

KISAN EKTA

Resolution taken in its 4th National Convention, Akola, Maharashtra 12th to 14th September 2016

Kisan Ekta calls for a ban of Genetically Modified Mustard (GM Mustard)Re-launch the Yellow Revolution ! Support the Indian farmer !!

We, the Leaders and representatives of the largest farmers' organisations in India, representing more than 400 million farmers, met at the 4th National Convention of the Kisan Ekta. We took up the urgent matter of Genetically Modified (GM) Mustard, a controversial hybrid of Mustard, that is being proposed to be introduced into Indian farms. We resolved to call for a ban of GM Mustard, and also resolved to oppose the move of the Government to risk the bio safety of the farms in India, the security of Indian farmers, the health of consumers and also the livelihoods of agricultural workers.

India's unfortunate tryst with GM Crops is today clearly visible amongst our Bt cotton-farming brothers and sisters in Punjab, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra. In the last two years, their Bt Cotton farms were destroyed by the same bollworm that Monsanto's Bt Cotton technology was supposed to destroy, and by other pests like whitefly. This much hyped technology has failed in such a short time, Monsanto and its subsidiaries and franchisees have made crores of profit, and farmers are being forced to carry the burden of the failure of this technology. Lakhs of farmers chose to take their own lives due to debt. We farmers strongly believe that this technology, inherent with unnatural processes and risky manipulations, cannot be deployed anymore in our farms.

The argument that we can improve crop productivity through the GM Mustard is a faulty attempt at trying to sell this technology to us. This GM Hybrid Mustard is less productive than at least 5 different

varieties/hybrids already in the market, and yet the productivity of GM Mustard was deceptively compared to low yielding varieties.

Moreover, we remember well that during the 1990s, we strived hard to produce oilseeds under the “Technology Mission on Oil Seeds” and this “Yellow Revolution” not only made India almost fully self-sufficient in oil seeds, but also improved the prospects of our farmers. We wish to remind the Government and our honourable Prime Minister that this effort was destroyed in less than a decade by anti-farmer import policies (reducing import duties), and not because of any shortfall in domestic production.

We have also clearly understood that globally, there is massive opposition to any GM crop and that any attempt to release more GM crops in India will endanger not only our farmers, but also our trade, exports and environment as well. Indian agriculture has a strong “No GMO” brand value, and we are moving into a high value “Organic” brand, with very impressive growth rates. GM Mustard will destroy this trade advantage and the long-pending shift to organic farming/agro-ecological agriculture. We wish to remind the PM that GM Mustard is a negative value crop, while organic mustard will have huge value appreciation. This is advantageous for the farmer, trader and consumer. No sensible nation will destroy this advantage.

We have also well understood that the present GM Mustard like any other GM crop, will have serious health and environmental impacts. The herbicide tolerance technology used in developing GM mustard will have far reaching implications. Both the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture (2012) and Supreme Court Technical Expert Committee (2013) have recommended that such technology should not be introduced in India. Farmers are already reeling under increasing weed problem and use of hazardous herbicides, and this crop would force us to use more and more herbicides to combat “superweeds”.

We, therefore resolve categorically to demand to the Government of India that GM Mustard has to be banned. We want the state governments

also to reject Genetically Modified Mustard. It is high time that we address the real issues that farmers face, vis-a vis farmer suicides, increasing cost of production, near stagnant prices, decreased import tariffs, massive crop losses, increasing debt of the farmers, and depleting natural resources including a healthy and organic soil.

We also call for a re-launching of the “Yellow Revolution” with a focus on organic and agro-ecological approaches, higher assured prices and increased protection from cheap imported oil.

Released on behalf of *Kisan Ekta*:

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