

भाकियू

महात्मा टिकैत अमर रहे

भारतीय किसान यूनियन जिंदाबाद

भारतीय किसान यूनियन

चौ० नरेश टिकैत
(राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष)



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क्रमांक:.....

दिनांक: 21.07.2014

To:

Shri Prakash Javadekar,
Central Minister for Environment,
Forests and Climate Change (I/C),
Government of India,
Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex,
New Delhi.

Respected Shri Javadekar,

Sub: GMOs are unneeded and unsafe – urge you to cancel field trial approvals given by regulators.

Respected Sir,

Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) is the largest farmers' union in the country working for farmers' rights and benefits in various states of India. From the time the debate unfolded in India on the controversial technology of Genetically Modification (GM), we have been opposed to GM crops being allowed in India, including for field trials.

The reasons for this are many – we are concerned about farm community's and nation's seed and food sovereignty which will certainly be eroded when GMOs are pursued as a technology. This is because most genes as well as processes of transgenics are already patented and these IPRs work for the monopolistic or oligopolistic benefit of profit-hungry corporations like Monsanto. It is well known by now that the ease with which transgenic technology allows corporations to claim ownership rights over seeds is what makes it attractive to these corporations who spin lies around why the world needs these GMOs. All their claims are hyped, unfounded and false whether it be related to productivity, or lack of need for chemicals or stress-tolerant GMOs etc. GMOs, backed by IPRs, are the way by which corporations want to control entire food chains. The implications are clear and have already been experienced by farmers here in India in the case of Bt cotton and elsewhere, in the case of other GMOs too. Seed prices will increase exorbitantly; these corporations will not hesitate to sue even governments in their pursuit of profits; seed choices will be highly limited for farmers; farmers will be driven to make irrational choices with a changed scenario related to seed supply; farmers will be sued in the name of proprietary rights when GM contamination happens, which of course is inevitable. All of this seriously jeopardizes the livelihood security of farmers.

Another important aspect of this debate is the lack of safety of GMOs – there is enormous scientific evidence that is already available to show that GMOs are unsafe, both for human and animal health and for our environment. If our crop ecosystems are disrupted, and our very soils affected, once again it becomes a livelihood security issue for us farmers.

A neglected but important side to this debate is that of the very need for GMOs. It has been shown very convincingly by scores of scientists in India, in a letter addressed to a former Environment Minister that GMOs

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do not bring in food security; on the country, in countries which opted for GMOs in a significant manner, the food security indicators worsened. For all the various problems that GM is touted as a solution for, there are better, safer answers which are actually more affordable both for governments to take the solutions to farmers and for farmers themselves to adopt. It is these solutions that need to be promoted urgently, while GM is a dangerous, unneeded, costly distraction.

Sir, BJP seems to be belying its promises in its manifesto by allowing deliberate release of untested GMOs into the environment through the latest approvals accorded by the GEAC.

We urge you to intervene and get the approvals annulled immediately, to keep the party's word to the electorate of this country, to show respect towards the judiciary which is right now looking into the matter through the PIL filed by Ms Aruna Rodrigues and others, and most importantly to show conclusively that your government will act on behalf of citizens' interests. Like we said, there is not a single convincing reason why the government should rush ahead with these trials of new organisms in our Nature and environment. Once again, we request you to cancel the approvals urgently. Thank you.



Naresh Tikait
(President BKU)

Sincerely



Dharmendra Malik
(Coordinator BKU)



Yudhveer Singh
(General Secretary BKU)