

Mahyco continues to revolutionize transgenic crop adoption

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Mahyco was the first company in India to commercially grow and market transgenic Bollgard Cotton in 2002. It is ushering the Bt revolution in Indian agriculture through Bt brinjal now.

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Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Limited (Mahyco) clocked an annual revenue of Rs 211.12 crore in 2008-09 as against Rs 170 crore in 2007-2008. During the fiscal, Mahyco also sold 11,70,341 packets of Bollgard I and 19,06,234 packets of Bollgard II. Total area covered by Mahyco came up to 25.64 lakh acre bringing within it a total number of 77.70 lakh farmers. Mahyco is a private sector seed company and played a pioneering role in the use of hybrids during the Green Revolution of the mid 1960s and 1970s. Founded in 1964 by an entrepreneur, Dr BR Barwale who is now the chairman of the company, Mahyco is currently engaged in research, development, production, processing and marketing of 115 products in 30 crop species, including cereals, oilseeds, fibre crops and vegetables. It has to its credit 21 notified varieties. Worldwide, Mahyco was the first company to successfully commercialize F1 hybrid cotton based on genetic and cytoplasmic male sterility systems. Mahyco was also the first company in India to produce and market hybrid sorghum, pearl millet and sunflower. At present, Mahyco is also developing genetically enhanced crops with the use of gene transfer technology and has a partnership with Monsanto as well as a multi-crop, multi-licensing agreement with several research organizations both in India and abroad, for bringing agricultural and environment improvement technologies

The company has a state-of-the-art R&D center near Jalna in Maharashtra, with ongoing hybrid breeding programs in over 30 crop species and support programs in plant pathology, entomology, cytogenetics, biochemistry, tissue culture, rapid cycling, and various other areas of biotech and transgenic plant research. The company has invested nearly Rs 47.12 crore (\$10 million) for the R&D infrastructure and spends Rs 11.78 crore (\$2.5 million) annually for research. In 1997, Mahyco was awarded the ISO-9001 certification for product development, production and processing. Over the past year, Mahyco has worked on bringing fruit and shoot borer (FSB)-resistant Bt brinjal closer to commercial release, and also on developing and testing herbicide-tolerant cotton, incorporating Monsanto's Roundup Ready technology. It had also released its Bollgard-II technology of

Bt brinjal, expressing the cry1Ac gene, has been in development and testing since 2000. Mahyco has completed a biosafety dossier encompassing environmental and food/feed safety tests on a variety of animal models including rats, rabbits, chicken, fish, goats and cows.