

## How to stem farmer suicides in India? Help farmers expand farm size

*Editor's note: GMO critics, most notably philosopher Vandana Shiva (Read her GLP profile [here](#)), have long contended that the introduction of Bt insect-resistant cotton in India in the early 2000s sparked an increase in farmer suicides because of the higher cost of seeds — which numerous studies have debunked.*

Only an overhaul of India's farming policy, including addressing the small size of agricultural holdings, will help to stem the epidemic of suicides among farmers that have devastated rural communities, campaigners say.

...

Tens of thousands of farmers have killed themselves over the past decade as drought in many parts of the country and lower global commodity prices hurt farm incomes.

More than half India's farming households are in debt, official data showed, owing banks and moneylenders hundreds of millions of rupees, despite loan write-offs by governments.

...

More than two-thirds of farmers who committed suicide were small and marginal farmers, with less than 2 hectares (5 acres) of land.

...

The average size of land holdings in rural India has halved over the past two decades, with more than 80 percent of rural households owning less than 1 hectare of land.

Farmers' groups have also demanded bigger fertilizer subsidies, a minimum support price for produce, easier access to credit and better crop insurance to help improve yields and prevent crop failures.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Bigger land holdings key to preventing farmer suicides in India, activists say](#)**