

KisanKraft develops 12 direct-seeded rice varieties, to take up multi-location trials in 14 States this year

Vishwanath Kulkarni
Bengaluru

KisanKraft Ltd, the Bengaluru-based agri-firm, has developed 12 new varieties of rice that are suited for direct-seeded rice (DSR) method of cultivation that uses less water for growing the cereal crop.

KisanKraft, which manufactures affordable farm equipment such as inter-cultivators and harvesters for small- and medium-sized farmers, diversified into seed research and development a few years ago.

“We have been focussing on developing rice varieties for the DSR method of cultivation since 2017. Our focus is on breeding varieties that are suitable for the changing climatic patterns. We have screened some 175

lines of paddy from across the country for various traits — from rain-fed areas to build resistance and the wetlands for yields — to develop these 12 DSR varieties,” said Ravindra Agrawal, Chairman, KisanKraft.

Currently, the company has taken up trials of these DSR paddy varieties at three locations in Karnataka in the ongoing summer cropping season.

TRIALS ON AT 40 LOCATIONS

The company expects to take up multi-location trials of the 12 DSR rice varieties across 40 locations in about 14 major rice growing States including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar among others in the forthcoming kharif 2024 cropping season, Agarwal said.



WATER-SAVER. A view of a paddy field in Hosanagar in Shivamogga district where KisanKraft's DSR rice variety is taken up for trial cultivation

KisanKraft is aiming to commercialise these DSR rice varieties in 2025 kharif season, he said.

“Our DSR varieties are a mix of fine grain, medium slender and bold varieties. The yields are better than average yields and on par with the high yielding vari-

eties, ranging between 22 and 25 quintals per acre,” said Sumanth Holla, head of seed R&D at KisanKraft.

Paddy is a water-intensive crop and the transplanted paddy uses some 4,000-5,000 litres of water to produce one kg of rice. Compared to the traditional

method of paddy cultivation that entails creation of nursery and transplantation, the DSR method saves on water use, labour requirement and reduces the cost of cultivation, besides cutting down on methane emission. “Water consumption can be reduced by more than half under the DSR method. When you take away puddling and transplanting, the water use comes down straight away by 30 per cent,” Holla said.

KisanKraft, which has got its R&D units recognition from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), is also working on developing hybrids of vegetables such as tomato, cucumber, gourds and capsicum among others. The company expects to commercialise some of the vegetable hybrids next year, Agarwal added.