

Rajasthan farmer group writes to PMO to protect GM Mustard

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On behalf of 14 crore farmers, Sir Chaudhary Chhoturam BKS, a farmer body of Rajasthan has sent a petition to PMO to protect the right of Indian farmers and give them a say in choosing the best agriculture technology. This letter comes after the recent attack on GM Mustard by anti GM activists. In the letter, BKS have shared their perspective on the false and negative allegations by anti-activist on GM Mustard and have emphasised on the fact that GM Mustard is going to be beneficial to the farming and agriculture community.

In their letter to PMO, they have said that agriculture scenario in our country is already facing major challenges due to climate change, issues of small land holding and depleting soil fertility. All these challenges have led to an increase in farmer suicides across India. While India's food requirement increases, it is important for us to also continue to grow and create a higher self-reliance with regards to food-crops. As per research GM Mustard hybrid has the potential of increasing yield by 25 per cent higher. This 20-25 per cent higher yield comes without using a single extra grain of fertiliser or single extra drop of water. This is going to be beneficial for farmers of water deficient states of North and North West India.

BKS further urged the PMO to give this technology a chance and banning trials is anti- science and country may loose out on the opportunity for second green revolution which is an integral part PM Modi's better India dream. "The government had faced the similar problem 14 years back, when the approvals for BT Cotton were going on. Farmer yields in cotton have doubled in the last 10-12 years. Same may happen with new technologies in mustard too," the letter said.

On the regulatory part, letter reads, "While BKS understand and agree that regulation and safety of GM Mustard is an important aspect and we should not simply put this technology in the farmer's field. Therefore, trials are critical and should be followed without any compromise and the technology should only be implemented after an approval from regulators. As long as GM Mustard meets all bio safety norms, interest of farmers should not be compromised. GM Mustard will benefit the Indian farming community."

BJP government has identified agriculture as an important area of focus. BKS has requested government's help, support and guidance to ensure that farmer well-being is protected and sustained.

The letter concluded that as upholder of farmer`s right, BKS says it is ensuring that farmers have a right to choose the best technology that assures them higher return the organisation is open to have a broader discussion with these activities who are promoting a cause that is detrimental to growth of agriculture economy and community.