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Top 20: Bt cotton business slows

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top-20-logoFor the 41-year-old Rasi Seeds, a leading player in hybrid seeds business, FY2013-14 did not usher in good growth for its Bt cotton business. It could register only an estimated Rs 266 crore in revenue from the sale of Bt cotton seeds. The company's growth was around 16 percent. The company is estimated to have sold about 35 lakh packets of Bt cotton seeds in 2013. It was affected by the lack of approvals like many others in the industry. Some of its exceptional hybrid cotton varieties include RCH 134 BGII, RCH 656 BGII, RCH 650 BGII, RCH 602 BGII, RCH 659 BGII, RCH 776 BGII, RCH 773 BGII, RCH 668 BGII, RCH 530 BGII, RCH 779 BGII, RCH 533 BGII, and RCH 2 BGII.

One of the major developments for Rasi in 2013 was the acquisition of the hybrid corn seed business of Bayer BioScience in India. This deal will enable Rasi to double its share in the Indian hybrid corn seed market, which is estimated to be about Rs 1,000 crore. It may be mentioned here that Rasi Seeds has three major divisions, which include Cotton Crop Division, Field Crop Division, and HyVeg Vegetable Division.

The company has a strong R&D focus and has inked several collaborations with leading agricultural research institutes. In fact, it is one of the early seeds companies in India to work on several genetically modified crops. It worked on Bhendi for Bhendi Yellow Vein Mosaic Virus Disease (BYVMVD) resistance, transgenic cassava production with gene(s) conferring resistance to Indian cassava Mosaic virus Disease(CMD), cotton for Leaf curl virus (CLCuVD) disease resistance through RNAi approach, tomato for fruit borer resistance, rice with gene conferring resistance to Yellow Stem Borer (YSB), and Brinjal for Fruit and Shoot Borer (FSB) Resistance using the genetic engineering technique along with leading research institutes and varsities.

Rasi Seeds has collaborated with the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and is in the process of creating new breeding lines under field crops. Its other collaborations include Madurai Kamaraj University, Center for Plant Molecular Biology (CPMB), National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology (NRCPB), IARI, New Delhi, University of Ottawa, Canada, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Manila, Philippines, and CIMMYT, Mexico. Most of its work has slowed down owning to a lack of clear guidelines on transgenic crops other than Bt cotton.