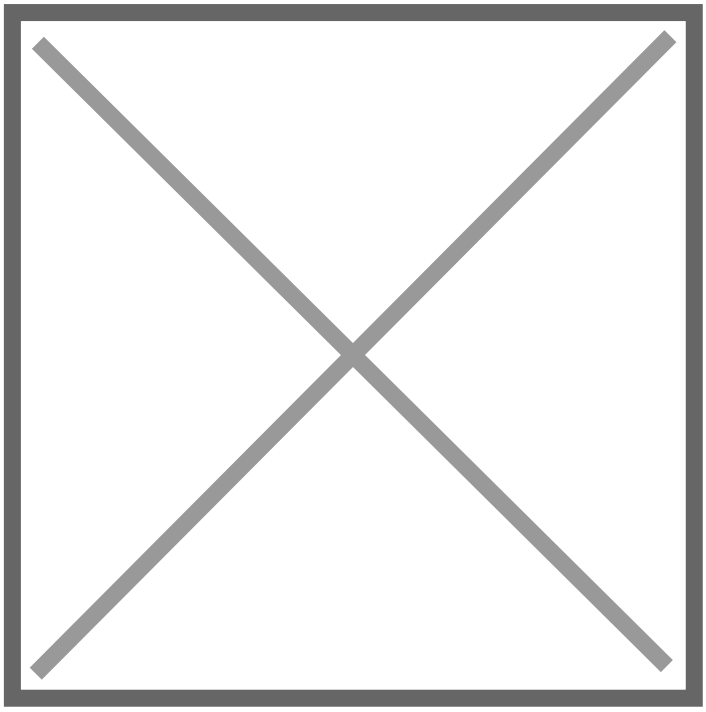
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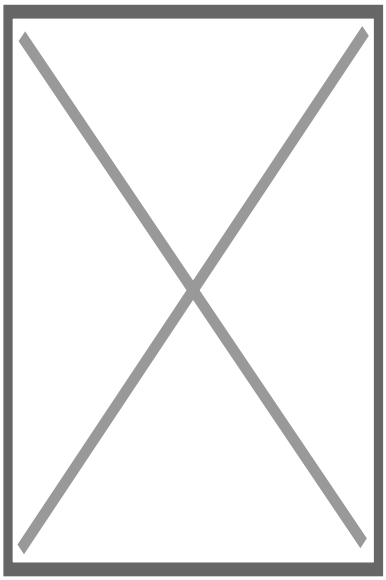
Agribiotech Player

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Ankur Seeds boasts of having over 115 hybrids in various crops. It also has a large collection of proprietary germplasm with novel traits of all crops.



Ankur Seeds

Business: Engaged in research, processing and developing hybrid and Bt seeds

CEO: MG Shembekar (MD)

Biotech Revenue: Rs 69.50 crore

Start-up Year: 1976

Address: 27, New Cotton Market Layout, Nagpur - 440 018.

Tel.: 91-712-2726148/ 2725117

Fax: 91-712-2723455.

Website: www.ankurseed.com

Ankur Seeds has done very well in the agribiotechnology space during 2006-07 by selling 9 lakh packets of Bt cottonseeds against just 9,000 packets in the 2005 kharif season, registering a growth of 100 times in terms of volume. It has sold 40,000 packets at price of Rs 1,250 per packet in the north zone while the remaining in central and south zones at Rs 750 per packet during 2006-07. It sales revenue from the sale of Bt cottonseeds were Rs 69.5 crore in 2006-07 against previous year's sale revenue of just Rs 1.62 crore. For the current kharif season, it got approval for 3 more varieties from the GEAC. With this, Ankur Seeds will market three Bt varieties in the north zone, four in central and three in south zones during the current season. Last year it has only two varieties to market in north and central zones.

MG Shembekar, managing director, Ankur Seeds, said, "The farmers have well accepted the new technology. We can see more farmers opting for Bt cottonseeds. Over 65 percent of the cotton area in India was covered under Bt cottonseeds in 2006 kharif season and it will increase to over 72 percent during the current kharif season. Considering the increase and the need for such seeds, we are prepared to sell 20 lakh packets of 450 grams each during the current season."

Ankur Seeds has launched its research and development activities with an objective to produce quality, high yielding and economical hybrids and varieties for farmer's need. A team of 35 scientists is working on insect, drought resistant Bt cottonseeds and on paddy crop. In May 2005, two of its hydrids received the GEAC's nod for commercial release and was able to sell 9,000 packets at Rs 1,800 per packet.

Ankur Seeds launched its research and development initiatives in 1978 and received recognition from DSIR, Government in India in 1992-93. It also bagged the national award for excellent research and development achievements in 1996. Ankur Seeds has realized the future needs of the industry and has geared up for the same. It realized that through biotechnology it could fulfil the needs of the farming community. Its testing laboratory at Kinhi provides testing facilities for biochemical analysis, fibre testing, molecular biology, tissue culture, soil and plant analysis, plant physiology, cytology, plant pathology and microbiology.

Ankur has various regional research stations for multi-location trials of advanced generation material. It has ventured into the field of transgenic research that includes incorporation of insect tolerance in cotton by using Cry I Ac and Cry X gene. The future projects include incorporation of drought tolerance traits, improvising the quality of vegetable crops like delayed ripening of the tomato.

It achieved its major breakthrough in cottonseeds in 1993 with Ankur 651 cotton hybrid. Its suitability to dryland farming, early flowering and adaptability to excessive as well scanty rainfall made it an instant hit with the farmer community. Ankur 651 was declared a notified hybrid in the all India coordinated cotton improvement project. The Central government has also notified Ankur's other two cotton hybrids Ankur 09 and Swadeshi-1 for dryland cultivation in central India.

Today Ankur boasts of over 115 hybrids in various crops. It has 125 hectares of land reserved specially for research. Ankur also has a large collection of proprietary germplasm with novel traits of all crops. Its team of dedicated breeders works hard to give the best possible research products suitable to the farmers' requirements. Ankur applies advanced techniques like DNA fingerprinting, marker assisted selection methods, development of markers for traits of importance to hasten up the speed of crop breeding treatment and various other biotechniques.

Ankur provides employment opportunities to over 30,000 persons annually through its contract farming practices. These persons residing in various parts of the country undertake seed production for the company under the able guidance of its professionals. Its staff works hand in hand with the growers to check the isolation, genetic purity and health of the seeds in the field to facilitate production of excellent quality seeds. Ankur also provides guidance to the farmers in the use of fertilizers. Thus the farmers gain expertise even for independant cultivation of various crops.

Ankur has 11 state-of-the-art processing plants with a production capacity of over 16,000 tons, a dehumidified storage capacity of 5,000 sqm for medium term storage and 10,000 sqm warehouses. Its processing plants are one of the best in the country equipped with the most modern technology. The plants provide facilities for drying, precleaning, ginning, delinting, gravity separation and fungicidal treatments.

Ankur achieved a record 12,500 quintals of production in the year 2001-02 of cottonseeds. Its share in the cottonseed industry is an astounding 18 percent. Incidentally Ankur also holds the largest share in proprietary cotton hybrid sales. The output of Ankur cottonseeds is a remarkable 80-lakh quintals, which is a 15 percent share of the Indian cotton industry. Ankur's long

staple cotton hybrid Akka has given the best results in the country with a staple length of over 32 mm.

Beginning with a modest office of a little over 200 sft in 1976 and an initial production of 150 quintals, Ankur received an overwhelming response from the people in Maharashtra for its public bred varieties of cotton, jowar and okra. It then expanded its production activities to Andhra pradesh, Gujarat and other parts of the country.

Today Ankur has 11 regional offices and 6 area offices. It has a network covering 12 major states of India. It periodically organizes field day programs and demonstrations in various parts of the country to educate the farmers on the latest in agricultural practices. It has organized seven regional demonstrations in the previous year and invited over 50,000 farmers to its programs. This activity is handled by the marketing department with a team of nearly 85 employees and a dealer /distributor network of over 300 persons.

The members of the marketing team are in close contact with the farmers from the point of sale of seeds to the time the produce is ready. The marketing staff together with the distributors and dealers provides valuable information to the farmer for helping him in optimizing his output.