

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2772
ANSWERED ON:12.12.2005
RESEARCH ON BT. COTTON SEED
Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a new report by scientists of the Central Institute of Cotton Research, Nagpur, published in the July 35 issue of current science gives scientific reasons for the failure of the Monsanto Bt. Cotton varieties;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has examined this report;
- (c) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (d) the response of the Government, thereto;
- (e) whether the Government has decided that Bt. Cotton will be permitted only in the form of true breeding varieties, not hybrids; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (f): The article published in `Current Science` in July, 2005 issue about the Bt. Cotton has been examined by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment & Forests and the Committee was of the view that the facts presented by the scientists do not speak against the efficacy and safety of the Bt. gene in cotton. The decision to approve Bt. technology was based on extensive laboratory and field data and none of the results presented by Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR) negate that. The Committee was aware that there is a possibility of variation in Cry 1 Ac protein expression in specific tissue of the plant depending on the genetic background of the host and the environment in which it is deployed.

Based on the above consideration, the GEAC has taken a decision to approve the Bt. hybrids on a case by case basis. All hybrids approved by the GEAC for release have been tested at several sites in various zones.

The Committee was of the view that the ongoing initiatives to increase awareness of farmers on the use of Bt. technology should continue and should include this aspect specifically.

In view of the biotechnological advancement, the Committee concluded that the present practice of reviewing the performance of released Bt. Cotton hybrids after every three years should also continue.