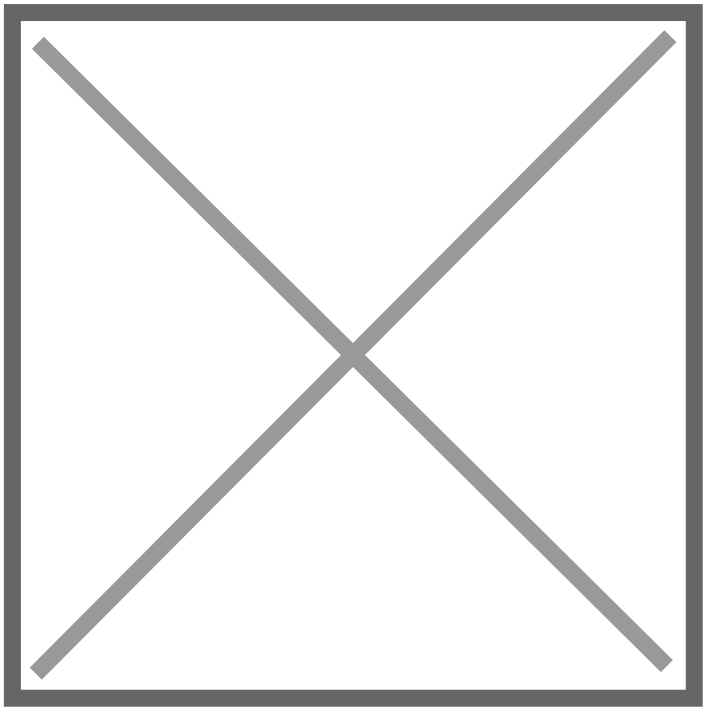
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APNLBP develops transgenics for crops

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The Andhra Pradesh Netherlands Biotechnology Program for Dryland Agriculture (APNLBP) that aims to promote application of biotechnologies relevant to small and marginal farmers has developed transgenics in castor, sorghum, pigeonpea and groundnut. These transgenics, currently being tested in laboratories, are expected to go to field trials in two years.

The APNLBP Chairman, Dr MV Rao, said that it was for the first time in the country that the transgenics have been developed for the four crops. APNLBP had granted Rs 4.1 crore to set up the seven research projects. It had also sanctioned Rs 5 crore to different universities in Andhra Pradesh towards human resource development in biotechnology. Dr Rao said that APNLBP had also successfully developed technology for shelf life improvement of tomato. Using this technology, hybrid tomatoes could be preserved for 42 days while the local variety of tomatoes could be preserved up to nine days without being damaged.

In the case of custard apple, initial experiments have shown that their shelf life could be extended up to 14 days. Experiments were in progress to standardize this technique and also to increase the shelf life further. APNLBP was currently promoting micro enterprises at the village level by providing technology and some revolving fund to educated unemployed youth.