

India has access to yield-boosting GMO crops, so why aren't farmers allowed to grow them?

[India's] Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee had first [approved](#) GM food crop Bt brinjal in 2009 after a nine-year-long trial. However, the Minister of Environment and Forests (MoEF), based on public consultations, imposed a [moratorium](#) on the release of Bt brinjal. It has been a decade since and we are still in a regulatory log jam.

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As a result of the government's indecisiveness, GM technology developers have been side-lined The approval for the transgenic mustard, developed by Deepak Pental, who invented GM mustard in India, has come to a standstill. DHM-11 got clearance from the GEAC in 2017, but then environment minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan sent it back to GEAC for reconsideration.

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The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 2013 envisages [establishment](#) of an independent authority — the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) — for the regulation of organisms and products of modern biotechnology.

However, the bill was met with strong opposition by anti-GMO activists presenting it as attempts to lower the bar for approvals. To have an independent regulator is not inherently a pro or anti-GM move, but rather a call for a coherent, predictable, and transparent framework that can rise above the current whirling, high-pitched debate.

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