

Philippines approves GMO insect-resistant Bt eggplant, rejecting Greenpeace objections

[On July 23, the Philippines Bureau of Plant Industry found] Bt eggplant, locally called Bt talong, to be as safe as a conventional eggplant and can substitute for its traditional counterpart.

The Philippines is the second country, after Bangladesh, to certify the safety of the Bt eggplant.

Bangladesh was the first country to plant Bt eggplant in 2014. From 2014 to 2019, a total of 91,270 smallholder farmers in Bangladesh have planted Bt eggplant.

The Bt eggplant contains natural protein from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* which makes it resistant to eggplant fruit and shoot borer (EFSB), the most destructive pest of eggplant.

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The Bt protein affects EFSB worms only and is safe for humans, farm animals, and non-target insects.

"Bt eggplant is safe as it only targets EFSB. It is safe for humans, animals, and non-target insects," said Dr. Lourdes D. Taylo, study leader of the Bt eggplant project from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

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