The collaborative nature of social media fosters a sense of community, empowering farmers to embrace and implement biological solutions for enhanced agricultural productivity.

### **Way forward**

Ag-biologicals have emerged as novel solutions for farmers that address several challenges of conventional farming methods. The need of the hour for the industry is to educate the growers about the potential of the products, as it will potentially lead to the growth of the market. As we move forward, the relevance of biology is also poised to increase as the world is now more focused on organic food, health, and sustainability. Collectively, it is safe to say that with the use of biological solutions to cultivate the crops, consumers will be reassured in the future that their food is produced in a safe and sustainable manner along with environmental protection.