View from an Indian farm: How GMO Bt cotton helped us cut pesticide use

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

I have been conversing with [Ganesh Nanote a cotton farmer in Nimbhara, India] over the period of some months to gain his perspective as a grower of GM cotton.

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. . . .In the 1990s, before GM cotton came into the market, farmers all over the country were fighting a serious infestation of cotton bollworms. Sometimes, Ganesh told me. . . farmers would lose more than half their cotton to it, and could not harvest enough to cover their costs.

They had resorted to using lethal doses of chemical pesticides in order to vanquish it. Due to overuse, bollworms had become resistant to four generations of insecticides.

"Endosulfan, Monocrotophos, Cypermethrin, Quinalphos, and Decametherin," Ganesh reads off the names of the cocktail they sprayed. ". . . Occasionally if the sprays fell on the skin some people would get nauseous or dizzy. . ."

Despite this dousing, Ganesh says, he used to get barely three or four quintals of raw cotton for sale a year.

This is why the promise of a cotton crop that came with its own insecticide created such a buzz.

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"People say Bt crops hurt the environment," Ganesh says. "But we have been growing it for twelve years and I spend all day in the farm. . .My family eats from the farm. Nothing has happened to us or to our animals. . . ."

The only way to make people understand, he says, is to include Indian farmers in the conversation. While Indian and international media has been preoccupied by tales of their distress and suicides, no one, he claims, actually asks them what they think.

Read full, original post: Profile of an Indian GM farmer: high-tech seeds on a traditional farm