

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:212

ANSWERED ON:24.11.2010

GM FOODS

Bhujbal Shri Sameer ;Dias Dr. Charles

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government has received representations from various State Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and eminent personalities about the effects of the Genetically Modified (GM) crops on human beings and environment ;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the companies involved in the production/sale of GM seeds are working for their profits and ignoring the impact of GM crops on environment and human beings ;
- (d) if so, whether the Government proposes to ban the GM foods in view of its impact on environment and human beings;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the Government has taken a final decision on commercial cultivation/consumption of Bt. Brinjal in the country; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN THE REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (g) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 212 BY SHRI SAMEER BHUJBAL AND SHRI CHARLES DIAS REGARDING GM FOODS DUE FOR REPLY ON 24.11.2010

(a) to (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry has received representations from various State Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and some sections of scientific and farming communities regarding safety of the Genetically Modified (GM) crops. They have expressed apprehensions on its long-term impact on human health and environment including the rich genetic wealth existing in our country. The representations further calls for extreme caution on the release of Bt brinjal as it is the first GM food crop to be introduced in the country.

(c) No, Sir. Several public and private institutions are involved in the research and development of genetically modified crops. In view of various concerns related to the safety, efficacy and agronomic performance of transgenic seeds, the Government of India is assessing the merits and demerits of each GM crop on a case by case basis even if it is approved for cultivation in other countries. Before any GM crop is approved for commercial cultivation, extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place. This includes generation of relevant biosafety information and its elaborate analysis to ensure food, feed and environmental safety. The environmental safety assessment includes studies on pollen escape, out- crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of terminator gene and baseline susceptibility studies. The food and feed safety studies include assessment on composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes. In case, the transgenic crop is not found suitable for release in the environment or human consumption, the product is rejected during the trial stage itself. A final view on the commercialization of GM plants is taken only when scientific studies establish that it is safe for the human health and environment.

(d) to (e) There is no proposal to ban the GM foods in view of its impact on environment and human beings as all GM foods would be tested for its safety prior to granting regulatory approval;

(f) to (g) The Government has imposed moratorium on commercial release of Bt brinjal event-EE-1 till such time independent scientific studies establish that Bt brinjal is safe for the human health and environment from the point of view of its long term impacts.