



Rijk Zwaan

Access to Seeds Index

Corporate Data

Headquarters: De Lier, the Netherlands
Ownership type: Private
Group revenue (2014): USD 426,463,140

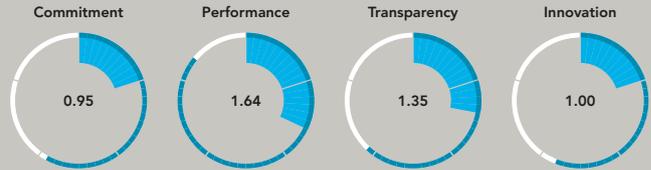
Rijk Zwaan Zaaideelt en Zaadhandel B.V. (Rijk Zwaan) is a family-owned vegetable seed company. It was founded in 1924 and is based in De Lier, the Netherlands. The company has sales offices and breeding and production facilities all over the world.



Global Index – Vegetable Seed Companies

Ranking fifth in the Global Index of Vegetable Seed Companies, Rijk Zwaan exhibits a number of strengths but also opportunities to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers in Index countries. The company performs well on increasing access to genetic

resources for further development, and leads Afrisem, an innovative commercial breeding program that focuses on developing local crops for Eastern Africa. The company is encouraged to expand its local capacity-building activities in Index countries, to ensure that smallholder farmers are better able to realize the full potential of quality seeds of improved varieties.



Leading Practices

Afrisem, a breeding program founded in 2008 in Tanzania by Rijk Zwaan in collaboration with East-West Seed, focuses on key local crops such as African eggplant, hot pepper and African kale.

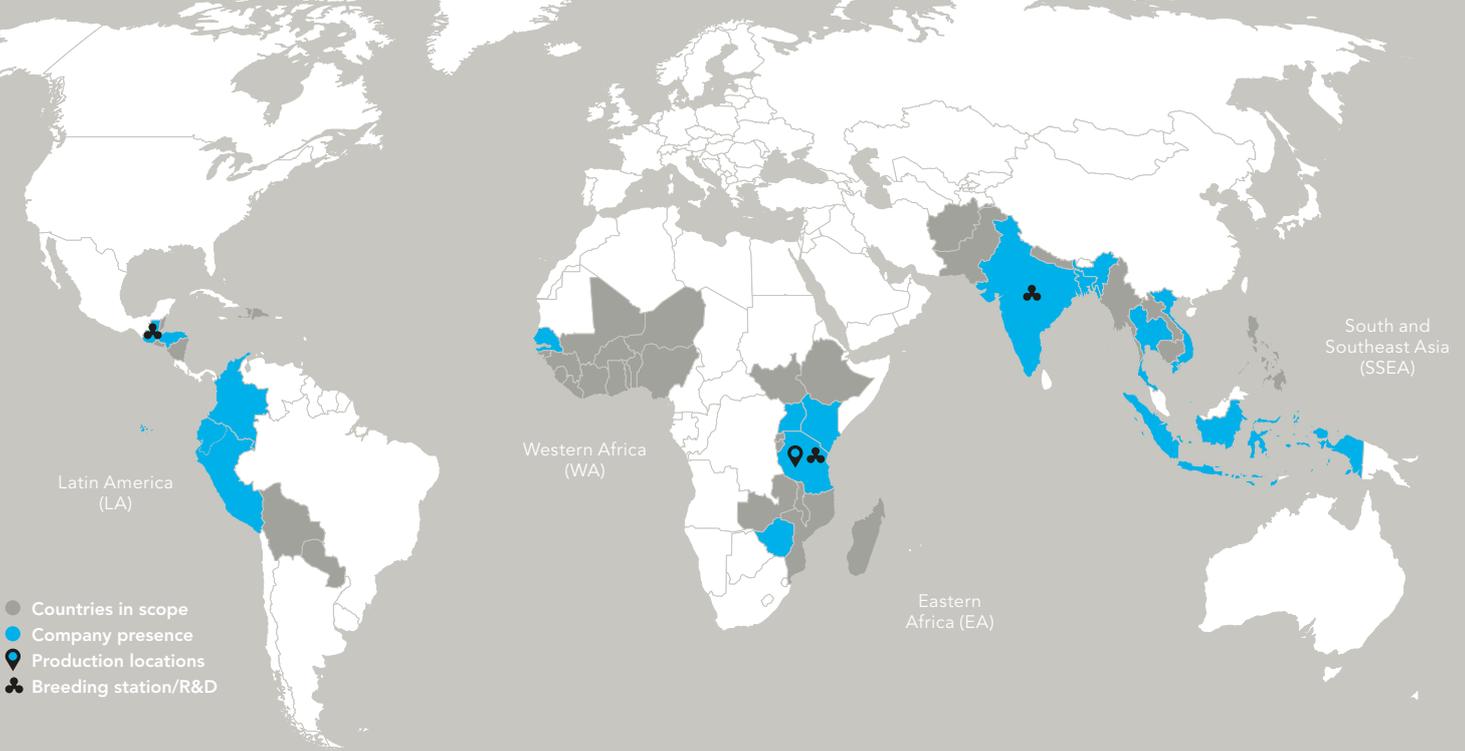
Areas for Improvement

The Afrisem breeding program aims eventually to provide African farmers with hybrid varieties and enable employees to contribute to the development of horticulture on the continent. Rijk Zwaan could set and disclose formal strategic objectives to strengthen the effectiveness of this program to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers.

Expanding the company's capacity-building programs to benefit a larger number of farmers in more Index countries could also help to increase sustainably farmers' productivity and income.

Rijk Zwaan scores highly in R&D relevant to Index countries, but lowly in Marketing & Sales. It would be logical to match these R&D investments with an equal effort in Marketing & Sales.

Operations in Scope



Index Vegetable Crops in Portfolio

Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrot
Cauliflower
Chicory
Chili pepper
Cucumber
Eggplant
Gherkin
Leek
Lettuce
Melon
Spinach
Squash
Sweet pepper
Tomato
Watermelon

Notable Findings

■ Rijk Zwaan states that biological material protected by patent rights should be freely available for the development of new varieties, which amounts to the equivalent of a breeders' exemption in patent law. As one of the principal founders of the International Licensing Platform (ILP) for vegetable plant breeding, Rijk Zwaan supports the guaranteed access to crucial vegetable plant traits that are currently covered by patent claims by ILP member companies.

■ The company provides access to its own genetic resources through its participation in Afrisem, but also regularly donates old varieties to the public gene bank of the Centre for Genetic Resources Netherlands (CGN), based in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The varieties donated are available under the Multilateral System.

■ All seeds produced by Rijk Zwaan globally are shipped to the company's Seed Technological Centre in De Lier and tested for seed identity (varietal trueness), seed purity, seed-borne diseases, germination and vigor under different conditions.

■ The company contributes regularly to capacity-building programs. In a training program hosted by the University of Horticultural Science in Kolar, India in 2014, the company provided advice on cultivating vegetable crops to more than 75 growers and 100 final-year horticultural students. The company also supports the horticultural college in Chimaltenango (Guatemala), where local growers, mostly women, attend courses on vegetable cultivation, marketing and organization.

■ Rijk Zwaan is a partner in Seeds of Expertise for the Vegetable Industry of Africa (SEVIA), a public-private partnership that includes East-West Seed and Wageningen University and Research Centre in the Netherlands. SEVIA aims to contribute to Africa's food security and vegetable industry development. It currently conducts independent variety testing in locations in Tanzania important for vegetable growing. The partnership's other activities include establishing demonstration fields at local growers, grower groups and cooperatives to introduce new cultivation technologies, as well as organizing 'training of trainers' sessions for horticultural workers.