

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATION AND FARMERS WELFARE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2236**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY, 2018

**ILLEGAL COTTON SEED BUSINESS**

2236. SHRI CH. MALLA REDDY:  
SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR:  
KUNWAR HARIBANSH SINGH:  
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:  
SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY KOTHA:  
SHRI S. RAJENDRAN:  
SHRI S.R. VIJAYAKUMAR:  
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a high-level expert panel set up by the Government has found that nearly 15 per cent area under cotton was planted with illegally produced and unapproved Herbicide Tolerant (HT) seeds in the 2017 kharif crop season, if so, the details thereof including the total estimated area which were planted with illegal and unapproved herbicide tolerant seeds in the country;
- (b) whether there is huge unregulated market for genetically modified cotton (GM) seeds, which is potentially harmful to the environment as it entails use of herbicides which are otherwise restricted, if so, the details thereof including the estimated losses due to illegal cotton seed business in the 2017 kharif crop season;
- (c) whether the Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) panel collected 13,361 leaf and seed samples and found 15% prevalence of unapproved HT cotton in major States like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat, and about 5% in Punjab, if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) whether farmers are using unapproved genetically modified HT cotton seeds to save on labour costs, if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to curb such type of malpractices and provide good quality cotton seeds to the farmers?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SEKHAWAT)

(a): Yes Madam, the high level expert panel i.e. Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) has been constituted under Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to investigate the veracity of spread of unapproved HT cotton in the country. Based on the investigation, FISEC, reported that nearly 15% area (which comes around 16.60 Lakh Hectare of total cultivated area of cotton during 2017) under cotton cultivation was planted with illegally produced and unapproved HT seeds.

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(b): Few incidences of illegal marketing of Genetically Modified seeds (HT Cotton) were reported in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telengana and Maharashtra. However, no reports on losses due to HT Cotton have been reported by State Governments.

(c) to (e): Yes Madam. Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) panel collected 13,361 leaf and seed samples and found 15% prevalence of unapproved HT cotton in major States like Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and about 5% in Punjab.

Farmers were using unapproved HT cotton seeds to save labour costs as it is less labour intensive and hence cost beneficial, but as it is unapproved, therefore DAC&FW has issued advisory to all cotton growing States to control and curb the sale and cultivation of unapproved HT cotton vis-à-vis its seed production, processing and storage. Accordingly, major cotton growing State Governments have taken necessary measures.

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