

# Synthesis

INHOUSE MAGAZINE OF SYNTHITE INDUSTRIES LTD



## Covering the extra mile

The first product that came out of the first Synthite plant in 1972 suffered from several technical flaws. But the company had no plans to drop it. It refined the process until the product met the quality standards.

Continued refining of processes and a constant thrust on innovation have today taken the company to the top of the oleoresin industry in the world, with a product bouquet of over 500 products and clients across the globe.

While its men worked on fine-tuning the processes and discovering new products, the company worked for them. When most corporates seek only to maximize profits, Synthite chooses to reinvest in the company and its people.

It also meant taking extra care of the employees.

From 1972 to 2012, the company has travelled ahead of its competitors.

How was the journey different?

Read the notes Synthite veterans Mr Sales K Francis, who heads the finance department and Mr M K Raju, who is in charge of production, wrote on their experiences. Mr Francis put in 16 years of service while Mr Raju has been with the Synthite processing plants for more than 30 years.

**Detailed Report on Page 4**



*Mr C V Jacob, Chairman, Synthite Group, launches 'Kitchen Treasures' in the presence of Mr P I Shaik Pareeth, District Collector, Ernakulam, and Directors of Synthite*

## Time to savour Kitchen Treasures

**Synthite launches first consumer brand; four spice powders in zip pouch packets**

Synthite Industries Limited has launched its first consumer brand, Kitchen Treasures. The company, which is completing 40 years and is today world's leading oleoresin manufacturer, will offer four spices – chilli, Kashmiri chilli, turmeric and coriander, in powder form in 500 gm and 1 kg zip pouch packets. At present, the company is targeting bulk consumers in the food service sectors such as hotels, restaurants, canteens and caterers. At a later stage, the products will be



made available in retail stores. Synthite, one of the world's leading creators of ingredients for flavor and fragrance industries, is launching 'Kitchen Treasures' with the backup of the finest and high quality raw materials. The company has an

extensive network of farmers across the country from whom high quality raw materials are procured. These farmers have been trained on international food quality standards and adhere to the company's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), ensuring adequate protection to the crops. A high level of customisation and dedication to quality control has earned Synthite, the trust of some of the best names worldwide.

### New Vistas



*Synthite Industries Limited Chairman and Managing Director Mr C V Jacob inaugurates the new office in Mumbai. (Inset): Mr Jacob and directors Dr Viju Jacob and Mr Aju Jacob with the staff*

#### The office address:

Synthite Industries Limited  
713, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Ackruti (Hub town) Solaris,  
N.S Phadke Marg,  
Near East-West Flyover,  
Saiwadi, Andheri (E),  
Mumbai- 400069

### INDIA'S VOICE



*Synthite Industries Director Dr Viju Jacob attends the 44<sup>th</sup> session of Codex Committee on Food and Hygiene held at New Orleans, Louisiana, between November 11 and 16, 2012. Dr Jacob, who is also the Vice-Chairman, Spices Board, represented India at the meet*



*The model plots in chilli; (right) farmers in the field with Synthite officials*

# Enticing the farmer

## Farmtech's model plots convince farmers the advantages of IPM

**M**aking the Indian farmer think differently is a tough task. Especially when it calls for new investment, dropping of some age-old practices and adoption of new ones. It has, however, become absolutely necessary as the food safety standards increasingly become tight and the raw material quality becomes a decisive factor in the international market.

The Farmtech division of Synthite Industries Ltd has adopted a novel approach to pass the message of integrated pest management (IPM) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to the farmers. It has set up about 100 IPM model plots in various States to educate farmers on recommended practices and demonstrate the advantages of practising it in minimising the cost of cultivation beside saving crop ecosystem.

"IPM demands that the farmers follow every single practice in the programme to the full," said Mr Abdul Lathif, Lead, Farmtech. "This means a different approach as well

as eliminating some of the prevalent practices. Many farmers find the shift difficult." The best way is to demonstrate the advantages of IPM, hence the idea of model plots.

Farmtech implements the projects by identifying some willing farmers in the village. "We meet the cost of input completely, and monitor the process closely." Seeing the advantage in terms of low input costs, better yield and better remuneration, more farmers take to IPM practices now, Mr Lathif said.

The initiative, coupled with regular farmer training programmes during the season to impart farmers with knowledge of GAP, helps them fully understand the import of the practices.

Farmtech also puts into practice elements of GAP which includes minimal intervention to natural crop ecosystem. This helps protect the soil, water and climate at its natural level.

In another initiative, Farmtech has launched direct farming in se-

lect villages where the company buys IPM chilli directly from the farmer. This helps the farmers get a better remuneration.

The Farmtech division offers advisory services to enable the farming community take up cultivation of various crops, mainly chilli, and implement post-harvest management practices. It also involves in the procurement of the produce obtained in the process, so that it meets the health standards prescribed by major customers in the US and the European Union.

Farmtech works with farmers in their day to day farming practices, monitoring crop care, ensuring IPM practices are fully implemented. A major area where strict monitoring is warranted is the drying of the harvested chilli as per GAP. At present, Farmtech works with over 3,000 farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu covering 4,000 acres. The division has now started its operations in Madhya Pradesh also.

# Its pays to spend on quality



**M K Raju**  
*Lead-Production*

Starting from the process of picking up the right people for the jobs, there has been a great quest for quality at Synthite. When I started working for Synthite 30 years ago, we had only one processing plant and half-a-dozen products. Today, we have more than a dozen plants spread across India and even abroad, and more than 500 products. These are no accidents, but the result of careful planning, and an uncompromising attitude to quality. True, we do not look at the cost while pursuing the best. But it has never been a blind game, and the money we spent never went in vain. It pays, in the end, to spend on quality.

One of my earliest memories of a decision which involved an extra cost was the one to import raw materials, especially pepper. The local varieties were not only low on yield, but also fell short of customer expectations. Import was a costly option, but we did go for that. In the end, it earned us a great name. Such seemingly costly efforts helped us make big gains in the long run.

The management has ensured that we have the best of equipment, and that we do not suffer from lack of infrastructure. From the first desolventiser to the latest centritherm, we have the best in class. At the same time, we have never stopped innovating our processes. We often take pioneering steps in pursuit of excellence. When it was warranted, we have even designed our own equipment.

As leaders in the oleoresin industry, we do not have very many models outside to look up to. It has mostly been the trial-and-error method that we have followed. Naturally, it in-

involved wastage of resources—human and otherwise. But we have been successful in systematizing everything that we do so that we learn even from the errors we make. The focus has always been on better results next time. Like a pioneer. But if the end product and its quality justify the cost, it will ensure better and continued business. We have consistently done it.

When I started, we got little advance training: it used to be only on-the-job training. But as we grew, we started putting systems in place. Now we have launched SPROUTS - a training programme for the systematic training of the new recruits which equip them with a proper orientation on the entire process so that they get an early advantage. In a nut shell, we have grown not only in the number of products and processes, but also succeeded in institutionalising quality production. I count it as a big advantage we have now.

Mistakes do happen, and the result may not justify the effort put in. But the company has always been on the look-out for ways to avoid a repeat of the same, and not for finding fault with the process. We do have very strict self-analysis and criticism, but the aim is always to improve the process and avoid mistakes.

The management has always been working with the people, and I found it never lacking in appreciating the work we put in. The hands-on approach of the top management starting from our chairman goes a long

**We have been successful in systematizing everything that we do so that we learn even from the errors we make. The focus has always been on better results next time**

**The hands-on approach of the top management starting from our chairman goes a long way in keeping our morale high. Every employee would have an experience in which he felt the fun of working together**

way in keeping our morale high.

Every employee would have an experience in which he felt the fun of working together. I too have one. In one of my early years, we had an order for a particular product in a particular quantity, and one of the directors, who had recently joined then, told me that the order held big potential for the future. However, when we started working on it, we realised that we were short of raw material. And we had little time to source it from anywhere else. Only an out-of-the-box thinking could save the situation. I decided to experiment with a new method which I thought could salvage the situation.

I went ahead, working on all the three shifts, and by morning, we had produced the sufficient quantity. The director came to me early in the morning and asked me how it went. I said we succeeded in extracting the sufficient quantity through a new process, and had given the sample for quality check. When he realised that I was working all through the night, he said he would go to the lab and collect the results.

He went there and waited for the results to come. And as soon as he got it, he came running, and congratulated me. These may be small gestures for many, but for the people on the ground, they mean a lot. A worthy lesson we try to emulate now.



From the  
Chairman's desk  
**Knowing our past**

In the last 40 years, we have not only become a big company, but also have earned the reputation as a good, caring company. We are known in the corporate circles not only for the impressive rate of growth we clock, but also for the good practices we follow and the pioneering spirit we show. We

are justifiably proud of whatever we have done.

We have chosen this path knowing well that there will not be many people to follow us. Our experience is a testimony to the fact that a company can reach its targets by travelling the path of truth, care and grace. We were never after profiteering; however, we profited from everything we did. We believed in hard work and dedication; we despised exploitation. We drew our raw material from a benevo-

lent nature; and we have more than returned to it what we took from it. From the farmer who toils on the soil to the customer who buys the products and uses them we have tried to be most truthful to all of them. And the result is our leadership position in the industry, and an impeccable reputation.

I would like all of us to have a good understanding of the practices we have followed because it shall help us when we plan for the future.

## Managing change



**Sales K Francis**  
*Head-Corporate  
Finance*

Synthite Industries has always followed exceptional policies when it comes to people. They not only offered its people financial benefits, but also a sense of life security. And the security cover did not limit itself to the factory premises. Instead, it extended itself to the entire area where the company operated. The result: the creation of a positive environment where people become constructive and more productive.

Synthite is the first private sector company in Kerala to offer pension to its employees. The scheme was launched in the eighties in association with the Life Insurance Corporation. The pension amount was fixed based on the salary each person draws; the company would pay two-thirds of the premium and the employee, the rest. It was so designed that even if an employee leaves the company midway, he or she can still continue with the scheme. In short, the company did not use it as a tool to retain employees but as an extension of its employee-friendly policy.

The company has been mindful of the problems its people faced in their lives, and chose to become a partner in their efforts to solve them. The company has been offering vehicle loans

and housing loans for long. They either come as interest-free or with a big component as grant. They are so carefully designed that they helped many realise their dreams so early in their life. The company also takes care of the medical treatment of its employees. It also is very liberal in its help for educating the children of the employees.

As part of fulfilling its commitment to the community in which it operates, the company launched a major health insurance scheme for the people of the Panchayat in 2003. Under the Vishva Arogya medical insurance policy, it covered as many as 7,000 people from 1,600 families in the village. Of late, the government has introduced medical insurance schemes for the people. Still, the company spends several lakhs for the scheme even now.

Over the past several years, the company has been going through big changes. From a family-managed enterprise to a professionally organized large corporate. And I believe that we are doing a fine job of managing

this change. An example is the way we used to take care of personal problems of the people. Earlier, from the chairman downwards, every body from the top management was accessible for the people to discuss their problems, and seek a solution. Now that we have become a big company with very well-diversified operations, this has become difficult as directors have moved into a more strategic role. So we are putting in place a policy frame work so that we have a system to address the needs of the people. The management continues to be accessible, but the decisions have become more institutionalised. Decision-making has become a lot more decentralized. I believe the management will not allow the human face we have evolved over the decades to become a casualty of our growth. The company has also realized that institutionalising its working means introduction of some of the best global practices in the company. Use of information technology for bringing in more efficiency and adoption of new human resource management techniques as well as tools such as total productive maintenance (TPM) are some such measures. We have always followed a trial-and-error method in which we fine-tune the processes after assessing the results. I am sure we will apply the same strategy here and come out with the best that will work for the benefit of the company and its people.

**The company has been mindful of the problems its people faced in their lives, and chose to become a partner in their efforts to solve them**

## Family @work



Several employees made use of the opportunity provided by Family @ Work to bring their family to their work place. The visitors went around the processing plants, interacted with the people who run the equipment. They also had meetings with top officials of Synthite. The visit ended with a sumptuous lunch



Synthite Harihar unit donated a grinding machine and idly cooker to the government school at Kavalettu. (In pic) Officials of Synthite receive a letter of appreciation from the school authorities

## It's in our blood

Ramada Environs Team in association with IMA Kochi branch organised a blood donation camp for Ramada staff and the neighbour-

ing people in Kumbalam Panchayat on November 30 at Ramada Resort Cochin. The initiative proved a great success as the IMA team was able to

collect more than 55 units of blood in four hours. (In pic below: The Ramada Environs Team which organised the camp)



## MERRY X-MAS



The Christmas celebration at the Synthite Calicut



Chief Operating Officer Mr Praveen Venkataramanan along with the Bio Ingredients HODs after the half-yearly review meet at Synthite Calicut



# Synthite Star Annual awards



Mr Raju B T (left) and Mr Paul C Jose receive the annual Synthite Star award from director Dr Viju Jacob

Mr Raju B T (Corporate Projects) and Mr Paul C Jose (Production-Spice division) were selected for the annual Synthite Star awards. Mr Raju was selected for persistent efforts in process improvement at multiple occasions, resulting in reduction of human efforts as well as increase in process efficiency. Mr Jose put in consistent and innovative efforts resulting in improved process efficiency and working. The award carries a cash price of ₹10,000 and a citation each.

## Synthite day



The Synthite Day was celebrated with pomp and gaiety on December 1, 2012 at the company headquarters in Kolenchery. Various programmes were held during the day, which ended with a musical programme by play-back singer Vidhu Pratap. (In picture) Mr P I Shaik Pareeth, District Collector, Ernakulam, inaugurates the celebration

## A day to remember



Children's day was celebrated at Synthite on November 24, 2012. The day was fun and learning filled for the children of employees of the company; the highlight being the visit to St. Thomas Orphanage, Perumbavoor

## Synthite Stars



Synthite Star of the month (October 2012) awardees Mr Paul C Jose, Mr Linus C S, Mr Pauly Joseph (Spice division) and Mr Raju B T (Corporate Projects) with Chairman and Managing Director Mr C V Jacob.

### Synthite Star- October 2012



Mr Gowtham K, Synthite Maradur who received the Synthite Star Award of October 2012 in the category of Individual Award- Business.

## OBITUARY



A H Arun, who was working as Associate-Farmtech Division (Hassan office) passed away on October 14, 2012. He succumbed to a severe attack of dengue fever. Arun is survived by his wife and a three-year old daughter.

May his soul rest in peace.

# The invisible hand

**Total productive maintenance (TPM) is a management tool that ensures optimal use of resources. It's tough for those who are new to the idea to identify the wastage, if any. For a deft hand, however, it's simple, as explained in this anecdote**

A leading hotel chain in India invited a management consultant from Japan to hold a workshop for its staff. The staff were very sceptical: the hotel is doing excellent business, and this person from Japan has no exposure to the hotel industry. What exactly is he going to teach us, they wondered.

But everybody as planned gathered for the workshop in the conference hall sharp at 9 am. The consultant was introduced to them. Not so impressive a personality, nor the English all that good. He spoke as if he was first formulating each sentence in Japanese and then translating it into rather clumsy English.

"Good morning! Let's start work. I am told this is a workshop; but I see neither work nor shop. So let's proceed where work is happening. Let's start with the first room on the first floor." The consultant, followed by the senior management and the participants tramped out of the conference room and proceeded to the destination.

That happened to be the laundry room of the hotel.

The consultant entered the room and stood at the window. "Beautiful view!" he said. The staff knew it; they need not invite a Japanese consultant to tell them this.

"A room with such a beautiful view is being wasted as a laundry room. Shift the laundry to the basement and convert this into a guest room."

Aha! Now nobody had ever thought about that! The manager said, "Yes, it can be done."

"Then let's do it," the consultant said.

"Yes sir, I will make a note of this and we will include it in the report on the workshop that will be prepared," said the manager.

"Excuse me, but there is nothing to note down in this. Let's just do it, just now," insisted the consultant.

"Just now?" asked the manager.

"Yes, decide on a room on the ground floor/basement and shift the stuff out of this room right away. It should take a couple of hours, right?" said the consultant.

"Yes," replied the manager.

"Let's come back here just before lunch. By then all this stuff will have got shifted out and the room must be ready with the carpets, furniture etc



and from today you can start earning the few thousand that you charge your customers for a room a night."

"Ok, sir." The manager had no option.

The next destination was the pantry. At the entrance were two huge sinks full of plates to be washed. The consultant removed his jacket and started washing the plates.

"Sir, please, what are you doing?"

The manager didn't know what to say and what to do.

"Why, I am washing the plates," said he.

"But sir, there are staff here to do that," informed the manager. He, however, continued washing. "I think the sink is for washing plates. There are stands here to keep the plates and the plates should go into the stands."

After finishing the job, he asked, "how many plates do you have?"

"Plenty, so that there should never be a shortage," said the manager. The consultant said, "We have a word in Japanese - muda. It means delay. Muda also means unnecessary spending. One lesson to be learnt in this workshop is to avoid both. If you have plenty of plates, there will be delay in cleaning them up."

On the last day, the consultant told them a story.

"A Japanese and an American, both fond of hunting, entered a jungle with guns. Suddenly they realised that they had run out of bullets. Just then they heard a lion roaring. Both started running. But the Japanese took a short break to put on his sports shoes. The American said, "What are you doing? We must first get to the car."

The Japanese said, "No. I only have to ensure that I remain ahead of you."

All the participants realised suddenly that the lion would stop after getting his victim!

"The lesson is competition in today's world is so fierce, that it is important to stay ahead of others even by just a couple of steps," said the consultant.

---

*Shared by Mr Ninan Philip,  
Director- Quality & Process  
Improvement*