

New Delhi,  
July, 18, 2017.

To  
Shri.Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,  
Government of India,  
South Block, Raisina Hill,  
New Delhi- 110 001.

Dear Mr.Prime Minister,

We, a group of concerned Indian economists, write this open letter to express our strong support to the commercialization of GM mustard.

By bringing hybrid vigour, GM mustard seed breaks the yield barrier leading to higher yields. Hybridization is a well-known and accepted way to increase yields and has done so for diverse crops such as cotton, maize, sorghum and vegetables. GM mustard has been successfully evaluated for food safety, environmental safety and agronomic superiority by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) of the Government of India. Several public sector institutions conducted research trials on their safety and efficacy, apart from the fact that this technology has been in use for the last two decades in Canada, United States and Australia without any adverse consequences. There is, therefore, no reason to deny the technology to our farmers.

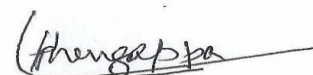
The opponents to commercialization criticize the regulatory process. The integrity of the regulatory process is paramount and it should be protected at all costs. Products that meet the benchmarks laid down by a fair, transparent and rigorous regulatory process should be approved for commercialization. However, it is self-defeating to test indefinitely without end. That amounts to a ban on commercialization of all GM crops. That may serve the critics of GM crops. But surely that is not the intent of the Government of India. Foregoing yield increases is very costly – especially to the poor. The seed-fertilizer technologies of the 1960s reduced poverty, increased farm wages and incomes. Bt cotton, introduced in 2002, accomplished the same in many parts of the country. These crops have disseminated widely which is a testimony to how farmers have valued them. Higher yields augment our limited land resources and alleviate farmer distress.

Technology is not a magic bullet. Complementary policies, such as for water, land, inputs, prices, credit and insurance will continue to be needed. Cooperatives and producer companies are important to ensure inclusive growth. However, sustainable development requires that we encourage technologies that conserve our scarce resources. The University of Delhi developed GM mustard with financial support from the National Dairy Development Board and the DBT. GM mustard is an achievement of the Indian public sector. Its release will encourage and empower researchers in the public sector to bring in advanced quality traits in mustard as well as in other crops.

We request you to consider this appeal in taking further decisions on GM mustard in the light of avowed objective of doubling farmers' income.

With best regards,  
Yours sincerely,

1. P.G.Chengappa, President, Agrl.Economics Research Association



2. Bharat Ramaswami, Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi



3. N.Chandrasekhara Rao, Professor, Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi



4. A.Narayanamoorthy (Professor, Alagappa University, Tamil Nadu)
5. Sangeeta Shroff (Professor, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune)
6. S.Mahendra Dev (Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai)
7. Parmod Kumar (Professor, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore)
8. Varadha Raj (Associate Professor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore)
9. Uma Lele (Independence Scholar, Former World Bank Economist, Washington D.C)
10. Niti Mehta (Director, Sardar Patel Institute of Social Science Research, Ahmedabad)
11. Bhavani Shankar (Professor, University of London, U.K)
12. P.S.Birthal (National Professor, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi)
13. Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay (Associate Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi)
14. Arunava Sen (Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi)
15. J V Meenakshi (Professor, Delhi School of Economics, New Delhi)
16. Lalitha Narayanan (Professor, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad)
17. Parikshit Ghosh (Associate Professor, Delhi School of Economics, New Delhi)
18. Debasis Mishra (Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi)
19. Farzana Afridi, (Associate Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi)
20. Y.K.Alagh (Chairman, Sardar Patel Institute of Social Science Research, Ahmedabad and Former Union Minister of Science and Technology)
21. C.H.Hanumantha Rao (Honorary Professor, Centre for Economic and Social Studies and Former Member, Planning Commission)
22. V.S.Vyas (Emeritus Professor, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur and Former Member, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council)
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