

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2581
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2009
IMPORT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether imported Genetically Modified (GM) food, which are banned by the Government, are freely entering the country with the tag as 'non-GM food';
- (b) if so, the facts and details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check the entry of imported GM food and to punish the importers?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (c) As of date there is no ban on import of GM food. However, import of GM food requires prior approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval committee (GEAC) constituted under 'Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms (HMOs) / Genetically Engineered Organisms (GMOs) or Cells, 1989' notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. A declaration at the port of entry by the importer that the product contains GM material is also mandatory under Schedule - I (Imports) of the ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 2004-09 under the Foreign Trade Policy (2004-09) issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade on 7.4.2006.

The Ministry had received a representation from Greenpeace alleging the import of GM food namely "Dorito's Cool Ranch Corn chips" from USA without the approval of the GEAC. Subsequently one consignment containing Dorito's Chips manufactured in Taiwan and imported from Singapore has been detained by the Customs Department for verification at Nhava Sheva Port, Navi Mumbai. Both the regulations provide for taking punitive action against the importers in case of wrong declaration or import without prior approval of the GEAC. The Food Safety and Standards Authority under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also in the process of framing rules and guidelines for import of GM food.