

ISAAA releases 'Brief 47' on Bt brinjal, appreciated by Bangladesh agri minister

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Brief 47 presents a thorough review and analysis of the deregulation of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh “from the scientific and biosafety assessment and commercial release to the planting of Bt brinjal by farmers in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is the first country in the world to approve the commercial planting of four varieties of the insect resistant Bt brinjal on October 30, 2013. Subsequently, 20 farmers planted Bt brinjal seedlings on over 2 hectares (each on 1 bha equivalent to 0.13 ha) in four brinjal growing regions of Gazipur, Jamalpur, Pabna/Ishurdi, and Rangpur in the spring season of 2014. Notably, Bt brinjal allowed farmers to raise a healthy and vigorous brinjal crop, substantially cut down on pesticide sprays to control fruit and shoot borer (FSB) disease, considerably decreased cost of cultivation and significantly increased marketable yield.

The union minister of agriculture Ms Matia Chowdhury, in her message for ISAAA Brief 47, supported the use of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh and endorsed the commercial approval of Bt brinjal as a step in the right direction. Congratulating the authors for bringing out facts on Bt brinjal to the people of Bangladesh and to the global society, Ms Chowdhury referred to the ISAAA Brief 47 as a comprehensive document that will help readers understand the rationale for the commercial release of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh.

Suggesting a coherent approach on information and knowledge sharing on Bt brinjal in Bangladesh, the minister emphasized that "we accord the highest priority to the safety and benefits of the society but shun any activity that intends to spread misinformation and misguide the public about Bt brinjal or other products that are evaluated by public sector research institutions."

Presenting the field level experience and evidence, Brief 47 also encapsulates the testimonials of experts and farmers attesting the benefits of Bt brinjal after a bountiful harvest in the first cropping season 2014. The Brief also presents a set of Bt brinjal photos from farmers' fields and a collection of highly cited references on Bt brinjal in Bangladesh.