

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 06.12.2010
ANSWERED ON
LABELLING LAW FOR GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD

2813

Shri Ishwar Singh

Will the Minister of COALENVIROMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether the country has in place a mandatory labelling law for genetically engineered food;
- (b) whether, despite a recent open-ended moratorium on the cultivation of the country's first transgenic food crop Bt. brinjal, many companies are marketing cotton seed oil extracted from seeds of Bt. cotton crop already under commercial cultivation; and
- (c) whether despite the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and Rules, 1955 now in force which includes compulsory GM labelling, there has been no effective enforcement of a strict labelling regime for genetically engineered products ?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) No, Sir. The draft notification on labeling of Genetically Engineered Food was published in the Gazette of India vide G.S.R. 152(E) dated 10th March, 2006 by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for inviting comments from all stakeholders. The same could not be finalized due to divergent and conflicting views received on labelling of GM foods. It was also noted that the Codex Alimentarius Commission (a joint body of World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization) was still to come out with its recommendations on the issue. It was therefore, considered premature to notify the labeling provisions on GM foods.

(b) Yes, Sir. Many companies are marketing cotton seed oil extracted from seeds of Bt. Cotton crop already under commercial cultivation. Bt cotton has been extensively tested to ensure food, feed and environmental safety prior to granting approval for commercial cultivation. Further, highly processed food like oil does not contain detectable DNA or protein. The Government has imposed moratorium only on commercial release of Bt brinjal event-EE-I. The moratorium is not applicable to other GM food or food crops.

(c) As of date there is no mandatory labeling law for genetically modified products in the country.