

SAGE – TAMIL NADU DEMANDS A GM–FREE TAMIL NADU

On the occasion of International GM opposition Month, South Against Genetic Engineering [SAGE]-Tamil Nadu, composed of farmers, farmers organizations, civil society groups, Consumers, human rights and media organizations, scientists and academicians held a Day Long Protest in the South Indian city of Chennai, and drafted a charter of demands. The charter was presented to the Government of Tamil Nadu and Government of India.

Charter of Demands

1. Tamil Nadu should be declared a GM Free State. GM trials and cultivation of genetically engineered crops should be declared illegal in the state of Tamil Nadu.
2. In the light of recent Supreme Court decision on GM Trials, Panchayats should be given the power to disallow any GM Trial in their territory. In order to ensure that the real people keep vigil over such decisions Gram Sabhas must be made the centres of such decisions. No trial should be undertaken without obtaining the approval of the Gram Sabha in a given Panchayat to avoid the possibility of Panchayats being appropriated by big money and corporate power.
3. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University which has a hoary past as the repository of people's knowledge and indigenous science, must stop getting into the trap of doing research in genetic engineering. The Government of Tamil Nadu must order the TNAU to stop all such activities. If it does not stop it, Tamil Nadu farmers will boycott TNAU and hold a series of rallies against it in all parts of the state
4. More than 10,000 farmers in Tamil Nadu have lost heavily by cultivating Bt cotton. The government must immediately take steps to force Mahyco Monsanto to adequately compensate these farmers. Currently not even 15% of these farmers have received compensation. The compensation given is a pittance. It is time that all farmers are provided proper compensation commensurate with the losses they have incurred.

This Charter of Demands has been put forward by more than 300 members of South Against Genetic Engineering [SAGE] – Tamil Nadu who held a day long protest against Genetic Engineering in front of the Legislators hostel in Chennai.

