

GEAC halt GM mustard cultivation

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Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), the regulatory body for genetically-modified food under the Environment Ministry, had deferred a decision on allowing commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) mustard and has asked the developer of the hybrid mustard to provide some more information on bio-safety related data.

on Feb 05,2016 GEAC has conducted a meeting. "In today's meeting, we sought more information from those who developed GM mustard (Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants, Delhi University) and had applied for permission for commercial cultivation. We will not rush through and will take a decision only after due deliberations," said Mr Prakash Javadekar, Environment Minister, after the meeting.

Reportedly, GEAC suggested eight additional bio-informatics tests for inclusion in the seed's biosafety dossier and asked the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) to prepare a Risk Assessment and Risk Management (RARM) document. It set a timeline of two weeks for submission of the revised biosafety dossier but separately recommended a long winding procedure for further review and consultation on the biosafety data.

According to the regulator, the revised dossier received from the applicant would be considered by the Sub-Committee and a Biosafety RARM report would be prepared for consideration of the GEAC. Subsequent to the review, and if the biosafety dossier is found to be complete in all respects, the GEAC has recommended that both dossier and RARM report - minus certain confidential segments - be put out in the public domain for comments. However, no information would be posted while the review is still under progress.

As per a note from the Environment Ministry, "A detailed response to the comments received would be prepared and considered before a final decision is taken by the GEAC."