

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1016

ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009

TRANSGENIC SEEDS

Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba

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

- (a) whether introduction of transgenic seeds poses a threat to the indigenous variety of seeds;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any study before permitting the use of transgenic seeds;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether farmers in the country are opposed to the introduction of transgenic food crops and have been protesting introduction of the same; and
- (f) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to address the concerns of the farmers in this regard?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (d) The Government of India is following a policy of case by case approval of genetically modified (GM) crops. In view of various concerns related to the safety, efficacy and agronomic performance of transgenic seeds, extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place before any GM plant is approved for commercial cultivation. 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 there is a clear economic and technical justification for release of the product.

(e) to (f) The data generated on the safety, efficacy and performance of Bt brinjal concludes that Bt brinjal is expected to provide enhanced economic benefits to farmers. These findings are in conformity with the Bt cotton experience in India and international experience with GM crops. However, as the Ministry has received strong views both in favour and against commercialization of Bt brinjal in India from the various stakeholders including the State Governments, farmers, civil societies, NGOs and scientists, the Ministry has decided to hold national consultations with the various stakeholders before a final view on the commercialization of Bt brinjal is taken.