

Adoption of new technologies vital for agriculture, says experts

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The country needs to adopt new technologies in agriculture and the current mindset over the usage of genetically modified products has to change to ensure that the farmer reaps the benefits out of it and the productivity grows. This was concluded by the experts at an interactive discussion held on October 16, 2012 at New Delhi. 'Technology as a driver of growth: ensuring farm prosperity' was eighth in the series of media workshops and panel discussions on the importance of farm technology organized by IndoAsiancommodities.com, a website devoted to agriculture, technology and metals.

“Long-drawn regulatory processes are an impediment to spread of technology,” said Vibha Ahuja, general manager of Biotech Consortium India “Our rules are really old. They were set in 1989 for environmental protection after the Bhopal incident. These rules are for industrial products and can't be applied to agriculture products,” she said at a panel discussion on agriculture and technology.

Ms Ahuja further said that there was no need for safety concerns over the usage of genetically modified products as there are strict processes in place to test them and approved products like Bt Cotton and Bt Brinjal are safe. “We do the same tests as are done in the United States,” she stated and added, “Regulators need to communicate better and our scientists don't communicate enough. The civil society may be against GM crops, but that is not the only stake holder. Think of the farmers who are waiting for new technologies.”

Dr KC Bansal, director, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources said, “The bureau has been working to identify genetic resources for rainfed agriculture. That's where we get 40 percent of our crops and that's

where 50 percent of agriculture labour is committed. Erratic monsoon due to climatic changes has made things difficult for rainfed agriculture and in such a situation better and high yielding seeds were necessary.â€?

Participating in the discussion, the panelists said that it was paramount that biotechnology is harnessed to boost production and any misconceptions over use of bio seeds and food safety issues have to be set at rest. Such technology has to be brought to the doorstep of the farmer to usher in a second green revolution and lift the living standards of farm workers.

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