

Third-generation Indian cotton farmer relates first-hand experience with non-Bt and Bt cotton

GMO Skepti-Forum has begun featuring essays by readers on the GMO controversy. We're going to be featuring some of them on the GLP. V.K.V. Ravichandran, a farmer from Tamil Nadu, India, relates his experience with Bt cotton:

Let me just recall the perils and hard ships we had under gone prior to the introduction of Bt Cotton (Bt Cotton was approved for commercial cultivation in the year 2002). As a farmer who had been growing cotton since 1986, I had the bitter experience of loosing substantial money to save my NonBt Cotton crop from boll worm infestation.

I still remember the days when our farmers spent major portion of their gross sale proceeds on various chemical pesticides to combat boll worms alone. The smell of these harmful insecticide used to fill the air in the villages where cotton was grown.

At this juncture our Government took the sane decision of approving commercial release of Bt Cotton Seed. It was the turning point not only for the cotton farmers like me, but also a trend setter for yarn and textile industry. Even at micro level, I used to spend Rs2000-3000/acre on pesticide prior to 2002 to control Cotton Boll Worm alone. Ever since I started cultivating Bt Cotton, my spending on pesticide has come down to Rs 500/acre, that too to control sucking pest for which Bt Cotton is not meant for.

In spite of the stiff resistance by few anti GMO Activists, our farmers whole heartedly patronized the technology. Though non Bt Cotton Seeds are available in the market, more than 92% of the cotton grown in India are Bt Cotton. This is because our farmers select the technology which really benefits him.

Read the full, original article: [A Third-Generation Farmer from India](#)