

CEAT plans to compete for a larger slice of ag tyre sector

The name CEAT is one with which users of farm equipment will have become more familiar in recent years, as the Indian manufacturer seeks to raise its profile and boost its business in the agricultural sector since the 2015 formation of the subsidiary CEAT Specialty Tyres Ltd, a specialist arm for the manufacture of tyres for agriculture, as well as mining, earthmoving, industrial and construction equipment.

But what does Mumbai-headquartered CEAT, the flagship company of RPG Enterprises and a producer over 15 million tyres annually, have up its sleeve in terms of product development to help farmers boost productivity ? Dyutiman Chattopadhyay, Vice President - R&D and Technology, CEAT Specialty, outlines the plans of the company, which has a 95-year legacy in tyre manufacturing, and long-established leadership in the Indian market.

Why has CEAT Specialty chosen to enter into niche technologies and categories, and what will its new products bring to these sectors?

“The need for enhanced agricultural productivity from the same arable land has led to the invention of new farming techniques and agricultural equipment, with the latter having become bigger, faster and more productive- and the tyres have been big contributor to this,it” points out Mr Chattopadhyay

“We at CEAT Specialty are developing tyres for this n“Niche, hHigh Technology” segment. Our strengths in research and development mean we are confident in our ability to deliver quality product in this segment at a competitive price.

“To this end, over the coming year we plan to add new products in these premium niche categories. These include IF and VF tyres for tractors and sprayers, tyres for high horsepower (400+hp) tractors, steel-belted radials for harvesters, steel-belted high-speed flotation tyres for road and field applications, steel-belted industrial and agro-industrial tyres, and ultra-large tyres for sprayers to fit rim sizes of up to 54in.”

How is the farm bias range being completed?

As such, the bias/cross-ply tyre market continues to shrink, as the agricultural sector continues to shift to radials, which offer lower compaction and higher life, resulting in better productivity. However there are segments such as low-hp tractors and implements, where farmers still prefer cost effective bias tyres, notes Mr . Chattopadhyay. CEAT always had a comprehensive bias range in tractor rears, tractor fronts, floatation and agro industrial

“CEAT has always had a comprehensive bias range in tractor rears, tractor fronts, floatation and agro industrial tyres. However, there have been gaps in our offering for farm implements, and skid-steers, which we will now address.

Does this mean CEAT can nowwill be able to offer something to meet the needs of every farmer, from the small livestock business to the large arable enterprise?

Yes. Now CEAT will cater for all the needs of every farmer- right from tyres for small implements implements right up to those for 500 +hp HP tractors and other sophisticated equipment.

The unique lug geometry, construction and compounding of our products will lead to means superior traction, roadability and lesser soil compaction than competition, and – this holds true not only will not only be true for high end segments, but also for our basic lower hpHP tractor tyres.

What makes CEAT tyres different to others in the market?

"CEAT believes in delivering "best-in-class" products to its customers, across segments. Due to its Our unique CTR (low Compaction, high Traction, high Roadability) design philosophy (CTR : Low Compaction, High Traction & High Road-ability) means CEAT tyres offer superior performance whenas compared to others.

We have a very robust New Product Development program, wherein each new product undergoes very stringent tests through different "gates", ranging from "computerfrom computer simulation through Finite Element Analysis" to rigorous testing of prototypes and demo tyres. This ensures the highest quality of the products launched in the market in line with CEAT's principle of "First Time Right".

What does customer centricity mean and how does CEAT make the customer central to how it develops its tyres?

"For us, "customer centricity stands for delighting the customers with best quality products and services at affordable price. Any new product / category development in CEAT starts with "customer in-sighting". Detailed insighting is conducted by R&D and mMarketing teams to capture the "voice of customer (VOC)", which is the first step in CEAT's product design process. This is analyzed in detail and the key "customer requirements" are incorporated while designing new products.

How does CEAT do customer centricity better or differently to other tyre manufacturers?

"High levels of customer engagement , customer education, fast settlement of claims and continual improvement of products are some of the key elements we use to which will enable us to win customer's' confidence."