

GM crops may be considered only if essential: Agri minister

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"I have spoken to government officials and feel GM technology is important. If it is very essential then, we will implement it," Mr Radha Mohan Singh, the new union minister for agriculture told reporters during his takeover of the agriculture ministry.

The line is somewhat cautious than his predecessor, Mr Sharad Pawar who openly batted for GM crops. Even Mr Verappa Moily, the previous environment minister too in the last months of UPA-2 government had given green signal to confined field trials of the GM wheat, rice, maize and castor.

Mr Singh, it seems is striking a balance between the activists and industry. Moreover, it coincides with the ruling party, BJP's manifesto that asks for more biosafety regulations before a go ahead.

Immediately after joining as agriculture Minister, Mr Singh held a meeting with senior officers of all three Departments of the Ministry, who briefed him about different aspects including the preparedness to tackle deficient rainfall during the monsoon season, farm insurance, matters relating to small and marginal farmers, animal husbandry, agricultural research and education.

Mr Singh has wide experience as a parliamentarian. This is his fifth term as a Member of Parliament. He has been in a number of parliamentary committees. He has also been active in rural development and welfare of the downtrodden.