Bangladesh field testing three GMO crops: potato, cotton, rice

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

Inspired by the success of the country's first commercially released biotech crop — Bt brinjal — in 2013, Bangladesh is now field testing three more crops developed through applications of agro-biotechnology.

These are: late blight resistant potato, Bt cotton and vitamin-A enriched Golden Rice.

The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), a non-profit international organisation that keeps watch on production and expansion of biotech crops worldwide, said this in its latest report titled "Global Status of Commercialised Biotech/GM Crops: 2015."

. . . .

The ISAAA report said, "Success with Bt brinjal has led Bangladesh to prioritise the field testing of a new late blight resistant potato [an important crop occupying 0.5 million hectares in Bangladesh] which could be approved as early as 2017."

. . . .

Once released, the RB (blight resistant) potato will be farmers' answer to late blight, one of the most devastating plant diseases caused by fungal attack, Rafiqul Islam Mondal, director general of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), told The Daily Star. He is optimistic that the biotech potato will get regulatory approval by 2017.

Farmers in Bangladesh spend up to Tk 100 crore a year in spraying 500 tonnes of fungicide to protect this major tuber crop.

"Given the importance of the large cotton/textile industry in Bangladesh, Bt cotton is being evaluated in field trials as well as Golden Rice, which could address the prevalent Vitamin A deficiency in the country," stated the ISAAA report.

. . . .

Each year Bangladesh grows a paltry 0.15 million bales of cotton and spends up to Tk 20,000 crore for importing over 5 million bales more to meet the demand, said Cotton Development Board (CDB) Executive Director Farid Uddin.

Read full, original post: Field test on for 3 more GM crops