

More firms to release

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Bt cotton seeds

Considering the positive and favorable response to transgenic Bt cotton, few more companies are preparing to release their genetically modified cotton hybrids for commercial use shortly. According to a study conducted by Rabobank International seven companies – Mahendra and Paras of the Emergent group, Nath Seeds, Ankur Seeds, Ajeet Seeds, Raasi Seeds, Krishi Dhan and Nuziveedu Seeds – are preparing to release their Bt cotton hybrids for commercialization by 2006. The study says that in near future multinational companies could invest more to develop or outsource capabilities in transgenic technologies.

Chhattisgarh to offer incentives for biotech industry

To boost the biotech industry, Chhattisgarh is planning to provide a package of incentives like tax rebates, single-window clearance and a dedicated Biotech Park. According to reports the state cabinet is also considering the announcement of a comprehensive biotech policy. The government has been encouraging private investment in all the areas of biotechnology. The biotech industries located in rural areas are eligible for all incentives and exemptions available to rural industries. The state's network of biotech park may come at Bhilai and Rajnandgaon and the government is expected to provide an initial support of Rs 10 crore to the park project.

Karnataka to participate in Washington Bio expo

Karnataka will participate in the three day Biotechnology Industry Organization Exhibition to be held in Washington DC. The exhibition will be held at Washington Convention Center from June 23 to 25. The participation will help the state to show case its strength and infrastructure facilities available to attract the investors and venture capitals to invest in the state.

Applications for funds dropped

In the last couple of years, the number of applications for funding the biotechnology ventures has dropped drastically, said Alok Gupta, associate director, Head Life Sciences & Biotechnology, Rabo India Finance Pvt Ltd. Earlier Rabo India used to receive 2-3 proposals a week. But now the industry has understood the hard realities. In spite of many market risk factors, he said, Rabo India has been funding 15 pharma companies for their different activities like clinical trials, discovery process, healthcare sectors etc. For SMEs, he said, Rabo India is providing advisory services in order to get funds to continue their new/present projects.

SII soon to release Hepatitis-B-DTP vaccine

The Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) is in the process of conducting phase III clinical trials for a Hepatitis B-DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis) combination vaccine. The SII medical director, Subodh Bharadwaj, said, "Research is going on but it is too soon to predict when the vaccine will be commercially available." The SII is the largest manufacturer of vaccines in the country and have seen growth in the Hepatitis B segment, with the share of its GeneVac B recombinant vaccine growing at about 37 percent during 2002 with sales of Rs 10.28 crore.