

## PRESS RELEASE

### **New alliance to unlock potential of smallholder farmers**

*In India, the 'Better Life Farming' alliance will develop sustainable and scalable business models with global and local partners to improve livelihoods and food security.*

**New Delhi, July 23, 2018:** 80 percent of India's farmers are smallholders who farm on less than two hectares of land. They are more vulnerable to challenges such as lack of finance, adverse climate impacts, irrigation management, pests and crop diseases, rural migration and fluctuating commodity prices. Because of these challenges, they are able to realize only a fraction of their potential productivity.

On April 20, 2018, Bayer, International Finance Corporation (IFC, a member of the World Bank Group), Netafim and Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, launched the '*Better Life Farming*' alliance in Washington D.C., to provide holistic and innovative solutions for smallholder farmers in developing economies. Today, the global alliance was launched in India along with additional local partners: Yara Fertilizers, DeHaat and Big Basket.

In India, the Better Life Farming alliance started with a project team mapping key crops in India and carrying out a study on local crop yields compared to the average national yield. Then, the regions and crops where the yield gaps were huge were chosen. That's how green chillies came into the picture with Varanasi being chosen as the first pilot in India. The project started with a small pilot to establish the proof of concept. 20 farmers in 20 villages received advisory on the use of best agricultural practices and the latest technologies to grow green chillies. As a result, farmers were able to double their yields and triple their farm incomes.

In 2017, the project was commercially scaled up to include 250 farmers. The team also brought in an offtaker to buy the produce from the farmers. In that way the oligopoly of the middlemen who had been dictating low prices to the farmers in the past was broken. Suddenly there was competition and price transparency, and within days, the traders were offering good prices to the farmers too. In 2018, the project will be scaled up to reach 1,500 chilli farmers in Uttar Pradesh. After green chillies, the alliance will focus on helping tomato smallholders in Jharkhand increase their yields and income.

Speaking at the launch of the alliance in New Delhi, Peter R. Mueller, Head of Crop Science Division, Bayer South Asia, said: "We want to support smallholders because we truly believe that empowering them is crucial to achieve food security. At the same time, we want to increase their livelihoods. But first, smallholders need to be fast-tracked towards achieving economic viability, so that they can earn incomes from their farmland and not just use it as a means to survive. Better Life Farming is a great example of how a collective effort and commitment to innovation, sustainability and social responsibility can contribute to a better life, not only for smallholders and their families, but also for their local communities."

Sharing his experience, Pappu Singh, a smallholder green chilli farmer from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, said: "Our plants often suffered from fungal and viral diseases and only produced a small harvest or none at all. After the interventions of the Better Life Farming alliance, I have

been able to double my yield compared to previous years.” This success gives Pappu Singh a reason to look to the future with optimism. “I would like to buy two hectares of extra land and create more employment for the people in my village. Now I can also fulfill my daughter’s aspiration to become a doctor”, envisions Pappu Singh.

“Many smallholder farmers reach less than 20 percent of their potential productivity owing to limited access to inputs, credit, and markets. The adverse effect of climate change further increases their risks. IFC is convening the private sector to improve farm yields through agricultural know-how, access to finance, and linkage to markets. IFC is committed to help family farming enterprises reach their full potential and increase their incomes, thus supporting the Indian government’s mandate of doubling farmers’ incomes”, said Rick Van der Kamp, Senior Operations Officer, MAS Advisory, IFC.

Randhir Chauhan, Managing Director, Netafim India, said: “This alliance aims to offer solutions to our most urgent global challenges, such as the growing demand for food and scarcity of water. By using precision irrigation, and other advanced farming practices the alliance brings, smallholder farmers can significantly increase their yields, reduce their vulnerability to weather changes and ensure economic growth.”

Sanjiv Kanwar, Senior Vice President, Yara Fertilizers India Private Limited, said: “Yara is an active partner in the Better Life Farming alliance. In collaboration with our partners, we aim to address smallholder farmers’ needs at every step of the value chain. Together, we are providing integrated solutions to enable a transition to more profitable and sustainable farming. Yara is contributing by educating farmers about balanced crop nutrition and supporting them with crop nutrition programs targeted to deliver improved productivity and profitability. The Better Life Farming alliance is aligned with Yara’s mission to responsibly feed the world and protect the planet.”

Shashank Kumar, Founder & CEO, DeHaat, said: “We strongly believe that only an end-to-end proposition can bring about a larger impact for smallholders. That's exactly what the ‘Better Life Farming’ alliance intends to do where various stakeholders come to a single platform with their respective strengths and offerings. In addition to the impact on farmers' livelihoods, we also foresee another value addition of the effort and that's about promoting sustainable agricultural practices as well as producing low residual produce for the consumer. As an AgTech start-up serving more than 50,000+ farmers, we are very excited to be a part of this alliance.”

“The ‘Better Life Farming’ alliance gels very well with Bigbasket’s strategy of partnering with Indian farmers directly. We use our technology based online platform to completely disintermediate the value chain of Fruits & Vegetables and hence give a better realization to farmers. The alliance will help us support farmers, who are using better technologies and producing quality produce,” said Vipul Mittal, National Category Head, Fruits & Vegetables, at Bigbasket.com.

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### **About Better Life Farming alliance**

The 'Better Life Farming' alliance aims to help ensure more safe, nutritious and affordable food for the growing world population, advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of 'ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.' The efficient use of available resources, such as water, fertilizer, and energy, will empower growers to produce higher quality crops, generate higher incomes, and make farming attractive for future generations so that rural communities can prosper. For more information about the alliance and its work with smallholders please visit [www.betterlifefarming.com](http://www.betterlifefarming.com)

### **About Bayer**

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health care and agriculture. Its products and services are designed to benefit people and improve their quality of life. At the same time, the Group aims to create value through innovation, growth and high earning power. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development and to its social and ethical responsibilities as a corporate citizen. In fiscal 2017, the Group employed around 99,800 people and had sales of EUR 35.0 billion. For more information, go to [www.bayer.com](http://www.bayer.com)

### **About IFC**

IFC, a sister organization of the World Bank and member of the World Bank Group, is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. We work with more than 2,000 businesses worldwide, using our capital, expertise, and influence to create markets and opportunities in the toughest areas of the world. In FY17, we delivered a record \$19.3 billion in long-term financing for developing countries, leveraging the power of the private sector to help end poverty and boost shared prosperity. For more information, visit [www.ifc.org](http://www.ifc.org)

### **About Netafim**

Netafim is the global leader in precision irrigation for a sustainable future. With 29 subsidiaries, 17 manufacturing plants and 4,500 employees worldwide, Netafim delivers innovative, tailor-made solutions to millions of farmers, from smallholders to large-scale agricultural producers, in over 110 countries. Founded in 1965, Netafim pioneered the drip revolution, creating a paradigm shift toward precision irrigation. Today, Netafim provides diverse precision irrigation solutions for agriculture, greenhouses, landscaping and mining, accompanied by expert agronomic, technical and operational support. Netafim is also leading the way in digital farming for irrigation, integrating monitoring, analysis and automation into one state-of-the-art system. Specializing in end-to-end solutions from the water source to the root zone, Netafim delivers turnkey irrigation and greenhouse projects, supported by engineering, project management and financing services. Know more at [www.netafim.com](http://www.netafim.com)

### **About Yara**

In collaboration with customers and partners, Yara grows knowledge to responsibly feed the world and protect the planet, to fulfil its vision of a collaborative society, a world without hunger and a planet respected. Our crop nutrition solutions and precision farming offerings allow farmers to increase yields and improve product quality while reducing environmental

impact. Our environmental and industrial solutions improve air quality and reduce emissions, and are key ingredients in the production of a wide range of products. We foster an open culture of diversity and inclusion that promotes the safety and integrity of our employees, contractors, business partners, and society at large. Founded in 1905 to solve emerging famine in Europe, Yara has a worldwide presence with more than 17,000 employees and operations in over 60 countries. In 2017, Yara reported revenues of USD 11.4 billion. For more information, please visit [www.yara.com](http://www.yara.com)

### **About DeHaat**

DeHaat is a tech based farmer's market place to offer complete end-to-end agri services right from seed to market. Currently 50,000+ farmers in eastern India are directly associated with DeHaat to avail 360 degree agri services. Our larger goal is to become one stop solution for small farmers in a sustainable way and at the same time to provide direct access to farmers for other stakeholders and to bring transparency in the agri value chain. DeHaat has been recognized at multiple forums and is targeting to serve 1 million farmers by 2021.

### **About Big Basket**

Bigbasket.com (Supermarket Grocery Supplies Pvt. Ltd.) is India's largest online grocery retailer, and is headquartered in Bangalore. It was setup in 2011, and currently operates out of 25 cities across India and employs over 15000 employees. It has a catalogue of over 20,000 products spread across 11 categories. Bigbasket currently services over 2 million customer orders per day, with 85% of them being repeat orders. Fruits & Vegetables constitute to over 18% of its turnover and is an integral part of the assortment. It procures F&V from over 5000 farmers spread across 10 states, through collection centres operating in over 25 locations. Bigbasket operates in both B2C as well as B2B space and aims to exit FY2018-19 at a run rate of USD 75 million per month in Sales turnover.



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