

KRISHAK SANGHARSH SAMITI

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5-11-2012

Dhenkanal, Odisha

To:

To Whom It May Concern:

Supreme Court of India.

In the case of Aruna Rodrigues Vs. Union of India

(Writ Petition (Civil) No. 260 of 2005)

Sub: Technical Expert Committee Report on GM crop Field Trials to Supreme Court – Recommendations - Request for Order.

We, Krishak Sangharsh Samithi, is humbly making this submission to the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the case regarding the ban of GM crops. Our is the prominent farmers organisation based in the Dhenkanal region in Odisha. We represent small and marginal farmers in the region.

We studied the interim report of the Technical Expert Committee on Field Trials, submitted to the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The report has considered the ground situation of the possible implication of field trials on small and marginal farm lands and farmers of India. The issue of Genetically Modified Crop and their field trials should actually be seen in the situation in India, where such small farms are the majority.

The report has clearly pointed out to the lacunae in the biosafety systems in India, including, the risk of doing field trials in farmers fields, lack of long term studies, post-release monitoring, including absence of protocols for various stages of the research. This report comes as a relief for organisations like ours that are feeling quite threatened with the present blind push for GM crops and field trials, that will surely disempower farmers in India. We appeal to the Supreme Court that appropriate orders be passed after accepting the interim report's recommendations.

The report has rightly raised the Precautionary principle, in the context of the possibility of contamination. This is a threat that has caused loss of biodiversity, even leading to huge losses to farmers in cases such as the rice farmers in the United States. In such cases, it will be the farmers, especially

the small farmers who will be worst affected by the application of this technology. The report makes significant references to the impact of field trials on small holdings, such as in our country.

We also understand that our regulatory systems are very weak and inadequate, and with such a system, as is now clearly evident, no protection can be accorded to the safety of our crops and hence our farming.

We wish to bring to the attention of the Supreme Court, that earlier in August 9th, through the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, the same recommendations were made. This report also strongly recommends a moratorium on GM Field Trials. But the Government is yet to take any decision on this recommendation. Contrarily, the Ministry of Agriculture that is supposed to stop field trials, has actually wrote to all Chief Ministers in India, asking them to allow field trials of GM crops, in complete disrespect to the Parliament Standing Committee recommendations as well.

The Indian farmers have been farming for centuries, using local technologies and technologies from the public sector. Using diverse seeds and traditional technologies including modern innovative organic methods, we are reviving our farming, and we have many alternatives for the same. As farmers we know that there is no need for taking the route of GM crops, be it Bt or HT crops. The recommendation of the TEC, to even evaluate the need for such crops before embarking on its research is an important one.

All the recommendations of this Committee of scientists, is much imporant for small farmers, who are the largest of the farming population in India, and hence the most important stakeholders. For the small farmers, such decisions are important for our lives and livelihoods, while for the seed business companies it is only a matter of profits, and for the scientists a matter of research.

Hence, we welcome the TEC report, and humbly request the Supreme Court to order an immediate stopping of field trials of various GM crops.

Sincerely yours

Debashisha Hota
(Er. Debashisha Hota)

Convener

For the Krishak Sangharsh Samiti