

**Binoy Viswam**

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**To**  
**Shri Narendra Singh Tomar**  
**Hon'ble Agriculture Minister**  
**Government of India**

**Date:** 08.01.2023

**Respected Narendra Singh Tomar ji,**

This letter is written to protest the recent order from ICAR dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022 stating that action could be taken against any 'unauthorised opinion' on the approval of GM Mustard Hybrid.

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has given approval for environmental release of GM mustard hybrid DMH-11. Several issues related to environment, human health, pollinators, biodiversity associated with potential application of herbicide Glufosinate with cultivation of herbicide tolerant Genetically Modified (GM) herbicide tolerant (HT) mustard and it's parental lines have been widely debated by farmers unions, agricultural scientists, doctors and environmentalists. As per media reports GM mustard is planted at various locations and started contaminating other non GM mustard varieties through pollen flow. Ht GM mustard carries bar and Barnase and genes responsible for herbicide tolerance and sterility respectively.

In this context Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) in its order dt. 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 2022 stated ' any unauthorized opinions, decisions (different from) on approved GM mustard can trigger action in public interest' will be taken against present and former employees of ICAR.

Such an order is inconsistent with the democratic ethos of the country where debate and dissent have been regarded as integral ever since the idea of India first merged. This is clearly a gag order aimed at silencing questions and scientific discussions on issues like GM mustard vital to our farmers with possible long term implications. Expression of different opinions by agricultural scientists is innate to scientific research and essential for future growth of agriculture. In absence of important data & results of biosafety and field trial data in public domain clearly shows ICAR has a lot to hide from public view.

Hence, I urge you to direct ICAR administration to withdraw the GAG ORDER targeting scientists in interests of Indian farmers and agriculture.

Yours sincerely

**Binoy Viswam**

Leader of CPI Parliamentary Party &  
Secretary, National Council