

Business Standard

PPVFR Act regulates GM seed mkt;no need for new norms: NSAI

Press Trust of India | New Delhi September 21, 2016 Last Updated at 17:57 IST

Opposing the government's draft guidelines on BT cotton market, apex seed industry body NSAI today said the existing PPVFR Act has adequate provisions to regulate the cotton seed market and other future technologies in the agriculture sector.

In May, the Agriculture Ministry had issued a notification prescribing new guidelines for licencing and royalty/trait value fixation of BT cotton seeds.

But later, the government withdrew the notification and turned it into a draft guidelines to seek comments from stakeholders amid opposition from crop biotech industry.

National Seed Association of India (NSAI) President M Prabhakar Rao said, "We have submitted our comments on draft guidelines to the government. We feel that there is no need for licencing agreement from the technology provider and even trait fee can be fixed by the Plant Protection authority."

The government's draft proposes a new format for bilateral agreements while the existing signed pacts between licensors (technology providers) and licensees (seed firms) would become invalid.

"We strongly believe that the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Act can very well take care of the proposed provisions of the draft licensing guidelines for BT cotton or any other future technology related to agriculture," National Seed Association of India (NSAI) Executive Director Kalyan Goswami told reporters here.

If the PPVFR Act is followed, there would be no need to sign any licensing agreement with the technology providers. Secondly, any breeder, researchers can access protected technology and developed their own variety/hybrids, he said.

"The developed material can also be commercialised paying royalty under PPVFR clause of benefit sharing," he said, adding that this will curb monopolistic regime.

The draft also proposed a cap on royalty for the new genetically modified (GM) traits at 10 per cent of the maximum sale price of BT cotton seeds for the first 5 years. Eligible seed firms access to the GM technology was also ensured.