

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2254
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2005
PURCHASE OF BT. COTTON SEEDS BY FARMERS
Purandeswari Smt. Daggubati

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the cotton farmers are required to pay a sum of Rupees 1700 for 450 grams of Bt. cotton seeds;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Monsanto seed company has established a joint venture company with Maharashtra hybrid seed company Ltd.;
- (d) if so, whether the Monsanto seed has the patents right for this gene;
- (e) if not, the reason for permitting the said company to charge a trait value for the cotton seeds gene which was neither developed specifically for India not it is patentable under the Indian law; and
- (f) the measures proposed to be taken to protect the interest of the farmers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. Rs. 1700 for 450 grams of Bt. Cotton seeds is an average price quoted by Private Seed Companies which have developed and are marketing Bt. Cotton hybrids seeds. There is no statutory control over the pricing of seeds and market determines the cost of the seeds. Seeds Companies generally fix the price of seeds based on their investments in Research and Development, cost of seed production, profit margin, marketing expenses etc.

(c): Yes, Sir. M/s. Monsanto, USA has established a Joint Venture Company in the name of M/s. Mahyco-Monsanto Bio-technology India Ltd., Mumbai.

(d) & (e): No, Sir. There are no patent rights conferred on M/s. Monsanto, USA on Cry 1 Ac gene by the Government of India. M/s Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company Ltd., (Mahyco) Mumbai, got the technology from M/s Monsanto, USA. The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment and Forests has granted permission to the Mahyco for commercial release of Bt. cotton hybrids in India. The price of Bt. Cotton seed per packet is fixed by different companies on the basis of the benefit they deliver to the farmers in terms of significant reduction of pesticides and the incremental yield due to prevention of losses caused by Bollworms. There are no directives from the Government of India to farmers to purchase Bt. cotton seeds only for cotton cultivation. The farmer has a choice to choose any cotton seed for cultivation.

(f): The Government have advised time to time the Bt. Cotton growing states to take necessary punitive action against the producers and vendors of illegal Bt. cotton seeds under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Seed (Control) Order, 1983. To assist the State Governments in controlling the release of spurious seeds, the Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur has been notified as the referral laboratory for detecting the presence/absence of the Bt. genes. The Institution have also developed a simple and cheap testing kit for quick verification of Bt. gene in Cotton. As on date 22 Bt. Cotton hybrids of four Seed Companies have been commercially released by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in the Ministry of Environment & Forests and are available to the farmers in the country.