

ABLE-AG welcomes PM's statement on GM crops

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We welcome Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh's long-awaited statement of the well-known fact that the government should not succumb to "unscientific prejudices" against genetically modified crops. We laud his reaffirmation of his faith in the power of technology when he said "Use of biotechnology has great potential to improve yields. This was stated by Dr N Seetharama, executive director, ABLE AG in a statement issued to the BioSpectrum on February, 06. The statement has come in response to the prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh's speech made at the Jammu University two days ago, where he inaugurated the Indian Science Congress 2014.

Highlighting the importance of biotech for the agricultural goodwill, Dr Seetharama added, "At a time when agriculture is under severe stress and requires immediate infusion of technology and innovation, we can't afford to ignore biotechnology which has a proven track record of enhancing crop yields in a safe and sustainable way the world over."

It is important to mention that Dr Manmohan Singh had in his address mentioned that his government remained committed "to promoting the use of these new technologies for agricultural development". He had further added, "To ensure food security and to improve land and water productivity, we have to launch a national drive for an ever-green revolution. This will test the ingenuity of our agricultural scientists. Climate-resilient agriculture and modern bio-technological tools hold great

promise. Use of bio-technology has great potential to improve yields", Dr Singh had said.

The statement from ABLE-AG also welcomed the positive attitude of the new environment minister. "The agri biotech industry aims to contribute towards sustainable and safe food production by facilitating the best biotechnology products and practices for both farmers and consumers. We also welcome Union Environment Minister Mr Veerapa Moily assertion that his ministry will allow field trials of GM crops. Many products from both private and public sector institutions are being tested for safety and efficacy before commercialization under strict regulatory system existing in the country, mentioned the statement from ABLE AG.

A record 170.3 million hectares of biotech crops were grown globally in 2012, at an annual growth rate of 6%, up 10.3 million from 160 million hectares in 2011. 2012 was the 17th year of commercialization of biotech crops, 1996-2012, when growth continued after a remarkable 16 consecutive years of increases. India is one of the countries which has adopted this technology on a large scale with outstanding impact, though only a single product of Bt Cotton is available so far to the farmers.