

Fortnightly Bulletin on Genetic Engineering South Against Genetic Engineering (SAGE)

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Chattisgarh government to order probe into Bt rice trial

For the first time in the history of GM crop field trials in India, a state minister had to rush to the trial spot to undertake damage control exercises as the local media and activists started reporting violations.

After the Uttar Pradesh government, it is now the turn of the Chattisgarh state government to order an inquiry into a Bt Rice trial close to the state capital - Raipur. State officials have expressed their displeasure as neither the state and district authorities nor the local panchayat were informed about the trial. For the first time in the history of GM crop field trials in India, a state minister had to rush to the trial spot to undertake damage control exercises as the local media and activists started reporting violations.

On Thursday, the state agriculture minister Nankiram Kawar visited the

Bt rice trial plot in the field of the farmer, Jagdishlal Arora in Purara village close to Raipur after receiving reports from local media that Mahyco's Bt rice field trial has been conducted without information to state authorities and worse, that crop residues have been allowed to lie around including some grain without being destroyed as per biosafety guidelines.

He ordered immediate destruction of the remaining crop in the field by burning. The major cause of concern is that this trial was conducted about one km distance from the world's richest collection of rice germplasm available with the

Indira Gandhi Krishi Vidyalaya, the state agriculture university. Mahyco officials when contacted said: "since the questions cover biosafety and statutory aspects, it is best to approach the regulatory authorities for details." The local Councillor Vinod Bhaghel said that she had no information about the trial nor did the district authorities in the agriculture department.

However, some of the officials were told about the trial only towards the end of the season, that too when the DBT asked them to be part of a monitoring team to visit the plot. According to Prabhat Tridatta, a senior

official in the state agriculture department the state government has not

given permission to the trial and that after collecting detailed information, they

will write to the Central government about their concerns.

http://www.financialexpress.com/fe_full_story.php?content_id=147310#

Article: Crops on trial

The Bharatiya Kisan Union's movement against the field trials of Bt rice reopens the debate on GM crops

THE tranquil routine of Rangaraju's retired life, in Ramanathapuram village near Coimbatore, was in for a rude shock. On the morning of November 10, people from the Tamil Nadu Farmers Association landed up at his doorstep. They wanted to uproot the harvest in his farm. The farmers told him that his rice field had a genetically modified (GM) crop whose harvest could contaminate food supplies if it was not destroyed. A bewildered Rangaraju did not know how to react. He asked them for time to consult Mahyco, the company that was conducting a field trial on his plot. But before he knew it, the 150-strong crowd had uprooted the Bt rice crop from his field. In a matter of one day, this former schoolteacher found himself in the midst of an international controversy.

"We didn't know what kind of rice they were growing," Hemalata, his daughter, told *Frontline* over the phone. "My father signed an agreement with the company, but didn't study it carefully. We thought it was a hybrid seed, we didn't know it was something different." Hemalata's family feels cheated. "It is fraud by the company. They did not tell us much. Let us hope it will not put our next crop in danger."

Rangaraju is not alone. In October, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) activists burned the harvest of Bt rice trials in

two farms, in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. In Rampura village in Karnal district of Haryana, activists burned the field to prevent contamination. In Rudrapur village in Gorakhpur district of U.P., they got the police to seize the grain that was lying in the plot. Along with the local panchayat president, the BKU filed a police complaint against Mahyco, the Department of Biotechnology and the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), for several violations found in a GM rice trial plot.

Here too, the farmers and the panchayat were not aware that the seeds were genetically modified and they had no clue about the likely dangers of growing them in their fields. They had merely leased out the land to Mahyco and signed the agreements without knowing what GM meant. The company is conducting 10 field trials of Bt rice in six States.

"They are toying with farmers' ignorance about GM technology," said Rakesh Tikait, spokesperson of the BKU. "Knowing the unreliable track record of the company and the state regulators, we had to destroy the crop to prevent contamination from the trial plots into the food supply chain where unwary consumers are eating untested products. This is all the more dangerous in a Basmati rice-growing belt of the country. The Department

of Biotechnology's guidelines require destruction of the GM plant material after the trial. By burning the crop, we have made sure these guidelines are not flouted."

Bt rice is a genetically engineered seed designed to make the crop resistant to pests such as stem borer and leaf folder. The seeds are created by inserting a synthetic version of a gene (called Cry1Ac) from a naturally occurring soil bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) into the plant's DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) so that the plant creates its own toxin to destroy the pests. India has allowed the commercial sale of Bt cotton seeds, and the trials for Bt brinjal are also under way.

In September, the Supreme Court temporarily stopped GEAC from granting permission for any more field trials of GM crops. The court was responding to a petition that pointed out several irregularities in the regulatory procedures. Currently, Indian rules allow field trials to start even before biosafety tests are completed. Moreover, monitoring of these trials are extremely lax, almost non-existent. The petition also pointed out the inherent conflict of interest evident in the constitution of regulatory authorities. Senior office-bearers and members of the GEAC are also part of biotech industry-promoted bodies or crop developers themselves

in their personal or institutional capacities. Currently, around 150 trials for GE food crops are under way, ranging from brinjal to tomato, mustard, maize and, of course, rice.

No country has cleared the commercial sale of Bt rice. Its impact on human health has not yet been tested fully. A recent study in Madhya Pradesh found that farm workers exposed to Bt cotton had allergies - skin eruptions, swollen faces and so on. Moreover, the Bt toxin can enter the human digestive system and interfere with the bacteria in the intestines. The Cry1Ac gene is a powerful immunogen and can prompt adverse reactions from the immune system. Studies worldwide have shown that eating GM food could result in wasteful growth of gut tissues, bacterial proliferation, intestinal tumours, immune system suppression, and interference with the development of vital organs and reproduction. Earlier this year, there were mass deaths of cattle grazing on the remains in harvested Bt cotton fields in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh.

Besides, GM plants could harm the environment and biodiversity. Once out in the fields, there is no way of knowing whether normal plant varieties have been contaminated by the GM variety through pollination, which could lead to the extinction of local crop varieties. Moreover, there is also a danger that insects could develop resistance to the toxin, after which more pesticides would be needed to get rid of them.

Farmers' groups are not alone in their protest against GM crops. Recently, rice exporters held a press

conference with Greenpeace demanding that the government halt the field trials. They are worried that if there is any contamination, it could harm exports. In August, rice exports of the United States were adversely affected when it was found that certain consignments contained GM-contaminated rice. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) admitted that a variety of Bayer's Liberty Link rice that was not approved for consumption or cultivation anywhere in the world (LL rice 601) had been detected in rice intended for export. This raised an alarm in the European Union and Japan and adversely affected U.S. rice trade. Indian exporters are scared that Indian exports could be similarly harmed if there is even a slight doubt of contamination.

"It is shocking and unfortunate that the government is allowing even small-scale field trials of GE rice in the Basmati-growing region. This is a matter of grave concern for all Basmati rice exporters in this region," said Brigadier Anil Adlakha, executive director of the All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA). "Any contamination from GE rice field trials will be a death knell for millions of farmers and exporters. We want the government to draw the correct lesson from the plight of the U.S. rice industry and stop further GE rice field trials in this region now. If the government does not heed our warning, it could prove to be a costly and irreversible blunder," he said.

Greenpeace recently found that GE rice from field trials in China had found its way into imported Chinese rice products in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Indian exporters are afraid that India's trade will suffer if

any part of the harvest from field trials in the country finds its way into food supplies. At present, India exports 400 million tonnes of rice worth Rs.700 crores.

"Why are they so concerned about exports? We should think of filling our own bellies first. Bt rice will help increase productivity by reducing crop damage due to pest attacks," M.K. Sharma, managing director of Mahyco, told *Frontline*. As much as 20 per cent of the yield could be lost owing to the stem borer pest, which Bt rice guards against, he added. Sharma said that Bt cotton sales had been rising exponentially every year because farmers found them effective. However, he dodged the fact that the places in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh where Bt cotton use is amongst the highest are also the areas from where the largest number of suicides by farmers were reported.

Outraged at the protests against the field trials, Sharma said, "These people are preventing technology from reaching farmers. They are standing in the way of scientific research. While testing is still under way, how can they say that the crop is dangerous? They have done this for cheap publicity and we have filed a police complaint against them for damaging our trial crop." He countered the allegation that proper norms were not adhered to. "We have followed all the rules, keeping 20-metre isolation around the field to prevent pollination outside. The question of contamination does not arise as we were about to burn the field as per the regulations so that there is no trace of any plant material. Moreover, the farmers had full knowledge of the trial. They signed

agreements with us in which all the conditions were laid out."

Environmental and agricultural research groups insist that they too were asking for scientific and transparent research. "While dealing with such technology, we have to follow the precautionary principle," said Kavitha Kuruganti from the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad. "Until independent scientific laboratory studies show that this crop is safe for human consumption, the government should not allow any field trials to take place." At present, the biosafety testing is done by the company itself.

Even though signatures were taken, field trials were conducted without warning the plot owners about the environmental hazards. "Contamination can take place even beyond the isolation distance. State and local authorities weren't informed either. Regulatory agencies are not monitoring <http://flonnet.com/stories/20061201003603000.htm>

the field trials properly," Kuruganti said. During field trials of Bt cotton and Bt brinjal, it was found that untested products from the trials were being sold in the local market, she added.

Often GE technology is pushed as the solution to India's food security problem. However, environmental groups challenge this assumption, asserting that there are several other indigenous plant varieties that can boost farm productivity. "The real solutions for sustainable rice production already exist in farms around the world. They are based on traditional knowledge combined with cutting-edge technology, and are far more reliable and acceptable than destructive industrial agriculture and imprecise genetic engineering," said Nammalwar, well-known organic farming scientist.

"The world's most important staple crop is too important to gamble with. There are 140,000 different varieties of

rice, with an enormous diversity of traits such as resistance to different pests and diseases and capacity to grow in salty or dry conditions," said Divya Raghunandan from Greenpeace India.

"We don't need genetic engineering to take advantage of these traits - we need to preserve this resource and knowledge and combine it with safe hitech breeding techniques." Greenpeace has just released a report called 'The Future of Rice' by scientists Dr. Emerlito Borromes and Dr. Debal Deb, which explains that GE technology is unnecessary since other more sustainable options exist to increase rice yields. Judging by the way field trials are being conducted, it seems like it is not only the farmers on whose plots the tests are under way, but also the Indian people at large who are left clueless of the dangers that GE technology could unleash.

Bt cotton bubble set to burst: Experts

■ - *emphasis added at the end of this story.*

Even though the Indian biotech industry is gung-ho over the success of Bt cotton in the last four years, crop scientists caution that in another few years the genetically-modified crop would not be able to kill the dreaded bollworm.

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As the success of Bt cotton relies on its pesticide-producing capabilities, it would become useless if the

bollworm develops resistance against the toxin. And apparently, that's happening in some regions of Gujarat, where illegal Bt cotton cultivation has been going on for the last six years with hardly any governmental control.

"Pockets near Vadodara are the cause of immediate concern. As for the rest of the country, it's only a question of time," said Dr K

R Kranthi from the Nagpur-based Central Institute of

Cotton Research. He was addressing an annual meeting of the Indian Academy of Sciences, which concluded at the Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya on Sunday.

Incorrect farm practices and planting of illegal Bt cotton is accelerating the process of resistance development, he said.

If the current farm practices continue and Bt cotton is cultivated in half of the total cotton cultivation areas, it would take another six to nine years for the insect to develop complete resistance against it, he said.

The solution, argued Dr Kranthi, lies in adopting better farm practices instead of blindly aping Western practices. Instead of plating five rows of refugia in Bt cotton plants, it is good enough to plant African marigold, which attracts bollworm more and reduces chances of resistance development.

However, the industry is upbeat about the future of Bt cotton as in 2006, it has been planted in 3.44 million hectares — a jump of 2.19 million hectares from 2005, said Dr Raju Barwale, chairman of Mahyco, the first Indian agricultural company to sell transgenic cotton.

■ However please note that what is being blamed is so called “illegal Bt Cotton cultivation”. As you all have known the misery of Bt cotton is spread to all parts of the country, whether it is “legal Bt or illegal Bt”. Reminds us of P Sainath’s brilliant piece in the Hindi titled “Chor Bt vs Bt Chor” in which he refers to “illegal Bt” as Chor Bt and Monsanto which spreads “Legal Bt” as Bt Chor.”

Emphasis added.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/nov142006/national22225120061113.asp>

Orissa: Cotton farmer kills self

This is the second instance of a distressed farmer committing suicide in the state. Reliable sources here said that Shesadri was depressed over the failure of cotton crop for the second successive season this year.

Mr A Shesadri, a farmer, committed suicide by consuming pesticides allegedly because he could not repay loans he had taken for cotton cultivation. The district sub-collector has been asked to probe into the incident and doctors here confirmed that

it was a case of suicide. This is the second instance of a distressed farmer committing suicide in the state. The previous one, also of a cotton farmer had taken place in Bolangir district and the issue had rocked the state assembly.

The government had denied the charge in the Bolangir case and said that the farmer had committed suicide due to other reasons and not due to loan burden. Reliable sources here said that Shesadri was depressed over the failure of cotton crop for the second successive season this year.

<http://www.thestatesman.net/page.news.php?clid=9&theme=&usrssess=1&id=138311>

Follow up: Genetic engineering no magic bullet for Africa's hunger

Genetic engineering is more about controlling seeds, selling more chemicals and reviving the sagging Green Revolution than about saving the world from hunger

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently announced their joint \$150 million Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa for the continent's 180 million impoverished farmers who -

they claim - were bypassed by the Green Revolution.

What? For 25 years, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research - the entity that brings together the key Green Revolution institutions

- invested 40 percent to 45 percent of its \$350 million-a-year budget in Africa. If these public funds were not invested in a Green Revolution, then where were they spent? If they were spent on the Green Revolution, then why does

Africa need another one? Either the Green Revolution's institutions don't work, or the Green Revolution itself doesn't work - or both. The Green Revolution did not "bypass" Africa. It failed.

Why are Rockefeller, Gates, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and even U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Anan proposing more of the same? Some writers who contributed essays to the Register in conjunction with World Food Prize festivities called for a second Green Revolution, too, this time employing the magic bullet of genetic engineering. Why should we believe that another multibillion dollar super-seeds project will be any more successful at ending hunger in Africa? Why would it avoid the first Green Revolution's extensively documented - but less celebrated - failures?

Indian economist Amartya Sen won the Nobel Prize for demonstrating that hunger doesn't result primarily from a lack of food, but from the poverty of the hungry, who can't afford the food that is available. Around the world, poor people go hungry while their country exports grain. During the heyday of the Green Revolution (1970-90), the total food available in the world rose by 11 percent per person. However, (excluding China), the number of hungry people also increased www.desmoinesregister.com

by more than 11 percent, from 536 million to 597 million.

In South America, food per capita rose almost 8 percent, but the hungry increased by 19 percent. The rise in hunger clearly was not due to population increase because total food per person went up. Rather, it resulted from the tendency of the Green Revolution to exacerbate unequal access to food and food-producing resources. Throughout the 1980s, sub-Saharan Africa's exports grew faster than imports. By 1994, 11 countries in the region were net exporters of food. During the terrible droughts of the 1960s and '70s, the value of agricultural exports was three times that of imported grain. Even in India, the country's heralded 26 million-ton grain surplus could easily feed its 320 million hungry people, but does not. Why? Because starving villagers are too poor to buy the food. Aside from inducing soil degradation and pest explosions on the marginal lands of poor farmers, Green Revolution crops are also water-intensive. In India, they are responsible for widespread, catastrophic declines in water tables, forcing farmers to return to rain-fed agriculture or give up farming altogether.

Industry spokespeople insist

that genetically engineered crops are the only alternative to mass starvation - bashing concerned opposition as "elitist." This name-calling masks the truth: Genetic engineering is more about controlling seeds, selling more chemicals and reviving the sagging Green Revolution than about saving the world from hunger. More than 80 percent of the world's biotech crop acreage is planted to herbicide-tolerant varieties that have increased herbicide use in the United States alone by more than 100 million pounds since 1996, while genetically engineered soybeans suffer from lower yields. Hardly a solution to hunger.

Hunger will also be exacerbated by the criminalization of seed-saving. According to a 2005 report from the Center for Food Safety in Washington, D.C., America's hard-strapped family farmers have already paid Monsanto more than \$15 million in lawsuits for allegedly saving and replanting the company's exorbitantly priced genetically engineered seeds.

African farmers beware. The genetically engineered Green Revolution may lead to the enrichment of seed, fertilizer and herbicide companies - but it will not end hunger in Africa. Indeed, it might make things worse.

Documentary Film festival in Delhi- *screening of Bt cotton in AP- a three year fraud.*

The film, 3-year Fraud, made by poor farming women from Andhra Pradesh, was on controversies involving seed companies such as Monsanto-Mahyco, who sold Bt cotton seeds in Warangal district

Qotes from the Earth documentary film festival in the capital recently, organised by

Toxics Link, a non-governmental organisation, along with the Swiss Agency

for Development and Cooperation, India.

The theme of pitched battles - people versus moneyed muscle, farmers against corporations - was repeated in several of the films screened.

The film, *3-year Fraud*, made by poor farming women from Andhra Pradesh, was on controversies involving seed companies such as Monsanto-Mahyco, who sold

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/stories/20061201000907900.htm>

Bt cotton seeds in Warangal district. All promises were broken and each assertion was disproved, but there was neither any legal action against the seed companies nor any compensation for losses, which led to dejection, and even suicide. Some farmers resorted to violence; they broke down the local seed distribution outlet. While one of the farmers said, "Thieves rob

you at night, but these corporations rob you in broad daylight, right under your noses!", another farmer wondered aloud why nobody associated with Bt seed companies had ever committed suicide.

Press release: Friends of Earth Africa calls for immediate recall of all tainted rice food aid, and commercial imports

"We are a nation just recovering from years of civil war and now to attack us in this manner is now making our people once more vulnerable."

A genetically modified (GM) rice not allowed for human consumption originated from the United States has been found in food aid and other rice supplies in West Africa. The findings were revealed today by Friends of the Earth at simultaneous press conferences in Ghana and Sierra Leone where the environmental campaign group urged the governments of Sierra Leone and Ghana to immediately recall the contaminated products.

In August this year the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the presence of LLRICE601, an unapproved genetically modified (GM) rice variant owned by Bayer CropScience in the food chain. Contaminated rice has been found in more than 15 European countries, and supermarket chains including UK-based Tesco, and Sainsbury have withdrawn

American rice from their shelves. The European Union is now testing all rice imports coming from the US (1).

In September/October 2006 Friends of the Earth Ghana and Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone collected samples of US long grain rice in their countries and sent them to a US laboratory for independent testing. The results show that there is LL601 contamination in Ghana and Sierra Leone.

"We are shocked that unapproved genetically modified long grain rice has been sent to our country through food aid channels," commented Arthur Williams, a GM campaigner with Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone. "We are a nation just recovering from years of civil war and now to attack us in this manner is now making our people once more vulnerable."

Ghana is among the top 10 importers of rice from the USA and it is feared that the contamination may have spread across the West African sub-region and beyond. Ghana's rice imports from the USA stood at 78.900 metric tonnes (MT) in 2001/2002, 117.600 MT in 2002/2003 and 166.400 MT in 2004/2005.

In 2002 East African countries such as Zambia rejected GM corn as food aid despite food shortages. In Latin America, contamination of the food chain through food aid was also found when illegal corn strain, such as Star Link, was found there in 2002 and 2005. Friends of the Earth said that serious efforts must be made by governments and international agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) to ensure that food aid does not become the popular channel for GM contamination around the world.

"We cannot accept a situation when food aid becomes a secret channel to ambush our peoples with illegal genetically modified food. We refuse to be used as guinea pigs in big business's experimentations," said Nnimmo Bassey of Friends of the Earth Africa. "With the confirmation of this contamination, it is very likely that a large number of African countries are already contaminated. Africa is facing a lot of challenges and cannot afford to add this man-made problem. It must be halted at its roots."

Reacting to the contamination, Cheryl Agyepong GM campaigner with Friends of the Earth Ghana said: "We don't want genetically modified rice in our fields and we call on our Government to take all necessary measures to prevent any possible contamination of our seeds." She further added that African governments must preserve "the African environment in order to secure the future of humanity."

phosphinothricin acetyl transferase (PAT), a glufosinate-inactivating enzyme.

The GM rice, produced by German-based biotechnology company Bayer, was field tested between 1998 and 2001 but the contamination of commercial long grain rice has only just come to light. The US exported more than 3 million tonnes of rice in 2005.

Friends of the Earth Africa calls on the government to immediately halt untested long grain rice food aid and commercial imports from the USA. The public does not want this illegal rice and even rice growers in the USA were shocked to learn that they were cultivating an unapproved rice strain, the environmental group said. The USDA must take immediate steps to examine protocols for the containment of field trails and also to ensure that every shipment to Africa is adequately screened to ensure they are free of contamination.

LLRICE601 is engineered to tolerate an herbicide called glufosinate which is sold under the brand name Liberty Link. This tolerance was introduced through a *Streptomyces hygroscopicus* gene that codes for

Brazil: Transgenic soybean seeds increase herbicides

The Brazilian environmental institute Ibama reports from 2000 - 2004 the domestic consumption of glyphosates has increased by 95% while the soybeans planted area rose 71%, showing the introduction of genetic modified soybeans Roundup Ready seeds from Monsanto, led to a larger use of agrochemicals.

Rio Grande do Sul, which hosts most of the transgenic soybeans agriculture shows a rate of 162% on glyphosate consumption and 38% in the soybeans planted area. Rio Grande shows what would happen in other states with the uses of genetic modified seeds. There soybean farmers have increased by 106% the consumption of

herbicides from 9,800 to 20,200 m tons (2000 - 2004) of which 19,300 m tons of glyphosates used in an area of 4.1 mil ha of soybeans plantations. Consequences of the massive use of herbicides are still to be seen, but researchers from Embrapa already noticed the growing resistance of plagues to glyphosates.

<http://www.keine-gentechnik.de/news-international.html>

Hungary sets limits for GM crops

Hungary's parliament has overwhelmingly backed legislation which severely restricts the planting of genetically modified crops (GMOs).

The Act came despite a plea from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for more liberal legislation.

Under the law, a buffer zone 400m (1,320ft) wide will have to exist between any GMOs and adjacent fields.

The written agreement of all landowners within that buffer zone will also be needed for planting to go ahead.

Farmers, environmentalists and scientists who oppose the introduction of GMOs worked closely with parliamentary deputies from both the governing and opposition parties on this legislation.

Critics of the legislation - led by biotech firms, some farmers and a vocal group of scientists in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences - say such stringent conditions will make it almost impossible to plant GMOs in Hungary.

Hungary, like Austria, Greece and Poland, already has a moratorium in place against one particular genetically-

modified organism which is permitted elsewhere in the European Union.

The Act is seen as a way of pre-empting expected pressure from the European Commission to end that moratorium.

Hungary is the second-largest exporter of maize seed in the EU, second only to France.

Supporters of the legislation argued that the strong position of Hungarian grain on the European market was partly due to its label as a GMO-free product.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6190720.stm>

Zimbabwe: GMO - Debate Rages On

A SOUTHERN Africa regional conference on genetically modified organisms and food security has stirred debate over the new technology's perceived benefits and negative implications on the African people.

This year's conference is being held under the theme: "Being the light of the world in the light of GMO debate".

The three-day conference, organised by Christian Care, included environmental lawyers, from South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania,

Canada and Germany, who are experts in biotechnology, environmental science and agricultural science, among others.

Christian Care national director Reverend Forbes Matonga said the conference was aimed at providing the

churches with information on GMOs in Africa to share experiences on the issues related to genetic engineering.

"We want them to explain to us their legal point of view since they are protocols and conventions that are being signed by governments.

"The organisation has a duty to look into the implications of the technology from its understanding of God, nature and humanity," said Rev Matonga.

"We receive food from donors on behalf of the communities which we distribute, therefore it is important for us to have <http://allafrica.com/stories/200611230032.html>

accurate information on the GMOs."

His organisation also wanted to have an understanding of the Government's position on GMOs since it complemented State effort in both development and humanitarian work.

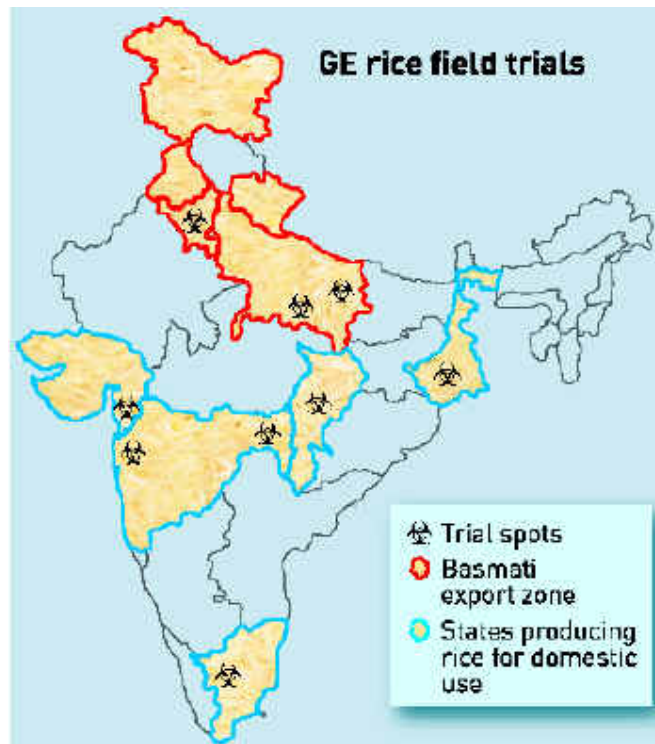
"We have managed to get the scientific details on what is genetic engineering and explanation on the legal framework at an international level.

"It is important to understand our own Zimbabwean law on biotechnology," he said.

Participants would, at the end of the conference, be able to strike a balanced understanding on the debate which would help the organisation to come up with some policies regarding GMOs.

GMOs are at the centre of intense debate. Concerns raised included environmental impact, food safety, and control of agriculture technology and direction of agriculture change.

While the majority of agricultural scientists worldwide have welcomed the advent of the new technology, the public remains sceptical



The data for this field trial map are from communications received from the Ministry of Science and Technology under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

Source: Greenpeace

<http://flonnet.com/stories/20061201003603000.htm>