



Monthly Bulletin
on Genetic Engineering
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SAGE- Karnataka

Stall in Krishi Mela

Gandhi Krishi Vighan (Kendra (GKVK)'s annual Krishi Mela was held from 16 to 21st Nov, in Bengaluru. Around four lakh people visited the 'Mela'. These fairs for most part are largely an opportunity for companies to show case their wares rather than an occasion for genuine participation of farmers. However, things seem to be changing a bit now. Awards are given to outstanding farmers and in the recent past some space is being given for organic farming. SAGE, in collaboration with ICRA, put up a stall in the Krishi Mela and took the opportunity to reach out to a number of people, sharing with them the dangers of GE in agriculture, and its implication for food and farming. Around 500 visitors have registered to be part of the campaign on 'Salt then Seed Now' which is rather encouraging.

Pressure on Panchayats

As part of democratization of GE debate, during the last two months, SAGE-K is involved in a significant work to declare series of villages in Koppal district GM free. SAGE-K met many panchayat presidents and local MLAs. Many panchayat presidents are in the process of preparing a memorandum and getting it passed in the village panchayat to declare their panchayat as GM free and demand the government to produce non-Bt cotton seeds and distribute them to farmers as before.

Salt then, Seed now

Work on SALT THEN, SEED NOW is on. SAGE-K, with the support a group of friends, has brought out five posters on seed issues.

SAGE – AP:

CROPS, a partner NGO in Warangal district organized a workshop for farmer leaders from 10 villages on safe food and safe environment on November 29, 2011. About 50 farmers who are also leaders and motivators in their respective villages took active part in the meeting. Mr. Abdul Qayum, Salome Yesudas and Giridhar participated in the meeting. The need to stop BRAI bill was also discussed. At the



end it was decided by the participants that they should make their villages GM free (Bt. Cotton free villages) CROPS secretary Sri. Lingaiah welcomed the gathering and Srinivas proposed a vote of thanks. Farmers felicitated Sri. Qayum for his contribution to NPM in cotton.

SAGE SAMVADA

SAGE – SAMVADA organized a workshop titled "Genetically Modified Organism, a Threat or a Boon" in Kala Suruchi Rangamane, Kuvempunagar on 6th November, 2011 at 10:30 AM in Mysore. A power point presentation on GE made on the occasion spurred an earnest discussion on the subject. It was followed by the screening of a documentary film, "Poison on a Platter/" The program is part of sustained efforts of SAGE to declare Mysore a GM free city



SAGE ODISHA

Two MPs have been contacted to protest the BRAI bill 2011 to be tabled in the winter session of the parliament.. The names of the MPs are Shri Laxman Tudu – MP Lok Sabha and Madam Sushila Tiriya – MP, Rajya Sabha. Some of the supporting materials related to the ill effects of BRAI bill were distributed to help gain a better understanding of the issue.

SAGE TN

Create organized the farmers of the delta region and participated in the Farmer's Grievance Day on 21st November at Thiruvarur district collector. There the farmers raised the issue of BRAI and demanded the ban for the introduction of BRAI bill in the parliament. They also gave a petition to the District Collector Mr. Muniyanathan. Women collectives, organized 2 villages level awareness programmes – one at Aathur, Salem district on 20th November and other programme at M. Rettiyampatti, Virudhu Nagar District on 29th November.

Kudumbam organized a State level training of trainers on GMO on 21st and 22nd at Trichy. Around 30 participants from different section of SAGE target people like farmers, consumers, students, women groups, advocates NGOs were participated. The SAGE steering committee members like Mrs. Sheelu, Mr. Murali, Dr. Duraisingam and Mr. Suresh Kanna oriented the participants on topics like GMO basics, laws favouring GM technology, GM and threats to farmers knowledge, GM and threats to consumers etc., Mr. Vetrivelvan, Advocate from Chennai handled the session on emerging laws and farmers rights.



Mrs. Salome Yesudas also participated in the training and she presented the importance of uncultivated foods and its nutritional values. She also facilitated the follow up action plans with the participants. Besides the state level training Kudumbam also organized awareness programmes for school children on safe food through competitions at Sentamil Vidyasalai Government Middle School, Erukkattancherry of Nagappatinam district in which 70 students were participated. Similarly, on 24th November an awareness programme was organized at Thavasi Government Higher Secondary School, Poraiyar of Nagappatinam Distirct.

Vanagam organized 2 village level awareness programmes on 29th and 30th of October at Suruman patti and Valli Nagar of Kadavur block. Around 40 people representing farmers, women, students and teachers were participated.

CREATE-Tamilnadu implemented the following activities in November.

At Thiruthirupundi, one day seminar was organized on November 9 for mixed audience , about 70 children, 60 women and 12 men took active part

Market propaganda in 2 villages names Manali and Alathambadi on 27 of November . they reached about 70 people. On November 29, they also organized safe food program in Government Higher Secondary School at Muthupattai Village about 100 students took part in the program.

NATIONAL

Pests continue to bug Bt Cotton growers

M.R. Subramani



Currently, sucking pests, mealy bug, para wilt, thrips, mirid bugs, jassids and pink bollworms are causing problems in cotton.

Mumbai, Nov 9:

Pests continue to cause problems to growers despite the widespread and increasing use of genetically modified cotton in the country.

According to Dr C.D. Mayee, President of Indian Society for Cotton Improvement, farmers are not any more facing problems from the bollworm that led to the introduction of Bt cotton in the country.

This year, Bt cotton has been cultivated in 93 per cent of the total 118 lakh hectares of land under cotton.

Currently, sucking pests, mealy bug, para wilt, thrips, mirid bugs, jassids and pink bollworms are causing problems in cotton.

“Mealy bugs have been noticed in a number of places in the country,” Dr Mayee said, address a plenary session at the fifth World Cotton Research Conference here on Wednesday.

According to Dr Sandhya Kranthi, senior scientists with the Central Cotton Research Institute (CICR), Nagpur, a solution has been found to mealy bugs and sucking pests.

“For mealy bugs, we have come up with bio-insecticide. We have uploaded details on our Web site,” she said.

Last evening, presenting a paper on “Emerging and key insects pests on Bt cotton,” she said a team of entomologists has found a solution to the problem of sucking pests in Bt cotton. It is now awaiting Government approval to go ahead in implementing the solution, found under the All-India Cotton Project.

She said research findings by the team on emerging pests in Bt cotton will be presented to the Government early next year.

Though new problems with pests were emerging in Bt cotton across the world, the issue in India was slightly different, Dr Kranti said.

“Jassids are causing more damage in central and southern parts of the country,” she said.

Entomologists from the CCRI, the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and State agricultural varsities are engaged in finding solutions to overcome these problems, she said.

In another presentation on “Global markets for organic cotton and India’s opportunities and challenges as primary producer”, Ms Prabha Nagarajan of Textile Exchange said that the country contributed 80 per cent to the global cotton organic market. But tighter regulation through introduction of Tracenet, an online traceability system, was required as also availability of non-Bt cotton seeds.

Mr P. Ramasundaram, in his presentation on economic effects of GM cotton in India, said that there was a need for technology upgradation to counter the dampening effects of technology depreciation as years roll by.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/agri-biz/article2611554.ece>

GLOBAL

International biotechnology conference calls for a moratorium on genetically modified foods.

Dar es Salaam, 15.11.2011. An international conference on Food Sovereignty calls for Government to suspend plans to spread GM biotechnology across Tanzania. The conference, hosted by international NGO SWISSAID, explores why communities around the world are rejecting GM foods and standing up for the rights of farmers and consumers to choose what they grow and what they eat.

Addressing the conference, SWISSAID's visiting food sovereignty expert Tina Goethe congratulated Tanzania on having some of the best biosafety laws in Africa, but warned that agribusiness industry pressure to abolish the safety regulations would put millions of farmers at risk. She also outlined Swiss involvement in the ongoing GM Cassava research at Agricultural Research Institute Mikocheni, and expressed SWISSAID's concern about it. She noted that Swiss company Syngenta – the world's second largest agro-chemical corporation with an annual turnover 50% higher than Tanzania's national budget – has also entered the Tanzanian market as a partner in the SAGCOT initiative and is linked to the controversial 800,000 acre Agrisol land deal in Rukwa.

Ms Goethe set out the global facts: that despite 20 years of industry investment in GM biotechnology, adoption by small farmers all over the world and in Africa has been poor, and the technologies have largely failed to live up to the empty promises of increased yields and incomes.

She explained why Switzerland, despite its history of high-tech innovation, does not embrace GMOs. Swiss farmers prefer organic or conventional production. In comparison with GM maize and GM canola yields in the US, Swiss farmers achieve better results with their models of production. Swiss consumers are rejecting GMOs because they are concerned about its impact on their health, environment and biological diversity.

Ms Goethe shared the experiences of groups in West Africa, Latin America, and India, who are campaigning for the rights of farmers and consumers to protect their biodiversity, to be able to keep seeds from their harvest to plant the following year, and to be able to decide which agriculture system best suits their needs and circumstances.

Ms Goethe explained, "Genetic modification is now a human rights issue. Farmers should not lose the right to keep their own seeds, to grow and eat the food of their choice, to protect their biodiversity, their lands and livelihoods. Around the world rural movements and people in capital cities are protesting against the power of global corporations".

The African Union, the United Nations, and 400 leading scientists from 60 countries including Tanzania agree on the need to develop sustainable alternatives to the high-input fossil-fuel dependent agriculture that is degrading the environment and accelerating climate change. They call for the adoption of modern agro-ecological methods that champion biodiversity, protect farmers' rights, and benefit rural poor communities.

A spokesperson for Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO), an alliance of 15 Tanzanian NGOs and businesses, welcomed Ms Goethe's visit saying: "This conference comes at very good time. The pressure is on to convert Tanzanian agriculture to a high-tech high-input GM model, while very few farmers are aware of what this will mean to their farms and their livelihoods. Yes of course Tanzanian agriculture needs increased investment, but it must be investment that conserves the environment and benefits the 4.8 million small farmers not just the 1,200 big ones. Hopefully the conference will help to make people aware of how much Tanzania stands to gain - and to lose."

http://www.swissaid.ch/wEnglish/entwicklungspolitik/gentechnologie/2011_11_15_pressrelease_ta.php

Environmental groups sue to stop GMO plants in wildlife refuges

by Dan Gunderson, Minnesota Public Radio, November 3, 2011

Moorhead, Minn. — Environmental groups are suing to stop the use of genetically modified crops on federal wildlife refuges in 10 Midwest states.

The lawsuit contends an environmental assessment completed earlier this year by the Fish and Wildlife Service was not adequate. That review found no environmental risk to planting genetically modified crops on refuges.

Attorney Kathryn Douglass says the federal review left many unanswered questions about how the GMO crops might impact wildlife, native grasses and and endangered species.

"It's our contention they haven't done enough environmental analysis," she said.

This lawsuit, filed on behalf of the Center for Food Safety (CFS), Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), and Beyond Pesticides, is the third of its kind filed against the Fish and Wildlife Service across the country.

A Fish and Wildlife official says the agency can't comment until it has reviewed the lawsuit.

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/11/03/gmo-crops-wildlife-refuges/>

GE & FOOD

GMO Ingredients in Organic Baby Food?

By Alexis Baden-Mayer, Esq., Political Director , Organic Consumers Association, November 30, 2011



In New Mexico, Arizona and, recently, [Belize](#), the work to revitalize, promote and sustain traditional methods of farming is being headed up by the Traditional Native American Farmer's Association (TNAFA). By challenging governmental policy and offering workshops ranging in length from a few hours to a few days, education and action are the group's methods to encourage Native peoples to maintain the agrarian ways of their ancestors.

TNAFA symposiums focus mainly on traditional organic-farming practices, but their courses also discuss [renewable energy](#) and social planning. "Our driving force is [educational programs](#) to revitalize traditional agriculture for spiritual and human needs," TNAFA Program Director Clayton Brascoupé, Mohawk and Tesuque Pueblo, says. "We find ways to bring youth back into agriculture and reintegrate them into farming, agriculture and food-related vocations based on traditional foods."

Because corn is a staple food and has traditionally been one of the most sacred foods of Southwestern peoples much of TNAFA's work is based on it, but it also covers the growing, harvesting and seed-saving of numerous Southwestern crops, including chilies, squashes, beans, melons and gourds. Participants learn [Native recipes](#) and food-preparation methods, and they discuss the

crops' ceremonial purposes and place in creation.

Program participant Carolina Macias, Mexica, attended one of the 12-day workshops and said it changed her life. "We learned permaculture from the ground up. To me, it seemed like a fairy tale to be able to sustain myself, but this was the catalyst to see that it was possible," she says. "Asking how can one live sustainably brought me to a wonderful community that rooted my path." She likens the threat of genetically modified organisms to ancestral seeds to the current worldwide eradication of indigenous knowledge that has evolved over thousands of years.

Brascoupé says one of the group's main campaigns is to educate farmers about the threat hybrids, genetically engineered seeds and commercial farming practices pose to Native peoples. "We advocate prevention and letting people know there is this potential threat out there. Everyone has to be aware and vigilant, especially with corn, because it's so easily pollinated and contaminated," he says, adding that genetically modified seeds that cross-pollinate with ancient seed strains present three types of threats to Native people: spiritual, nutritional and cultural.

He says crops contaminated by genetically engineered seeds can be used only by those who have a contract with the maker of those seeds. All other individuals must destroy those crops, and the best way to discard such crops is to burn them. Brascoupé says the thought of having to destroy ancestral seeds has a devastating effect on farmers. "If we look at these traditional foods as related to us—like the Three Sisters—it would be very difficult, emotionally, to incinerate a relative," he explains. "When I began to tell people about this, it hurt me even to explain it, because I was bringing really horrible news to the people."

Some varieties of corn have specific purposes in ceremony, and there are certain types of food made with a specific type necessary for a ceremony to be complete. "If they don't have that, it can have a profound effect on the religious belief. If a genetically modified seed has been used to make that food, it has in some way been adulterated," Brascoupé says.

In many Native creation stories, every entity in existence has a specific purpose. "We have the understanding that everything that we see, feel, touch, was created by the Creator for a purpose," he says. Everything has a place, and everything is related to one another. There is a sense of responsibility between every piece in this universe. Brascoupé says that the genetically engineered crops were not part of that creation. "Where are their origins if, when our Creator created this world, they were not present?" he says. "They don't have that relationship or responsibility to us."

TNAFA has been asking these questions and prompting these discussions in Native communities throughout New Mexico and Arizona for 20 years. In 2004, it received grant money from Honor the Earth for seed-saving programs. This led to several political milestones. In 2006, at a New Mexico Food & Seed Sovereignty Alliance conference, TNAFA, the New Mexico Acequia Association, the Tewa Women United and Honor Our Pueblo Existence signed a Seed Sovereignty Declaration supporting the protection of the ancestral and spiritual connection between Native farmers and crops that are free from genetic engineering. Similar resolutions were then passed by the Tesuque Pueblo, Pojoaque Pueblo, the All Indian Pueblo Council (consisting of 19 pueblos) and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council. The counties of Santa Fe and Rio Arriba then passed resolutions supporting the original declaration.

The aforementioned groups, now united, got the New Mexico legislature to approve Senate Joint Memorial 38 and House Memorial 84 in 2007, acts that recognize the importance of indigenous agricultural practices and Native seeds to the food security and cultural heritage of New Mexico. They also validate the rights of New Mexico farmers to protect their seeds from contamination, and calls for collaboration

between New Mexico State University and TNAFA to encourage the farming of Native varieties and the promotion of traditional farming practices and animal husbandry.

In 2006 and 2010, the National Congress of American Indians passed similar resolutions promoting food and seed purity and the development of policy and programming to develop sustainable communities and agriculture.

Brascoupé and the affiliated parties continue in their legislative and community awareness initiatives. He says that the reasons for doing so are multifold and include protecting farmers of traditional seeds from potential litigation.

Speaking from a hotel room in Washington, D.C. while on a trip to educate legislators about his mission, Brascoupé says his work is arduous but necessary. "We didn't choose to be put into this situation, but we are forced to accept it."

Read [more:http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/11/24/genetically-engineered-seeds-and-commercial-farming-threatening-corn-63768](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/11/24/genetically-engineered-seeds-and-commercial-farming-threatening-corn-63768)
<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/11/24/genetically-engineered-seeds-and-commercial-farming-threatening-corn-63768#ixzz1fMB233TB>

GE & AGRICULTURE

Genetically Modified Rice Settlement To Pay \$750 Million To Participating Farmers

By CHUCK BARTELS 11/18/11 03:39 AM ET

AP

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Rice growers who lost sales after genetically modified rice seed mistakenly entered the U.S. market five years ago have until Monday to sign on to a \$750 million settlement proposed by the company blamed for the problem.

More than 10,000 farmers in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Texas sued the German conglomerate Bayer CropScience after the modified strain of long-grain rice got loose in 2006. The mistake led to lost sales in major markets, such as the European Union, and left many growers with huge losses.

Matthew Davis, a rice grower from Almyra, Ark., is among farmers hoping to settle. He recalled hearing the news that the crop was contaminated and then watching prices plunge.

"Everybody was in shock ... but you get used to bad news when you farm," Davis said. "It sure messed us up in 2006."

Bayer proposed the settlement but set a threshold of 85 percent of rice acreage involved. Bayer can opt out of the deal if not enough farmers sign up for the settlement, but the company doesn't have to.

"Bayer CropScience is hopeful that the 85 percent of acreage threshold of grower participation will be met," Bayer spokesman Greg Coffey said in a written statement.

Farmers filed the lawsuits after a strain of genetically modified rice was mistakenly released from a Louisiana test plot and made its way into the stream of commercially marketed rice.

The proposed settlement applies to long-grain rice, often used in pilaf or mixed with beans. Farmers who grow medium-grain rice, often used in sushi, or short-grain rice, found in cereal, weren't affected.

The long-grain rice variety wasn't approved for human consumption at the time, but no health problems became associated with the rice and the trait has remained in the food supply.

It will take about a month for claims adjusters to review filings by farmers to ensure they are valid. Once that process is complete, farmers will start receiving checks, assuming enough chose to participate.

The settlement would pay \$155,000 to a farmer who planted 500 acres of rice annually from 2006 to 2010, a rate of \$310 per acre. Farmers can collect more if they switched to crops that typically offer lower profits, such as wheat or soybeans.

In Arkansas, which produces half the nation's rice, Davis said he knows some farmers who quit because they couldn't endure the financial toll.

After the mistaken release, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ruled that the genetically modified rice is safe to eat, but that didn't bring back the European market.

"I don't think we're ever going to be made whole, but you get what you can," said farmer Jonathan Hillman of Stuttgart, Ark.

Hillman said the effect was immediate when word came out in 2006 about the genetically modified rice.

"We didn't do anything wrong. Bayer lets this happen and it affects us more than it does Bayer," Hillman said.

Bayer was accused of knowing there was contamination, but the company has not admitted fault and stated when announcing the settlement that "Bayer Crop Science believes it acted responsibly in the handling of its biotech rice."

The settlement is open to affected growers even if they haven't filed lawsuits.

Arkansas is first in rice production, followed by California and then Louisiana.

Attorney Don Downing of St. Louis represents a number of growers in the settlement. He said he doesn't expect a rush of farmers to suddenly decide Monday that they want to sign up.

"The vast majority of farmers made that decision a long time ago," Downing said, though he added that there have been a few stragglers.

Separately, Bayer and a group of farmers from Lonoke, Ark., are awaiting a ruling by the Arkansas Supreme Court on whether a \$50 million verdict against Bayer will stand.

A jury awarded the farmers \$5.9 million in actual damages and \$42 million in punitive damages, an award Bayer argues is excessive.

Downing said he's optimistic the 85 percent level will be met and doesn't think the outcome of the Lonoke case is weighing on their decisions.

"I've talked to hundreds of farmers ... and not one indicated that was a factor for them," Downing said.

Attorney Richard Coffman of Beaumont, Texas, expressed a similar sentiment and said farmers want to resolve the matter by agreeing to the settlement with Bayer.

"For my 600 farmers, we're not watching the Arkansas case. We're filing claims," he said. "They decided it's time to settle rather than risk what can happen down at the courthouse."

Lawyers have held meetings in cities across rice growing areas, letting farmers know what their options are.

Bayer's proposal is based on jury awards already made in lawsuits that weren't part of the settlement.

The Monday deadline affects the majority of farmers who grow long-grain rice. Two categories have later deadlines: farmers who planted certain varieties and farmers who feel they have greater damages than average and have to file greater documentation.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/18/genetically-modified-rice-settlement_n_1101257.html

ADDITIONAL LINKS

Monsanto Defeated by Roundup resistant Weeds

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Monsanto_defeated_by_herbicide_resistant_superweeds.php

India's New GM Crops Bill is a Gross Example of Corruption

<http://www.policymic.com/articles/2548/india-s-new-gm-crops-bill-is-a-gross-example-of-corruption>

Locals still opposing gene-modified eggplant

<http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Nation&title=Locals-still-opposing-gene-modified-eggplant&id=41544>

Beyond Bt cotton

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/editorial/article2627347.ece>

Letters to PM on crop trials

<http://indiafarm.wordpress.com/2011/11/08/letters-to-pm-on-crop-trials/>

Harper government blocks GMO Food Labelling

http://www.agoracosmopolitan.com/news/canadian_news/2011/11/25/1920.html

GM crops need to be monitored

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/article2655624.ece>

This monthly bulletin is brought out by Southern Action on Genetic Engineering (SAGE), a coalition of civil society activists, farmers, scientists, academicians, and consumer groups of four Southern States of India, viz., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. SAGE has been waging a concerted battle against genetic engineering through a series of activities that involve public protests, media actions, seminars, consultations and publication of a series of educational materials.