

Minutes of the 13th Meeting of the Standing Committee to evaluate applications for commercial release of Bt cotton hybrids expressing approved events under 'Event Based Approval Mechanism (EBAM)' held in DBT, New Delhi on 15th April, 2015

The 13th meeting of the Standing Committee to review applications for commercial release of Bt cotton hybrids expressing approved events under 'Event based approval mechanism (EBAM)' was held on 15th April, 2015 in Room No. 727, Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan, ADG (Commercial Crops), ICAR, New Delhi. The list of participants was as under:

A. Members

1. Dr. Dilip Monga, Head, CICR Regional Station, Sirsa, Haryana
2. Dr. Punit Mohan, Principal Scientist, CICR, Nagpur
3. Dr. A.H. Parakash, Project Co-coordinator (Cotton), AICCIP, CICR, RS, Coimbatore
4. Prof. Ramesh Gumber, Addl. Director of Research & Head, Plant Breeding, PAU, Ludhiana
5. Shri R. K.Mishra, Director (Seeds), Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi
6. Dr. S R Rao, Member Secretary, RCGM & Scientist-G, DBT
7. Dr. Rajalakshmi Muralidharan, Member Secretary, Standing Committee & Scientist-E, DBT

B. Special Invitees

1. Dr. Nitin Jain, Scientist-E, DBT
2. Dr. Amit Parikh, Scientist-D, DBT
3. Dr. Govind Rai, Scientist, BSU
4. Sh. Sunil Naik, JA, DBT

Dr S.J. Rahman, Principal Scientist & Head, AICRP on Biological Control, Agri. Research Institute, Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Hyderabad could not attend the meeting due to some personal problems.

2. Welcome Remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman, Standing Committee extended a formal welcome to the members of the Standing Committee and initiated the process of the meeting.

3. Remarks/Views by the Members

Member Secretary, RCGM made a brief presentation on "Analysis of applications for consideration by the Standing Committee under EBAM for commercialization of Bollgard II Bt cotton hybrids incorporating stacked cry1Ac and cry2Ab2 genes". After detailed deliberations, the Committee unanimously agreed that the minimum criteria for the established parameters should be adhered to while scrutinising the applications for commercialization of Bt cotton hybrids under EBAM:

To elaborate, besides parameters such as protein contents, mortality, significant superiority of hybrids over best Bt check, care was also taken to examine the "Boll damage" as measured by economic threshold of damage determined to be at 10%.

4. Action taken report by the Member- Secretary

Member Secretary informed that necessary follow up action had already been taken on the recommendations of the Standing Committee in its 12th meeting held on 21.05.2014 and letters were issued to State Agriculture Departments/applicants under intimation to the GEAC.

5. Recommendations of the Bt cotton hybrids to State Agri. Departments

The Committee observed that 260 applications have been received against the 'Call for Applications' for North, Central and South Zones and the scrutiny of all applications in a single day is very difficult. The Committee therefore decided that only the applications received for North Zone will be considered in the meeting and the applications received for Central and South Zone will be considered in the next meeting. Members also noted that the tenure of the Standing Committee has been extended by GEAC for a period of one season (Kharif 2015) only.

The Committee scrutinized the applications received for North Zone taking into consideration the TOR of the Committee stipulated by GEAC, the following parameters mentioned in the 'Call for Applications' published on the DBT Biosafety Website:

- (a) Confirmation of gene/ event through molecular characterization by the licensor that the gene/s which is being used is one of the approved events (LOC in original)
- (b) Level of protein expression in green house and field trials
- (c) Morphological characters using DUS descriptors as per PPVF&RA guidelines
- (d) Bio-efficacy data generated in laboratory conditions
- (e) Authorization certificate/ No Objection Certificate (NOC) in original from technology provider in case of sub-licensee
- (f) Affidavits duly signed by the Notary on Stamp Paper,
- (g) Field trial data of the particular hybrid at least for one year from one SAU per State of the particular Zone; besides yield parameters, the data on quality aspects as well as reaction of test hybrid against insects and diseases as recorded under AICCIP; Seed cotton yield should be significantly superior to the best check in the SAU/ICAR trial.
- (h) Data on tolerance of Bt cotton hybrids to CLCuV in North Zone as evaluated by SAUs in North Zone/CICR, Sirsa

Based on the SAU/AICCIP-ICAR reports, the Committee recommended the Bt cotton hybrids for commercial cultivation in respective States for North Zone. The Committee directed the Member Secretary to issue the recommendation letters to different State Agriculture Departments in North Zone, for recommended Bt cotton hybrids under intimation to GEAC, on the same lines as in the previous meetings.

6. Communication from GEAC regarding a request from Vikram Seeds Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad for permission to use non-Bt varieties as refugia for BGII

hybrids, along with the comments from Director, CICR, Nagpur and Dr. O.P. Govila, Member, GEAC & Former Prof. of Genetics, IARI, New Delhi

The Committee considered the communication received from GEAC and observed that the matter does not come under its purview.

7. List of Bt cotton hybrids recommended for withdrawal from commercialization

The Committee noted the list of Bt cotton hybrids requested by the applicants, for voluntary withdrawal. The Committee directed the Member Secretary to send the list to GEAC for consideration.

With the above, the meeting ended with thanks to the Chair. The minutes are approved.

N. Gopalakrishnan

(Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan)

Chairman, Standing Committee &
ADG (Commercial Crops), ICAR, New Delhi

Place: New Delhi

Date: 1st May 2015