

## Viewpoint: Genetically-modified mustard is key for India to reduce expensive imports of oilseed, a 'prime guzzler of foreign currency'

India's dependence on edible oil imports to meet its growing domestic demand has been cause of concern over the years. Government has been encouraging farmers to take up oilseed production to bridge the gap between production and consumption. These efforts have yielded some results and oilseed production has increased in recent years, especially for soybean and mustard but we are a long way from self-reliance in oilseeds. India is expected to import 14.37 million tonne (mt) of vegetable oil in 2022-23 compared to 14.07 mt that was imported in 2021-22. Though this is an improvement on 15.32 mt imported in 2016-17, it remains the prime guzzler of foreign currency.

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The approval of GM mustard is a step in the right direction leading to self-sufficiency in oilseeds as well as attaining nutritional security. The [barnase-barstar](#) technology for hybrid production offers a great opportunity for improvement in mustard production. It can be used to efficiently develop hybrids with critical disease resistance and climate resilient traits. High yielding and high oil producing hybrids will encourage farmers to take up mustard cultivation and further help address the gap between oilseed production and consumption in the country.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)