

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3426
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2001
GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have decided to develop and introduce genetically modified foods;
- (b) whether some of the countries have strongly opposed the entry of Franken foods into their countries;
- (c) whether several West European countries have banned the entry of genetically engineered food;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the reasons for India`s going ahead with the introduction of genetically engineered golden rice ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT)

(a) to (e) : Realizing the benefits of Genetically Modified Foods, many research programmes have been supported. The Government of India has however not yet accorded approval for commercial release of any Genetically Engineered Food in the country. As per the Indian Environment(Protection) Act, 1986 and Rules 1989 it is mandatory that all such products require the approval of Genetic Engineering Approval Committee(GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests. Such products are to be assessed from biosafety(environmental and food safety) angle before they are permitted for use and sale in the country.

As this technology is new, fears have been expressed about the safety of such foods and case by case testing is undertaken by countries to ascertain the merits and demerits of using such foods. No country has unilaterally decided to put a total ban on use of genetic engineering technology and almost all countries are using genetically engineered pharmaceutical formulations, many as life saving drugs. An Indo-Swiss collaborative research proposal is under consideration to develop rice with enhanced nutritional qualities.