

## Bt cotton seeds not responsible for whitefly attack: ABLE-AG

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New Delhi, Oct 9 (PTI) Biotechnology industry body ABLE-AG today said it is wrong to blame Bt cotton seeds for outbreak of whitefly attack as there is no relation between the two. Cotton is one of the important crops of our country. The use of Bt cotton in India has improved the cotton sector which has grown exponentially since its introduction, Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprise-Agriculture Group (ABLE-AG) said in a statement. "Bt technology in cotton provides resistance against specific types of insects namely Bollworms while whitefly is a different category of insects called sucking pests. "The recent outbreak of whitefly attack has no relation with Bt technology in cotton," ABLE-AG Executive Director Shivendra Bajaj said. Bajaj added that if any one claims that the damage caused by sucking pest is because of Bt technology, should publish data with evidence to the effect. Bajaj's comments come after Navdanya, an NGO, blamed genetically modified (GM) seeds for loss of cotton crops by whitefly. The NGO, led by activist Vandana Shiva, had said that destruction of cotton crops by whitefly in Punjab led to reported suicides by farmers. "Effort should be made to investigate real reasons of whitefly outbreak rather than making false claims," Bajaj said. Currently, there are no approved agriculture biotechnology solutions to counter the infestation of whitefly. The recommended solution for farmers is spraying of approved pesticides.