

# Agriculture & Industry Survey

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**Prashant Thakkar**  
Managing Partner  
Aditya Corporation

*Indian raisins: Tradition to  
technology*  
(Page 16)



**Madhav Kshatriya**  
Managing Director and CEO  
Cornext Agri Products Pvt Ltd

*From fodder crisis to fodder  
security: How Cornext is  
revolutionising India's  
dairy sector*  
(Page 22)



**Vaidya Akhilesh  
Varier**  
Co-founder, Shivamastu  
Ayurevolve Solutions

*India's organic export  
revolution*  
(Page 30)



**Commercial Dairy Farming;  
more failures than success**

**Dr. Chandrakiran N. Sant**  
Dairy Management Advisor

(Page 42)

## Opportunities in Agriculture

Discover 30+ business opportunities and partnerships.  
See full listings with contact details inside — Page 45

## BIRDS IN FARMING

### Balancing benefits and risks

This article highlights the vital role birds play in sustainable farming. It explains how species like owls, hawks, and swallows help control pests and enrich soil, while also noting the challenges posed by crop-damaging birds. Drawing lessons from history, it emphasizes the need for balance—managing bird populations through habitat conservation and reduced pesticide use—to ensure both agricultural productivity and ecological health.

**O**n any farm, the sound of birdsong is more than just background music—it's a sign of ecological activity at work. Birds are far from passive visitors; they are active partners in agriculture. From pest control to pollination, from soil enrichment to seed dispersal, they provide a suite of services that help farmers reduce dependence on chemicals and boost long-term productivity.

Owls and hawks keep rodents in check. Swallows and flycatchers consume swarms of insects that would otherwise attack crops. Even droppings play their part, delivering a steady supply of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to the soil. Wild plants such as sunflowers

and thistles provide food that keeps these species close to farmland, creating a cycle of mutual benefit.

But the relationship is not without its risks. Farmers across India will testify to the damage caused by flocks of parrots, pigeons, crows, and sparrows feeding directly on grains and fruits.

Crop losses can be severe, and droppings can contaminate produce. Infrastructure, too, can suffer—nests clog drainage systems and weaken roofs.

History offers cautionary tales. When China launched the Four Pests Campaign in the late 1950s and drove sparrows nearly to extinction, the result was a massive surge in crop-eating insects that contributed to famine.

In India, the collapse of vulture populations due to poisoning from veterinary drugs allowed carcasses to pile up, spreading disease. The indiscriminate use of DDT wiped out bird populations worldwide, triggering rodent infestations and pest explosions. The message is clear: disturb the balance, and farms suffer.

So what's the answer? Experts say farmers must learn to manage bird populations rather than try

to eliminate them. Hedgerows, water bodies, and safe nesting areas can encourage the right kinds of birds to stay. Limiting pesticides and herbicides ensures their food sources—seeds, insects, and wild plants—survive. Community-level monitoring of bird numbers helps maintain an "optimum population," where the benefits outweigh the losses.

The rewards go beyond individual fields. Balanced bird populations save farmers money by cutting down on fertilizer and pesticide use. They strengthen food security through natural pollination and seed dispersal. And they contribute to biodiversity, making farms more resilient to climate shocks.

Birds, then, are not the enemies of farming. They are partners whose presence, when carefully managed, secures both productivity and ecological health. The challenge for today's farmers is to find that middle path: encouraging the allies, limiting the rivals, and ensuring that birds remain a vital part of agriculture's future.

**CONTACT:**  
Mr Mallinath Hemadi  
GoPals, Bangalore  
www.wegopals.com  
95359 35622