

Will India's government scrap Monsanto's patent royalties on insect-resistant GMO Bt cotton seeds?

Will the pressure to be seen as farmer-friendly, especially with national elections looming, lead the Narendra Modi government to scrap the "trait value" on Bt cotton? There is increasing talk of this, even as the Agriculture Ministry is expected to fix the maximum sale price (MSP) of Bt cotton seed packets for the coming kharif planting season by early next month.

The MSP for a 450-gram packet of Bt cotton seeds is now Rs 800, of which Rs 49 is the royalty ("trait value") on Bollgard-II (BG II), the proprietary technology of the US life sciences major Monsanto. BG II technology allows seed firms to incorporate two genes 'cry1Ac' and 'cry2Ab', isolated from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) and coding for proteins toxic to bollworm insect pests, into their hybrids.

However, a section of seedmakers belonging to the National Seed Association of India (NSAI) and the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), a Communist Party of India-affiliated farmers' union, have demanded "removal" of the Rs 49 trait value. The reason: BG II Bt cotton's failure to control the pink bollworm (PBW) pest that has caused heavy damage to the crop during the last two seasons, especially in Maharashtra.

Read full, original post: [Monsanto's Bt cotton tech to be royalty-free?](#)