

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:35

ANSWERED ON:21.07.2003

AWARD TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEED FOR COTTON DEVELOPING COMPANY

AVTAR SINGH BHADANA;BHERU LAL MEENA;CHARAN DAS MAHANT;RAMA PILOT

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons for awarding Technology award to company developing genetically modified seed for cotton (Bt. Cotton) in the country;
- (b) whether the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture has emphasized the need to review the decision on cultivation of Bt. cotton; and
- (c) if so, the action likely to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a): Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company (MAHYCO), Mumbai was awarded the Biotechnology Product & Process Development and Commercialisation Award 2003 by the Department of Biotechnology for its R&D capabilities, ongoing research efforts in biotech product development including development and commercialization of Indian Bt. cotton hybrids containing the insecticidal gene after necessary regulatory approvals from the Government.

(b): Yes, Sir.

(c): The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee in the Ministry of Environment & Forests had granted permission to MAHYCO in March-April, 2002 for the release of three Bt. cotton hybrids into the environment for a period of three years. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has constituted a committee to evaluate the performance of Bt. cotton. The results of this evaluation during Kharif, 2002 prima facie show that the three Bt. cotton hybrids have been found to be reasonably resistant to bollworm thereby reducing the requirement of spray of insecticides. However, since the incidence of pests in cotton during Kharif, 2002 was generally low due to dry spell, the efficacy of this technology against bollworm needs to be assessed for the next two years also.