

## Bureaucracy hampers GMO Bt insect-resistant cotton approval in the Philippines, despite widespread demand from farmers

The delay in the approval of the propagation of genetically modified (GM) cotton is hampering the revival and revitalization of the local fiber industry, according to a government official.

Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFida) Executive Director Kennedy T. Costales attributed the delay to current regulatory regime for approving GM crops.

“We are experiencing delays in the approval for the importation and propagation of Bt cotton because we have to get the nod of five departments, which we cannot control. It’s really the bureaucratic process delaying it,” Costales told the BusinessMirror in an interview.

He said he has instructed the PhilFida staff to fast-track the processing of the necessary documents to accelerate the approval of the propagation of Bt cotton so that farmers could plant it by December.

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Costales noted that the use of Bt cotton would drastically cut the costs incurred by farmers for pesticides to control and prevent bollworm infestation.

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“We will not engage in cotton farming if the farmers will not agree. And to be frank, a lot of farmers want to plant cotton as long as it is Bt variety due to its insect-resistant properties,” Costales said.

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