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Title: Problems being faced by farmers due to drought, subsequent crop failure and new varieties of crops.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (KHAMMAM) Sir, I want to appeal, through you, to the whole House and particularly to the Government that there has been a completely unimaginative insensitive attitude towards the farmers. There cannot be a bigger insult to us, as a farming community, to be told by this Government which has no comprehension of what the impact of drought and biotechnology means on this country.

Last year, after much debate, Bt. Cotton was allowed to come into this country. Today, to our utter horror, we have found that the Bt. Cotton, which has been brought to us, is not giving us the yield that we need. At Mallapur in Mahbubnagar district, the cotton crop has failed after Bt. Cotton seed was given to us. To compound our injury, we had to spend large sums of money on the additional pesticide to keep this crop going at a high premium. We did not ever recover that. The 10-12 quintals that were promised and assured came down to one quintal of produce. So, until the Central Government will conduct surveys of what is happening in our Bt. Cotton growing areas to see if it is really cost-effective for our production, we have to have a policy approach on this problem.

Also, in today's drought situation, the Government has not taken into consideration that we have large poultry and fish farming, both of whose seed is not available today. We have a crop failure in our corn and maize. I have written to the Prime Minister, to the Government and to the Minister of Agriculture that the import of maize and corn should be allowed as one-time drought measure with no import duty so that our livestock can be fed and kept alive. This Government has to wake up from its stupor syndrome of Rip Van Winkle. They will wake up one day and realise that the country has gone by then.