

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

RAJYA SABHA

QUESTION NO 06.12.2010

ANSWERED ON

PERMISSION FOR CULTIVATION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS

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SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the permission for cultivation of genetically modified crops has been given to farmers of the country since 1995 ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that farmers producing genetically modified crops are getting adversely affected due to the said cultivation ;

(c) whether scientists have not carried out an indepth study on adverse impact of genetically modified products on coming generation; and

(d) if the answers to the said questions are in affirmative, the rationale behind allowing to produce genetically modified crops ? ANSWER

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) No permission for cultivation of genetically modified crops has been given to farmers of the country since 1995. Bt. Cotton Crop has been approved for commercial cultivation in the country only in Kharif 2002.

(b) The Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur has been conducting detailed studies at State level in collaboration with the State Agricultural Universities of the nine cotton growing States. Information so far collected indicates that:

- (i) production has increased in all the cotton growing States with the introduction of Bt. Cotton;
- (ii) bollworm menace in cotton has significantly reduced all over the country; and
- (iii) there is a reduction in market share of insecticides used in Cotton. The area under Bt. Cotton has increased to 80.00 lakh hectare (estimated) in 2009-10 as compared to 0.29 lakh hectare in 2002-03.

(c) & (d) In view of various concerns related to the safety, efficacy and agronomic performance of transgenic seeds, the Government of India is assessing the merits and demerits of each GM crop on a case by case basis even if it is approved for cultivation in other countries. Before any GM crop is approved for commercial cultivation, extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place. This includes generation of relevant biosafety information and its elaborate analysis to ensure food, feed and environmental safety. The environmental safety assessment includes studies on pollen escape out-crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of terminator gene and baseline susceptibility studies. The food and feed safety studies include assessment on composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes. In case, the transgenic crop is not found suitable for release in the environment or human consumption, the product is rejected during the trial stage itself. A final view on the commercialization of GM plants is taken only when scientific studies establish that it is safe for the human health and environment. Further, all GM crops approved for commercial cultivation has to undergo post release surveillance to monitor the safety and efficacy of the new trait introduced in the GM crop.