

Following pest infestation, will Indian farmers turn wary of GMO Bt cotton?

The loss caused by the pink bollworm infestation has raised questions about the sustainability of GM cotton, which accounts for over 90% of all cotton grown in [India]. Bt cotton, as GM cotton is known, is the only commercialised GM crop in the country. Monsanto introduced its first-generation Bt cotton, called Bollgard I (BG-I) in 2002 and Bollgard II (BG-II) in 2006, the latter of which is still the de facto GM cotton variety.

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“Resistance is a natural and evolutionary adaptation of insects and pests to widely and continuously applied stress factors,” says a spokesperson for Monsanto Mahyco Biotech (MMB), a joint venture between Monsanto and Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company.

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Among the reasons for the rise in pink bollworm infestation area, according to the company, are use of unapproved Bt cotton, lack of planting of non-Bt crops next to Bt cotton and early planting and prolonging the life cycle of the plant.

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Some advocate abandoning Bt cotton for local varieties, even of the organic kind, which they say will reduce farmers’ dependence on companies.

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[G]iven that Bt cotton is certainly not cheap ... those affected may not take the viability of Bt cotton for granted anymore.

Read full, original post: [These two issues could put the brakes on the Bt cotton story](#)