

Local brinjals can be genetically engineered to tackle pests

OUR BUREAU

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Is it possible to genetically modify an insect that attacks a plant and use it to tackle other insects of the same species? No, says a senior agricultural scientist, in the Indian setting as the number of (problem causing) species is huge and may not be affordable to farmers. However,

plants could be genetically engineered to take on problem-creating insects.

Addressing the symposium on Genetic engineering of agricultural crops and livestock here on Monday, P Ananda Kumar of National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology, has said that genetically engineered crops could significantly reduce the



number of pesticide sprays, particularly in vegetable crops.

Talking on pest resistant vegetable and pulse crops at the conference, he said, though there was not much export opportunity for (GM) eggplant, the technology could address the nagging problems the farmers faced.

Answering a query on protecting the diversity of brinjal, he admitted that it was quite a diversified vegetable

variety. He, however, said that it was possible to bring in technology intervention in the local varieties.

The conference was organised by the Association for the Promotion of DNA Fingerprinting and other Technologies, National Academy of Agricultural Research Management and University of Hyderabad.