

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:220

ANSWERED ON:21.07.2003

PROJECT ON TRANSGENICS FOR COMBATING DISEASES OF CROPS

PUTTASWAMY GOWDA;SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) propose to formulate a Rs. 40 crore project on transgenics aiming to combat disease that destroys 14 crops;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether mandatory approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether environmentalists have viewed this untested technology harmful on the health of human beings and animals; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposed project on `Transgenics in Crops` will comprise two technical components viz. functional genomics to provide basic material and information on the genes and their expression for agronomically important traits, and the transgenic development, which would be of applied value in selected crops. The project also envisages strengthening the capacity and expertise of the participating centres through need based human resource development activities.

The traits to be targeted for transgenic research component shall be : (i) resistance to insect pests (in rice, sorghum, maize, pigeonpea, chickpea, Brassica, cotton, tomato and brinjal); (ii) resistance to fungal diseases (in rice and banana); (iii) resistance to viral diseases (in soybean, cotton, tomato, potato, banana, papaya and cassava); (iv) tolerance to abiotic stresses (in Brassica) and (v) extended shelf life (in tomato).

(c) & (d) : The project proposal has been submitted to Planning Commission for approval in principle.

(e) & (f) : Bio-safety and environmental concerns are important as also raised by environmentalists. Before the environmental release of any transgenic crop, the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Environment and Forests ensure the biosafety following a system of well laid out safety guidelines.