

'If field trials of GM crops were encouraged, we would have drought-resistant varieties by now'

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

Criticising the moratorium on field tests for genetically modified (GM) crops eminent agricultural scientist Dr. M. Mahadevappa, here on [April 28], opined that such a move was detrimental for the farming sector. "If the field trials of GM crops were encouraged, scientists would have come out with drought-resistant varieties by now," he said. He was speaking at the inauguration of a State-level seminar on farmers' suicides organised by Mysore University's Post-Graduation Centre Hemangotri.

"There used to be strong opposition towards releasing Bt cotton in India. Finally, Bt cotton was released in 2002. In eight years, India became the second largest cotton producer in the world. Before the introduction of Bt cotton, we were in the fifth position. This is the advantage of advanced technology," he said.

Scientists at UAS Dharwad have cultivated Bt brinjal, but have not yet received permission to conduct field trials. They have been waiting for approval to conduct a field trial of Bt brinjal since February 2012. "If they were allowed to conduct trials, by now, the scientists would have come out with drought-resistant varieties of various crops, proving to be of great help to farmers," he said.

Dr. Mahadevappa, who is also former Vice-Chancellor of UAS Dharwad, took a dig at the emphasis on organic farming. "Agriculture is nothing but organic farming. Along with it, we have to adopt new technologies to get a better yield. Nowadays, some people are getting undue publicity in the name of organic farming," he said.

Read full, original post: ['Allow field testing of genetically modified crops'](#)