

# GENETIC LITERACY PROJECT

SCIENCE TRUMPS IDEOLOGY

## India's chief science advisor encourages PM to approve GMO mustard

Krishna Das | January 18, 2016 | Reuters

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

India's chief scientific adviser has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to decide the fate of the country's first genetically modified (GM) food crop, mustard, and a recent meeting suggests authorities may support commercialisation.

While the path to a commercial launch is fraught with political opposition, allowing GM crops is critical to Modi's goal of attaining self sufficiency in edible oils. India spends more than \$10 billion annually on vegetable oil imports and GM mustard – with yields 38 percent higher than normal varieties – will give Modi a chance to slash this bill. . .

In a letter sent to Modi and seen by Reuters, Principal Scientific Adviser R. Chidambaram said GM food crops were widely prevalent globally and their use would only rise as changing weather patterns hit farm output. India already consumes oil derived from a GM rapeseed grown in Canada.

"India, in my opinion, should not hesitate to be the first introducer of new advanced technology, after convincing itself, of course, about its value to the users and the nation, its economic viability, its safety and environment friendliness," Chidambaram wrote in the letter sent in October. . .

India's GM mustard makes use of three genes already incorporated in rapeseed hybrids in Canada, the United States and Australia. . . Also, oil derived from its seeds does not contain any of the proteins linked to the three genes used, he added.