

CASE FOUR : MAHARASTRA HYBRID SEED CO. LTD.

A role model of a pioneering unit

Indian agriculture faces tremendous challenges of producing enough food, which will have to be doubled by 2025 AD to satisfy the needs of growing population. This increase has to come from increased yields from major crops grown on the existing or may be even declining cultivable lands. Development of high yielding varieties of seeds through research is, therefore, critical for the farm economy of the country. Established in 1964, Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Co. Ltd. (Mahyco) is a pioneer and leader in the Indian seed industry and is India's largest private sector seed company. Currently, the firm is engaged in research, production, processing and marketing of approximately 200 hybrids in 30 crop species including cereals, oil seeds, fibre and vegetables. The firm is all set to launch products developed through the process of biotechnology. It has made a break through in the development of hybrids in rice and wheat. The firm is also involved in the mining of microbes and plants for useful genes from indigenous sowells native to India.

Mahyco Life Science Research Centre (MLSRC) near Jalna is one of Asia's most advanced seed industry R & D establishment and is well equipped with state of the art labs for seed—health, molecular-biology, cyiogenetics, pathology, entomology, molecular-virology and plant trasformation. The company carries out its research of six centres all over the country. In addition, the crop performance testing is done at 16 different centres across the country. The ISO 9001 certification awarded to Mahyco is the largest multinational certification in India covering 59 locations.

Mahyco products are known for excellent quality. The production, processing and packaging of seeds are done as per stringent quality assurance norms. Its seed-testing lab has been granted the status of member lab of the International seed Testing Association (ISTA), Zurich, Switzerland since 1999.

More than one million grower farmers, 29 production centres, a million quintals of seed-processing capacity at 14 processing plants and more than 25,000 quintals of dehumidified storage for sensitive seed materials are the highlights of Mahyco's truly huge infrastructure. The production and processing network is supported by a well developed all India marketing network consisting of more than 5,000 sales outlets. The company has received several awards for the pioneering role in developing the private sector seed industry in India.

In a joint venture program with Monsanto Co., USA, Mahyco has been instrumental in introducing the genetically engineered *Bacillus Thuringiensis* (Bt) cotton in the country, on an experiment basis. If the field trials are successful the dream of adaption of biotechnological innovations for the improvement of Indian agriculture may come true for the Indian farmer.

You Are Required to Answer

1. Bring home the pioneering role of Mahyco in agricultural economy of India.
2. Give your comments on how to feed hungry millions ?