

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:803

ANSWERED ON:27.11.2006

ACCESS OF BIO TECHNOLOGY TO FARMERS

Renge Patil Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao;Singh Deo Smt. Sangeeta Kumari;Singh Shri Rakesh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the efforts made by the Government to make the benefits of bio-technology to the farmers;
- (b) the benefits accrued to the farmers as a result of the said efforts;
- (c) whether any website has been created to make new technologies more accessible to the farmers; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the efforts made to provide computer and computer training to the farmers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) to (d): Government of India set up a Task Force in May, 2003 on Agricultural Biotechnology under the Chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan. The Task Force submitted its Report in May, 2004, which has been accepted by the Government. The Task Force has made various long-term and short-term recommendations and one of the main recommendations relates to establishment of National Bio- technology Regulatory Authority (NBRA) for streamlining and improving the regulatory procedures in development and release of Genetically Modified crops.

At present, cotton is the only genetically modified crop which has been approved for commercial cultivation in the country by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) functioning under the Ministry of Environment & Forests. So far, 62 hybrids of cotton have been approved for commercial cultivation in the country. The area under Bt. cotton has increased exponentially from 72,682 acres in Kharif, 2002 to 30,84,865 acres in Kharif, 2005. State Governments have reported to 15 to 30% increase in yields due to use of Bt. cotton seeds.

Further, the Central Government has provided financial assistance to various State Governments, National/State Seeds Corporations, State Agricultural Universities and scientific institutions for establishment/strengthening of Tissue Culture facilities for propagation of elite plant material. Government has also given financial assistance for training and awareness of farmers on package of practices relating to transgenic crops and post release monitoring. Information about various schemes and projects of the Department is available on its website www.agricoop.nic.in and on the portal