

Rajasthan farmers seek PMO assurance on GM mustard trials

New Delhi, Nov 23 (PTI) A Rajasthan farmers body has sought PMOs intervention to ensure that state governments dont ban field trails of genetically modified mustard seed. Emphasising the need to protect farmers rights in choosing the best agriculture technology, it said commercial cultivation of GM mustard should be allowed only after regulatory approval. It is mandatory for developers of GM varieties to obtain a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the state government concerned before going ahead with field trials. "BKS further urges the PMO to give this technology (GM mustard) a chance and banning trials is anti-science and we may loose out on the opportunity for second green revolution which is an integral part PM Modi`s better India dream," Chaudhary Choturam BKS said in a statement. Government had faced similar problem 14 years ago when the approvals for BT Cotton were going on but yields in cotton have doubled in the last 10-12 years, it said, adding that same may happen with new technologies in mustard too. This letter to the Prime Ministers Office comes in the wake of recent attack on GM mustard by anti-GM activists. Stating that regulation and safety of GM mustard is an important aspect, BKS said, "We should not simply put this technology in the farmers field. Therefore, trials are critical and should be followed without any compromise." The technology should be implemented only after approval from regulators. As long as GM mustard meets all bio-safety norms, interest of farmers should not be compromised, it said. 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, it added. On behalf of 14 crore farmers, BKS has sent a petition to PMO to protect the right of Indian farmers and give them a say in choosing the best agriculture technology. In the letter, BKS have shared their perspective on the false and negative allegations by anti-activist on GM mustard and emphasised on the fact that GM mustard is going to be beneficial to the farming and agriculture community. The resistance against the GM crop is growing as there are reports that the regulator GEAC might consider the application filed by scientists of the Delhi University Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) seeking permission for GM mustard commercialisation.