

# Summit Agro - a reliable partner at the right moment!

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*We are talking with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miroslav Tityanov, Managing Director of Summit Agro, about the fundamental corporate policies whose upward trend guarantees high-value market success and technological breakthroughs, raises the level of strategic partnership and integrity with Bulgarian agriculture to increase its intensity, sustainability, quality and effectiveness.*

*Interview by Emil Ivanov*

**Assoc. Tityanov, please briefly present the business card of Summit Agro**

Summit Agro is owned by Sumi Agro Europe, a subsidiary of one of the largest Japanese corporations – Sumitomo Corporation, a multinational conglomerate in all sectors of the economy. Japanese manufacturing and leadership – a symbol of superior quality and precision – were brought to Bulgaria by Summit Agro in 1999. The focus of the company's business is agriculture. We officially represent more than 40 leading global manufacturers of plant protection products, fertilizers, seeds, biostimulants and biopesticides from Japan, France, Italy, Spain, the USA and others. A competitive advantage of the company is that it has the capacity and resources to update its product portfolio in real time, depending on the requirements and needs of the market. The dynamics and structure of our commercial portfolio, whose characteristics are guaranteed product quality, an adequate pricing policy and the high professional competence of the team, have made us one of the leading companies in this sector.

***What are the behavioral rules of the company team in a highly competitive market environment?***

With minor exceptions, every business, every job is not done by one person, but by a team. A cohesive team that has accumulated collective experience develops. In order to build on and preserve its valuable qualities, the team must work together, closely, in person. To understand each other with few words, with a single look, with a single gesture. And most importantly – trust! It is built over years, with very costly mistakes and failures. It evaporates in no time!

I admit, this is not an exhaustive answer to your question. I will expand on the topic another time, because it is multifaceted. It concerns the price and value of leadership, of vision, of convergent thinking, of reasonable risk and many other things. I will allow myself only to add: there are no ready-made recipes for forming a championship company line-up. And yet, it is worth trying, struggling, working hard. This is a real challenge, a real test for every manager who has the ambition to prove themselves!

***In recent years Summit Agro has been boldly opening new doors. What innovations will you position on the market in 2021, which structural technologies will you upgrade and transform in order to protect the corporate mission – A reliable partner at the right moment?***

Our corporate agenda for 2021 includes several highlights. We continue to develop the plant protection products segment in several directions. One of them: comprehensive targeted solutions for specific phytosanitary situations. Another: increasing efficacy, avoiding resistance through the introduction of new active bases,

combinations and formulations, etc. A third: solving difficult problems. Such a difficult problem, for example, is the effective control of soil pests. Many of the plant protection products known so far have been banned from use, a trend with a persistent trajectory. Summit Agro offers an excellent solution to overcome the emerging deficit – microgranulated insecticides with additional nitrogen and phosphorus content.

Summit Agro is among the companies on the Bulgarian market with leading positions in the offering, supply and sale of fertilizers. We have a super multifunctional nutritional complex for different agricultural crops, for different production systems – conventional and organic. The MICROSTAR technology is based on microgranulated fertilizers whose parameters and qualities have no analogue on our market. Microstar Fusion is the only formulation with a full set of root activators. Part of our commercial palette are liquid phosphorus fertilizers for soil application, as well as fertilizers containing methylene urea for foliar and soil use. Microbial fertilizers, fertilizers containing micronutrients, and super-concentrated NPK fertilizers in gel form complement our commercial list.

This year we are launching a new project – we are positioning a large range of biological pesticides. This promising direction fully fits into the ambitious plans and initiatives of the EU for a “green” course of agricultural production, which is also gaining momentum in our country. The project is ambitious. The new generation of biological means for achieving a high health status of agricultural crops will give us the opportunity to redefine part of our commercial strategy. We have proven on the market that we have the energy to accumulate new ideas, new horizons, new perspectives. And this is a clear sign that Summit Agro is a responsible and active participant in the large-scale transformation of crop production towards a sharp increase in its environmental and safety coefficient. Of course, this approach and activity of ours are not an indulgence for genius. We simply strive to keep pace with the times.

***Today one policy creates a significant advantage in agribusiness – a new level of connectivity between education, science and industry. What is the corporate philosophy and vision of Summit Agro on this strategic topic?***

The new, higher level of connectivity between education, science and industry is still a topic of discussion today. Models, formats, high-speed tracks, roadmaps, formulas that will work are being sought... My personal opinion on the matter, as Managing Director of Summit Agro and a lecturer at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, is that connectivity should be defined on the basis of rational collaboration with the aim of achieving one or another strategic objective, a new horizon, a new perspective.

What is the strategic objective today? This objective is precision agriculture under conditions of a changing climate and phytosanitary situation. We need reliable means in an uncertain environment.

Let us return to your question. Summit Agro is a partner of all scientific organizations in agriculture, with the focus on the Agricultural University in Plovdiv. This is the only higher education institution in Bulgaria of a high class where the professional asset, the specialized managerial staff of Bulgarian agriculture is created. It is also the active research center of national importance. Summit Agro, as a structure-defining factor in agribusiness, invests a great energy charge in achieving the most successful possible integrity with education and science. The leading principle is shared responsibility. At the Agricultural University we test new plant protection products, biostimulants, biopesticides. Our specialists are frequent guests at the university, informing the student audience in advance about our latest innovations – products and technologies that we are about to offer on the market. This type of connectivity gives us a competitive advantage. Future agronomists are well acquainted with the market business policies, competencies and expertise of Summit Agro as a reliable partner at the right moment!

***What is the opinion, attitude and position of Summit Agro on the current topic of illegal import of plant protection products that are not authorized for use?***

The illegal import of plant protection products is a market tumor whose size in Bulgaria is increasing at a steady pace. The consequences of this calamity are multidirectional. On the one hand, with these products, most of which do not contain the specified amount of active substance, the respective phytosanitary case cannot be resolved. On the other hand, the lack of any guarantee regarding their environmental status endangers human health. The unfair commercial practice, demonstrated under the nose of the state and the public of the country, inevitably leads to distortion of the market environment, to substantial financial losses for all legitimate participants in agricultural production – farmers, suppliers of plant protection products, traders in crop production, consumers.

***This assessment of the situation by you is rather discouraging and pessimistic, suggesting that there is no light at the end of the tunnel...***

The only effective way to remove this tumor is the political will and institutional initiative to criminalize the illegal import of unregulated plant protection products! Until this happens, all desperate attempts by the Plant

Protection Industry Association, of which Summit Agro is a part, as well as by the customs authorities and the police, to bring about change are efforts, funds and energy wasted to the wind!

***In agribusiness circles the expression “informed choice” has become very popular. Its interpretation: the commercial company creates a reliable and objective information field; thanks to this privilege the farmer formulates their most appropriate decision for the choice of plant protection product, technology, etc. In other words: the loyal trader, in the role of a responsible partner, shows empathy and solidarity, protects the investment of their client, works for their profit.***

### ***How does Summit Agro use this instrument?***

Technologies have turned information from a scarce into an abundant resource. And this changes the rules of the game. The information avalanche, in addition to its unquestionable cognitive values, in some cases also creates a favorable environment for speculation, for conflicting messages and signals, for dubious suggestions, for the imposition of false authorities, for learning some things the hard way.

You ask how Summit Agro works to create a real image of the content, capabilities and qualities of its commercial portfolio? We strive to activate thinking. Innovations require thinking, and information overload is a major obstacle to in-depth and focused thinking!

In our view, the real informed choice is a set of dialogical practices, combinations of attitudes and qualities that exclude the information flow from moving in one direction – from trader to client. Summit Agro seeks feedback. And once we receive it, we proceed to draw up a specific commercial proposal. This type of communication, this affinity for dialogue, this aspiration of ours to make our top list recognizable, helps us a lot not to lose concentration, to lay the cornerstone in trader–client relations. For us there are no privileged, favored, preferred clients; for us all clients are important! This active link between company and client, expressed through informed choice, is our guarantee that the farmers who have chosen to work with us will buy rationally, not emotionally. We generate basic professional knowledge, skills and attitudes so that our partners possess reliable and effective tools for managing risk and crisis situations, guarantees for achieving a high health status of their agricultural crops.

*We extend our special thanks to Assoc. Prof. Tityanov for the interview. The team of "Plant Protection" magazine wishes Summit Agro another strong year filled with great success!*