GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3311
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2009
IMPACT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the hybrids/genetically modified seeds affects the fertility of land and the health of living beings;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has conducted any study in this regard;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

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

(a) to (d): Hybrids/genetically modified seeds do not affect the land fertility and health of living things.

All GM crops/seeds are extensively tested for its biosafety before it is allowed for commercialization. The Biosafety assessment includes environmental safety assessment as well as food and feed 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 the protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of Terminator Gene. The food and feed safety assessment studies include composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes.

As of today, Bt cotton is the only approved for environmental release and is under cultivation for 7 years. There is no evidence to show that Bt cotton seeds affect land fertility or human health.

On the issue of adverse impact on human health due to consumption of GM food, it may be further noted that GM food crops are being cultivated in 25 countries and consumed in several countries (including developed countries like Japan, EU, Australia and New Zealand) for many years and there has been no scientific evidence to prove that Bt protein is toxic to human and animal health.

Studies have been conducted at Central Institute of Cotton Research, Nagpur to assess the impact of GM cotton on land fertility and soil micro-organism that growing of Bt cotton does not adversely affect the fertility of land wherever balanced fertilization and integrated nutrient management practices are followed.