

**LIES OR LIVES?**  
**The genetic industry's lies continue to consume farmers' lives.**  
**What do we protect?**

Press Release

April 8, 2006

On the International Day of Opposition to Genetic Engineering, the Andhra Pradesh Coalition in Defence of Diversity strongly expresses its total resolve to resist the genetic engineered crops from the farms of Andhra Pradesh and genetically modified foods from the plates of consumers.

The performance of Bt Cotton, the first genetically engineered crop to enter Andhra Pradesh has been disastrous. It did not reduce the pesticide consumption nor did it increase the yields. It had promised to bring down the cost of cultivation and increase the farmers' profits. But the cost of cultivation has gone up and profits have come down drastically, so much so that they have been the negative. The performance had become so devastating that the government of AP had to kick out Monsanto from the soil of the

state for its refusal to accept the failure of the seeds it sold and compensate farmers.

The latest study by the AP Coalition in Defence of Diversity and Deccan Development Society point to the continuing trend. Even the much touted action of Bt against the dreaded cotton bollworm has ended up in a whimper. [Please see the annexed full study FALSE HOPES, FESTERING FAILURES – Bt

Cotton in AP -2006].

In the four years of its existence, Bt cotton in Andhra Pradesh has already taken the lives of many farmers, killed hundreds of livestock and endangering the life of the soil on which it is grown.

In Vidarbha, next door to Andhra Pradesh, nearly 350 farmers who had planted Bt cotton last year have committed suicide. This is an unprecedented genocide through seeds.

Undeterred by the mounting scientific evidence against the Bt Cotton, the biotech industry has adopted stealth and sleaze in its attempts to force it down the Indian throat. Illegal trials of Bt Okra is a case in point. Not even the farmer on whose field this crop is growing knows that this is a Bt Crop. The biotech industry, strongly backed by the Confederation of Indian Industry is paying for fast track clearance for genetically engineered products in the country with a single point argument that it will bring Foreign Direct Investment into the country. If in the process thousands of farmers commitment suicide, lakhs of animals die and millions of acres of farmland become toxic, it does not matter to the dalals of the Dalal Street.

To add to their strength the bureaucrats and the government of this country who are absolutely unconcerned about the welfare of the country's farmers are entering into an embrace of death with the USA through their Knowledge Initiative. This agreement between the two countries will open the floodgates for genetically engineered crops and research into this country. The results can be catastrophic.

But why has India become the preferred destination for the producers of poison? The reason is not far to see. The Genetic Engineering industry in US is dying. The genetic engineering came to the farms of USA and later to other parts of America with the promise of increased yield and reduction in

the use of pesticides.

But in the USA both these promises have failed miserably. In a country where 65% of farming area grows genetically engineered crops, the pesticide use has not come down even by a gram in the last ten years, whereas the pesticide use in the rest of the world [where hardly 5% of farmers grow genetically engineered crops] is coming down steadily during the same period. The yields have not increased in USA either. In fact farmers in the US are suing companies like Monsanto and their own governments against the GE crops. Farmers in Vermont, USA have filed a petition to the government to "protect farmers not Monsanto".

Europe has firmly shut its doors against GE. Though the USA has tried to use its brute force and its manipulative powers in the WTO to get a ruling in its favour, country after country in Europe has renewed its ban against GE. In the last three months or so, countries such as Austria, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Poland [otherwise a puppet of USA], have extended their ban on GE. A French court has ruled that GE crops are unconstitutional. German ban on GE continues to stay. Farmers in Sweden and consumers all over Europe are up in arms against genetic engineering.

Terminator seeds, the most diabolical version of the genetic engineering was globally banned ten days ago in the international Convention on Biological Diversity. This was the most humiliating defeat suffered by the most powerful- Australia, Canada and New Zealand with open and covert backing of the USA.

It is in this context that the need to observe a Global Day of Opposition to GM has become a way of articulating a worldwide solidarity against genetic engineering. In this context the APCID demands that

- \* The Government of Andhra Pradesh continue its boycott of Monsanto and take the company to court for poisoning the soils and crops in this state.
- \* The Government of AP should ban other companies such as RASI and BANNI from producing and selling Bt cotton seeds in the state in view of their complete failure this year. And for the genetic pollution they are continuing to create both on the soils and food chain.
- \* The Government must get hold of the culprits of the illegal trial of Bt Okra detected in Guntur District of the state and put them behind the bars for poisoning the food of the people through their illegal activity.
- \* The Government of India must put the lives of its farmers, soils and animals before its greedy pursuit of FDI and declare a ban on all genetic engineered crops and foods in this country like even small European nations such as Greece have done. The Indian government which never tires calling itself an emerging superpower, should show that it has spine and resolve to fight the sinister designs of the GE industry by banning it from its farms, its research institutions
- \* Considering the enormous harm it has created in Vidarbha, it should start criminal proceedings against Monsanto charging it with genocide.
- \* Scientific experiments all over the world have conclusively proved that the GM foods are causing various kinds of diseases. In view of this spiralling evidence, ban GM foods from this country.
- \* The current proposal to label the foods as GM foods will not serve the purpose in a country like India where consumer awareness is at an abysmal low. If the Government of India is keen on saving its consumers, it should declare a total ban on import of GM foods like Europe has done. Are Indian people inferior to people in Europe that they shall be subjected to poisonous foods?