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Royalty cap blow for new GM seeds

“For the first time, the technology providers would be authorised to get some kind of a minimum royalty/trait fee. We have kept the royalty at not more than 10 per cent in India, while the global average is seven per cent. If it is below 10 per cent, they can negotiate directly,” Press Trust of India reported, quoting an agriculture ministry official.

Meanwhile, Shivendra Bajaj, executive director, Association of Biotechnology-Led Enterprises — Agriculture Focus Group said the Centre’s gazette notification is a huge blow to the innovators in agribiotech sector. “It clearly indicates the intention of the government to disregard research and innovation and thereby not protecting IPR (intellectual property rights) in the sector. This order creates an environment of policy unpredictability and arbitrariness of decision making,



which is contrary to the recently-launched IPR policy. Such a decision is a discouragement of research and is contrary to our Prime Minister’s vision of bringing research into the hands of farmers,” Bajaj said.

Kalyan Goswami, executive director of National Seed Association of India said, “The new notification seeks to address the issue of failure of non-performance of technology. Now, one-sided

licensing terms of technology provider will no longer hold ground.”

This will do away with the “monopolistic practice and create a level-playing field for all,” he added. The new guidelines also prescribe that the technology provider would not be eligible for any royalty whatsoever if a GM trait loses its efficacy as reported by states and verified by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.