GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No. 30
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 08.12.2022

Approval to HT Hybrid Mustard DMH 11 for commercial cultivation

*30. SHRI ANEEL PRASAD HEGDE

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that approval was given to HT Hybrid Mustard DMH 11 for commercial cultivation despite Supreme Court appointed Committee barred Herbicide Tolerant crops and HT Mustard as not suitable to India and a crop of origin in India respectively;
(b) whether HT crops are a failed US technology which resulted in degradation/devastation of farms/environment in US in the last 35 years; and
(c) whether herbicides are highly toxic chemicals, promoting antibiotic resistance in population, if so, the basis for the approval thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 30 TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.12.2022 REGARDING APPROVAL TO HT HYBRID MUSTARD DMH 11 FOR COMMERCIAL CULTIVATION BY SHRI ANEEL PRASAD HEGDE.

(a) to (c) The environmental release of mustard hybrid DMH-11 has been granted for its seed production and testing as per existing ICAR guidelines and other extant rules/regulations prior to commercial release.

Genetically Modified (GM) Hybrid Mustard DMH-11 has not been approved for Herbicide Tolerant (HT) trait but for a GM technology for hybrid seed production. The HT characteristic/trait present in the GM mustard hybrid seed is essential for eliminating fertile plants that are not transgenic in the hybrid seed production plots to maintain the purity of hybrid seed. The use of herbicide will be limited to seed production stage by the seed producing company/institute and not during the commercial cultivation of DMH-11 by the farmers. The use of herbicide will be after obtaining label claim and approval from Central Insecticide Board & Registration Committee (CIB&RC).

India is not centre of origin of mustard. It is China. Central Asia is the centre of diversity of mustard. India is not primary centre of diversity also. India is only a migratory diversity region. Central Asia-Himalayas are a primary center of diversity for this species, with migration to China, India and the Caucasus.

Globally Genetically Engineered (GE) crops are cultivated in 190.5 million ha of which HT crops occupy 85.1 million hectares i.e. about 45% of the global transgenic crop area. In USA, HT corn, HT cotton and HT soybean area increased and over the past 25 years, and today more than 90% of area under these crops are HT varieties.

Based on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) survey data, the percent of domestic soybean acres planted with HT seeds rose from 17 percent in 1997 to 68 percent in 2001, before plateauing at 94 percent in 2014. In 2021 and 2022, soybean HT acreage increased slightly to 95 percent. HT cotton acreage expanded from approximately 10 percent in 1997 to 56 percent in 2001, before reaching a high of 94 percent in 2021. In 2022, approximately 90 percent of domestic corn acres were planted with HT seeds.

Herbicides are the chemicals that kill weeds, in no ways herbicide use will promote resistance to antibiotic, which kill bacteria.

The issue of environmental release of GM Mustard is under adjudication in the Writ Petition (Civil) 115/2004 and Writ Petition (Civil) 260 of 2005 titled as Gene Campaign Vs. UoI & Ors. and Aruna Rodrigues Vs. UoI & Ors., respectively before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

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