GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3708
ANSWERED ON:17.08.2010
GM CROPS
Singh Shri Ganesh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the farmers in the country are opposed to Genetically Modified (GM) crops and do not use GM food items for religious and cultural purposes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor indicating the negative traits of GM crops?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (c): Bt. Cotton is the only Genetically Modified (GM) crop commercially approved for cultivation by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MOEF). Farmers preference for Bt. cotton is clearly reflected from the increase in area to 80 lakh hectare (anticipated) in 2009-10 as compared to 29000 hectare in 2002-03. Cultivation of Bt. cotton has resulted in 31% increase in yield, 39% reduction in pesticide usage and more than 80% increase in profitability for the farmers (ISAAA 2009). No GM food crops have been released for commercial cultivation in India so far. Bt. brinjal had been approved for commercial cultivation by GEAC but has been placed under moratorium by order dated 9th February, 2010 of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Several concerns have been expressed regarding issues of risk to human health and environment from use of GM crops particularly during the public consultations on Bt brinjal. Government of India has, therefore, adopted a case by case approach to assess safety concerns in respect of each transgenic event. All issues relating to bio -safety, environmental safety etc., have been entrusted to a strict regulatory regime under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. GM crops can only be released in India after all the regulatory agencies are fully satisfied about the safety.