

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1192  
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2013  
AGRICULTURE BIO TECH RESEARCH  
Pradhan Shri Nityananda

**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) the present status of agriculture bio-tech research in the country;
- (b) whether the Government has approved private and public research projects in bio-tech research and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has delayed the approval of the project; and
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor along with the action taken by the Government to approve the project?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR)

(a) The Government of India has established Genetic Engineering Units in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi and a National Institute for Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi to work in the area of plant genomics. About 300 institutions in India including National Agricultural Research System (NARS) comprising Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities besides other public and private sector organizations are involved in various aspects of bio-technology research. The ICAR has established National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology (NRCPB) at New Delhi to address biotechnological aspects of agricultural crops. Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is implementing agricultural biotechnology research through National Institute of Agri-Food Biotechnology and challenge programmes for bio-prospecting and utilization of useful genes. Genes related to pest and disease resistance, nutrition and productivity improvement are utilized for research work on cereals, pulses and oilseeds. Bt cotton is the only transgenic crop approved for cultivation in India subsequent to extensive evaluation and regulatory process approval.

(b) Two hundred and twenty DBT approved projects are in operation till May 2013 in agricultural biotechnology comprising crops, animals, aquaculture and marine biotechnology. This includes 3 projects under Small Business Innovation Research Initiative and 10 under Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme. The details of various aspects of agriculture biotech research are presented in Annexure-I.

(c) & (d): Although approval for release and cultivation of transgenic Bt cotton was accorded by the Government, approval for Bt Brinjal has been delayed. Similarly, further evaluation and release of transgenic crops like mustard, maize, rice have been delayed due to issues of clearance from certain State Governments, risk perception projected by some Non-Governmental Organisations besides certain sections of Civil Society. Agricultural Biotechnology research projects are approved by the Governmental Organizations following standard procedures taking into account feasibility, utility and budgetary allocations. The Government of India is following a policy of case by case approval of genetically modified crops. A final view on the approval for commercialization of genetically modified crop plants will be taken only when there is a clear economic and technical justification besides suitability for environment and human consumption.