

Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II

Supporting agricultural development through biotechnology

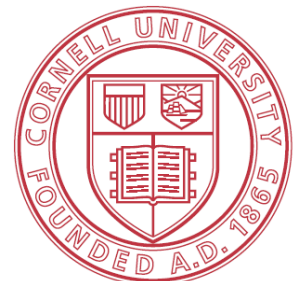
Lessons learned in communication:

The challenges of communicating about agricultural biotechnology and the importance of public outreach

06/05/2012 Washington DC

Randy A. Hautea

ISAAA



Ag. Biotech and Public Communication

- Agricultural biotechnology, particularly crop genetic engineering, is often misunderstood hence it is controversial
- There are well-resourced opposition groups and organized campaigns against agricultural biotechnology/crop genetic engineering
- These challenges have to be collectively addressed by ABSPII project partners with the support of the national institutions and stakeholders
- Strategic, science-based communication is vital

Challenges

Bt Brinjal/Eggplant in India – An Example

Anti-biotech
groups

Bt brinjal debate on the boil



How safe are GM crops

FOUR HYBRID varieties of Bt brinjal are being tested across 11 locations in the country for over two years now

THE TESTS include study of the socio-economic impact of

cause medical problems. So far, data generated by

GM crops answer to food shortage, says govt; not safe, say critics

Jatin Gandhi
New Delhi, May 4

Hindustan Times
Special

CAN THE humble brinjal open the doors to a series of health hazards Indian consumers may never recover from? At least that is what a group of TV and film celebrities, musicians, farmers and activists plan to convey when they gather at the Jantar Mantar on May 6 to protest against the entry of Genetically Modified (GM) brinjal set to hit Indian markets by the end of this year.

market, so people who want to say no to GM crops, will simply have to boycott vegetables," said Kavita Kuruganti of the Coalition of GM free India that is organising the celebrities' protest to raise awareness against GM foods. Among the celebrities are Nandita Das, Amala, Milind Soman, Khushboo, Rabbi Shergill and Nafisa Ali. "On May 6, they will boycott the brinjal

unsafe for human consumption and tests that are carried out can never predict what might go wrong in the long run. The debate on the brinjal also opens a window to the larger debate in India on whether India should allow GM foods.

The government, however, says it can't disallow GM crops that clear the prescribed tests. "Nothing is untouchable. Risk-assessed GM crops are good and the government's policy is crystal clear on this," Dr Mangla Rai, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and



Bt brinjal row: India to now sue Monsanto/Mahyco



By Anne Sewell
Apr 23, 2012 in [World](#)
[1 comment](#)

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Monsanto is being accused of allegedly using Indian brinjal varieties for commercial purposes without the permission of the National Biodiversity Authority of India.

India | Updated Feb 27, 2012 at 04:38pm IST

Jairam Ramesh defends controversial BT Brinjal decision



Rupashree Nanda, CNN-IBN

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GM food. He spoke to CNN IBN's Rupashree Nanda in Kochi while on a three day visit to Kerala.

Highlights of Recent Events (India)

- **2010**
 - **Minister for Environment and Forests decides to impose moratorium on Bt brinjal in February 2010 and defer commercial release pending further tests**
 - The Prime Minister intervenes and the Planning Commission requests the Six National Science Academies to examine the scientific rigor in assessment of GM crops
 - Environment Minister constitutes a 19 member Expert Committee to examine the comments of Greenpeace supported entities
 - Examined the biosafety data and issues raised by various stakeholders
 - Concluded that the benefits of Bt eggplant event EE-1 developed by Mahyco far outweigh the perceived and projected risks.
 - The matter is currently pending to be considered by the Expert committee – It will again be referred to GEAC thereafter with the recommendations of the Expert Committee
 - Final Decision awaited
- **Anti-biotech-NGO-led litigation to create road blocks for the public sector to commercialize technologies relevant for resource poor farmers**

Anti Bt Eggplant Campaign - Philippines

Launched in July, 2010 - new Government, newly enacted Organic Agriculture Act



stamp

Dear Sec. Alcala:

To: **Hon. Proceso Alcala**
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
Elliptical Road, Diliman,
Quezon City, Philippines 1100

SIGN PETITION HERE!

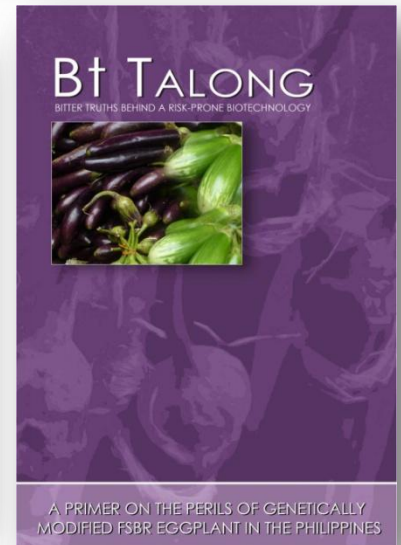
To Our Most Honorable Secretary Alcala,

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR APPOINTMENT AS THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY! We have great faith in your capabilities to hold the position, especially with your enduring commitment to organic farming. We are sure that with you at the helm, the country's state of agriculture will finally experience an escalating development towards what the country, and the whole world really needs - SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE.

We recently learned about the Development and Commercialization of Philippine Fruit and Shoot Borer (FSB) Resistant Eggplants Containing MAHVO Bt eggplant being tested in 1) Sta. Maria, Pangasinan; 2) UPLB, Bay, Laguna; 3) CSASAC, Pili, Camarines Sur; 4) Sta. Barbara, Iloilo; 5) VSU, Baybay, Leyte; 6) UP Mindanao Davao City; and 7) University of Southern Mindanao, Kibacan, North Cotabato.

According to an article published on June 28, 2010 issue of the Manila Bulletin, the FSBR eggplant will be the first public-sector genetically modified (GM)/biotech crop product in the country and the first GM/biotech food crop to be cultivated in the country by 2011. Field tests in the seven (7) sites cited above are pushed by Dr. Desiree Hautala, project leader of the FSBR project and is funded by the USAID.

WE URGE YOU TO STOP ALL THESE FIELD TRIALS AND THE EVENTUAL COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE FRUIT AND SHOOT BORER RESISTANT (FSBR) EGGPLANT DUE TO THE FOLLOWING REASONS:



Challenges

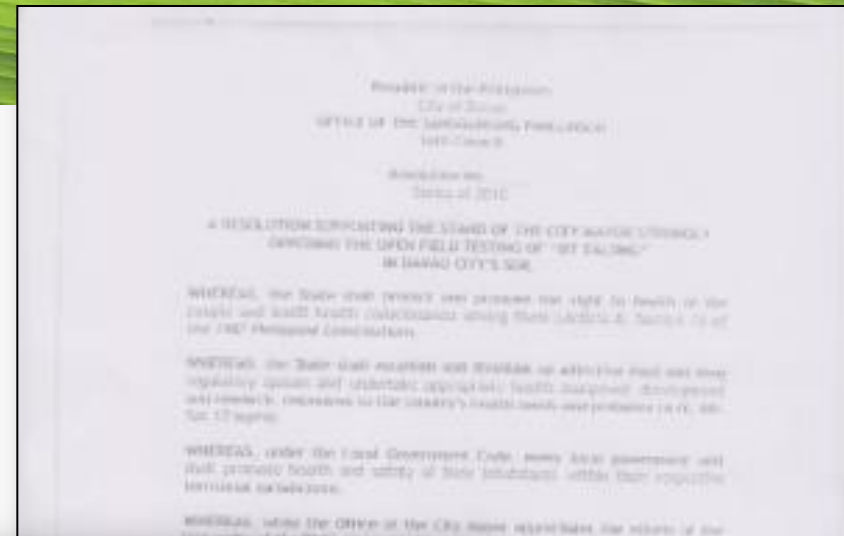
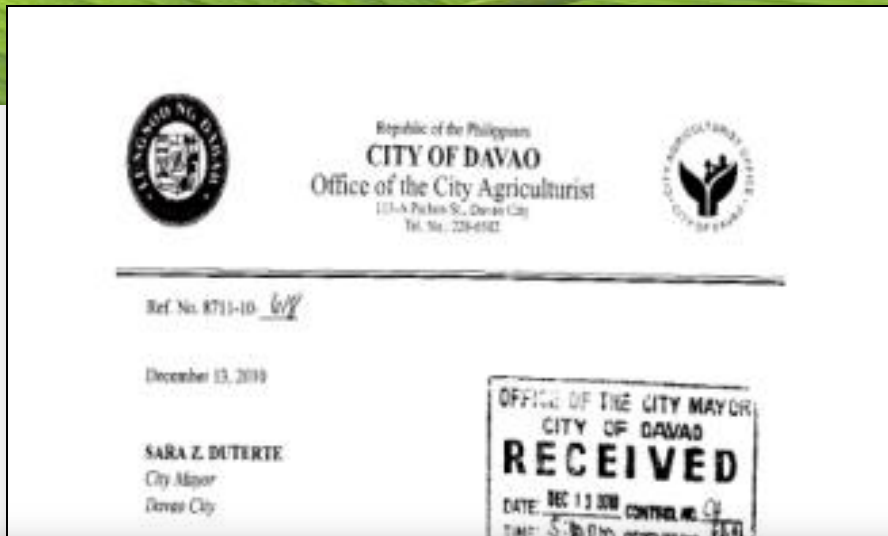
Bt Talong/Eggplant in the Philippines – Another Example

Anti-biotech
groups



Challenges

Misinformation from NGOs;
Resolutions opposing field trials



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Monday, March 12, 2012

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City stands firm vs eggplant testing

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By Jereco O. Paloma
Saturday, November 12, 2011

THE City Government told proponents of the controversial *Bacillus thuringiensis* eggplant or the "Bt talong" to make things clear first before they could run the second round of testing they are mulling.

Leonardo Avila III, acting chief of the City Agriculturist Office (CAO), said the City Government in general did not change its stance in opposing the open field test of Bt talong in any parts of the city, even inside the University of the Philippines in Mindanao (UPMin), in Mintal, this city.

[Have something to report? Tell us in text, photos or videos.](#)

Weekend

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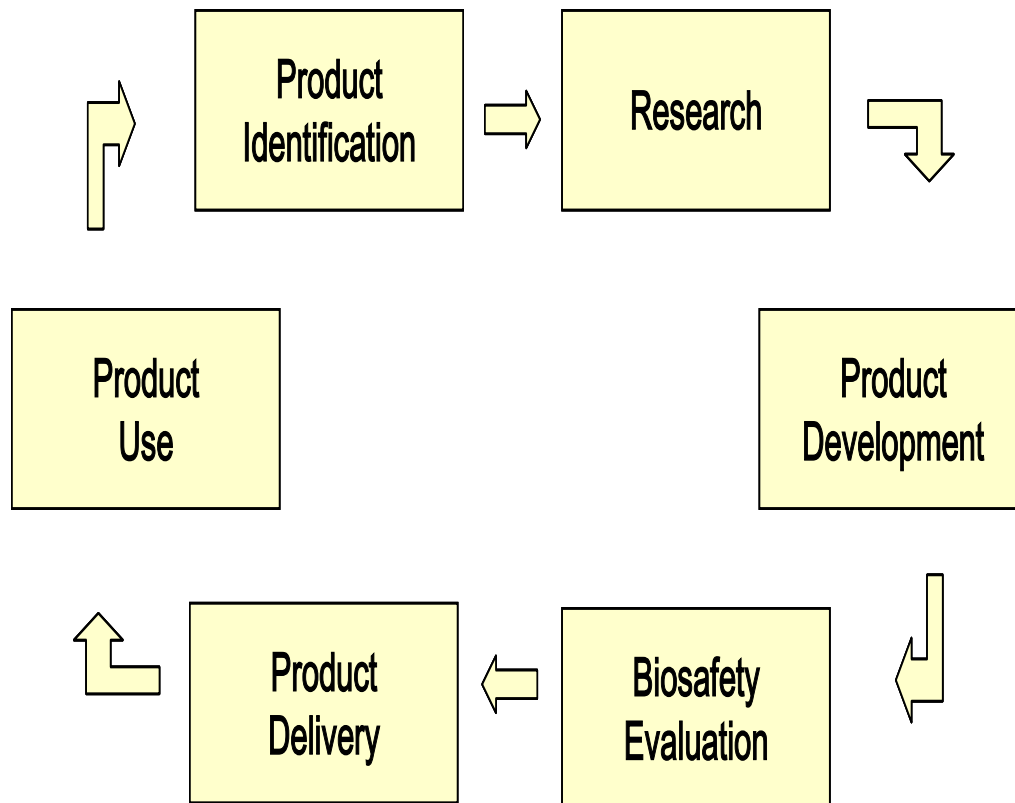
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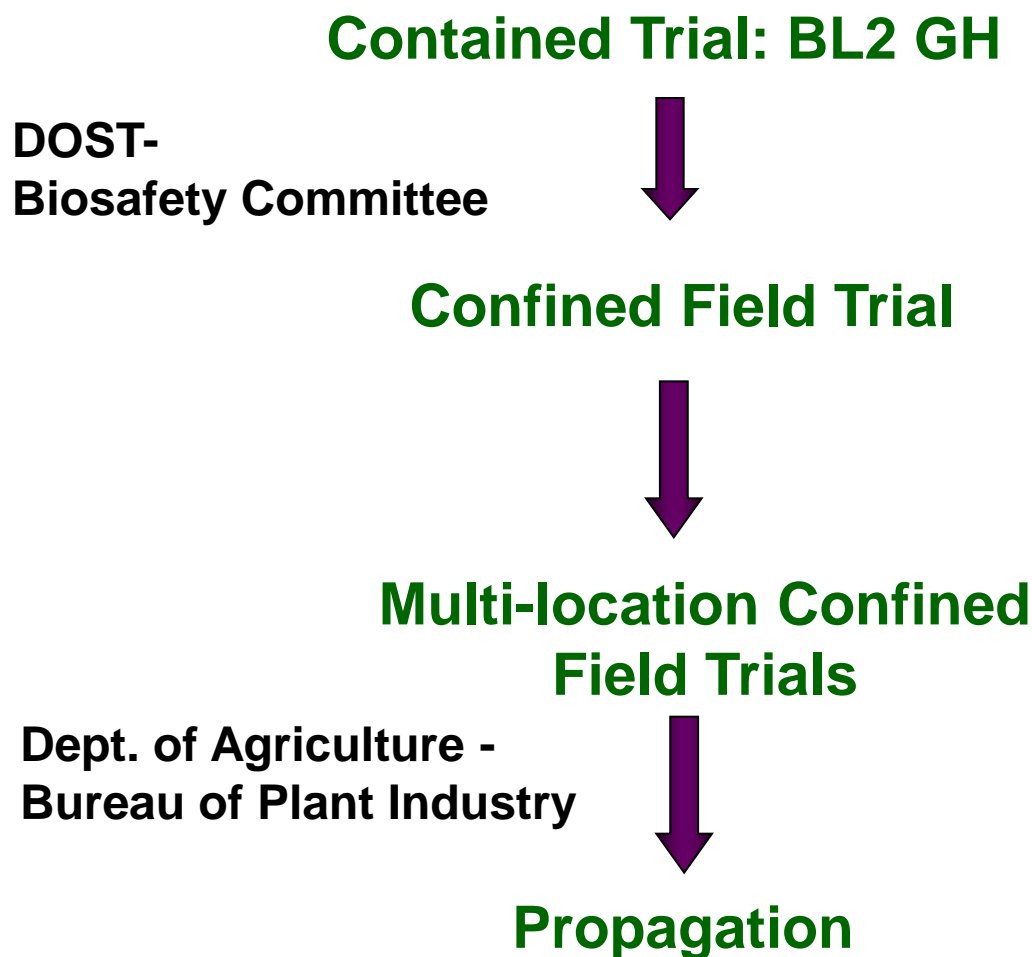
ABSP II Product-Driven Communication Strategy

The Bio-Engineered Product Life Cycle



- **Government policy makers**
- **Government regulators**
- **Scientists**
- **Journalists**
- **Producers**
- **Consumers**
- **Seed sector**

Legally Mandated Public Consultation Activities at Various Stages of Bt Eggplant Research and Development – the Philippine Case



**No Public
Consultation
Required**



**No Public
Consultation
Required**



**Public Information
Sheets and
Comment Period**

**Papers of National
Circulation and
Comment Period**

ABSP II Communication and Outreach -Focus on Bt Eggplant-

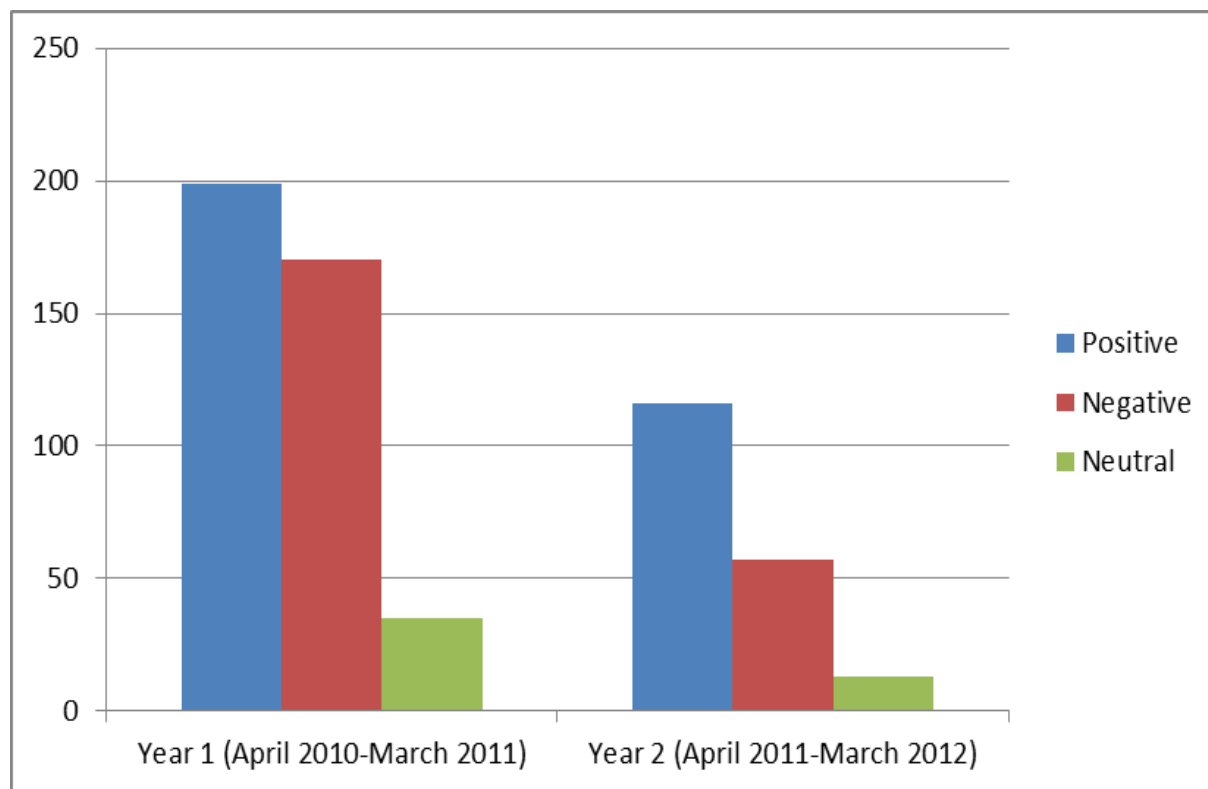
- **Understanding and monitoring of public awareness, knowledge and opinion**
 - Media monitoring and analysis
 - Survey of Public Perception and Attitudes on Biotech Eggplant From Field Trial Sites
- **Capacity building in understanding and communicating biotechnology**
 - Technology update visits for policy makers, farmer leaders, media, scientists and partners
 - Training-Workshop on Biosafety Regulations and Risk Communication for Researchers and Collaborators of Bt Eggplant Project

ABSP II Communication and Outreach -Focus on Bt Eggplant-

- **Development and targeted dissemination of communication messages and materials on crop biotechnology to various stakeholder groups**
 - Development/updating of info resource kit
 - Print Media
 - Broadcast media
- **Increasing awareness of ABSP II and Bt eggplant R&D activities**
 - Seminars, briefings on Bt Eggplant project to Local Govts. and communities in trial sites
 - Study visit and exhibitsExhibits
 - Website and Newsletter

Media Monitoring – Bt Eggplant Articles

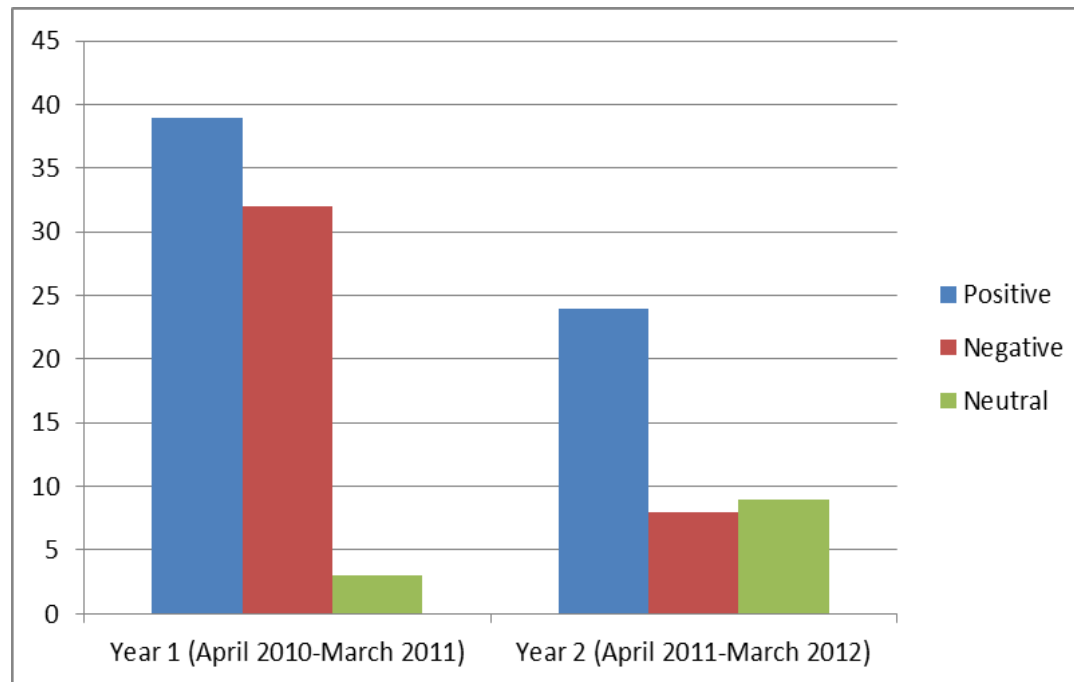
National Dailies, Community Newspapers, Online News
April 2010-March 2012 (Philippines)



Media Monitoring – Bt Eggplant Articles

National Dailies Only

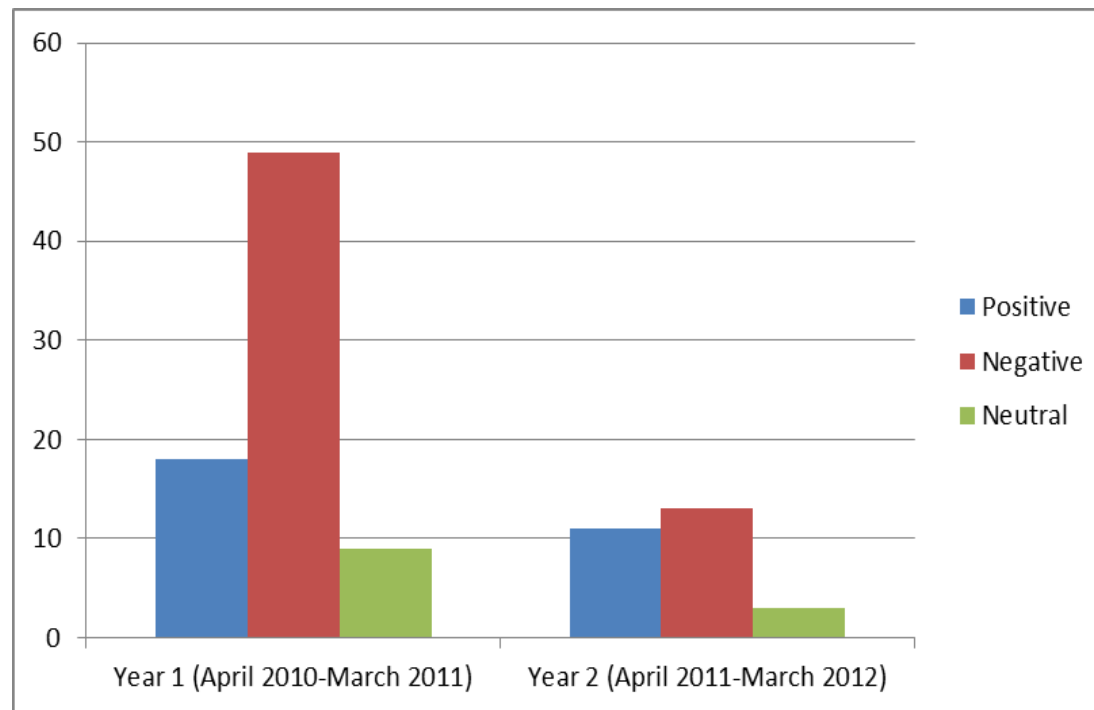
April 2010-March 2012 (Philippines)



Media Monitoring – Bt Eggplant Articles

Community Newspapers Only

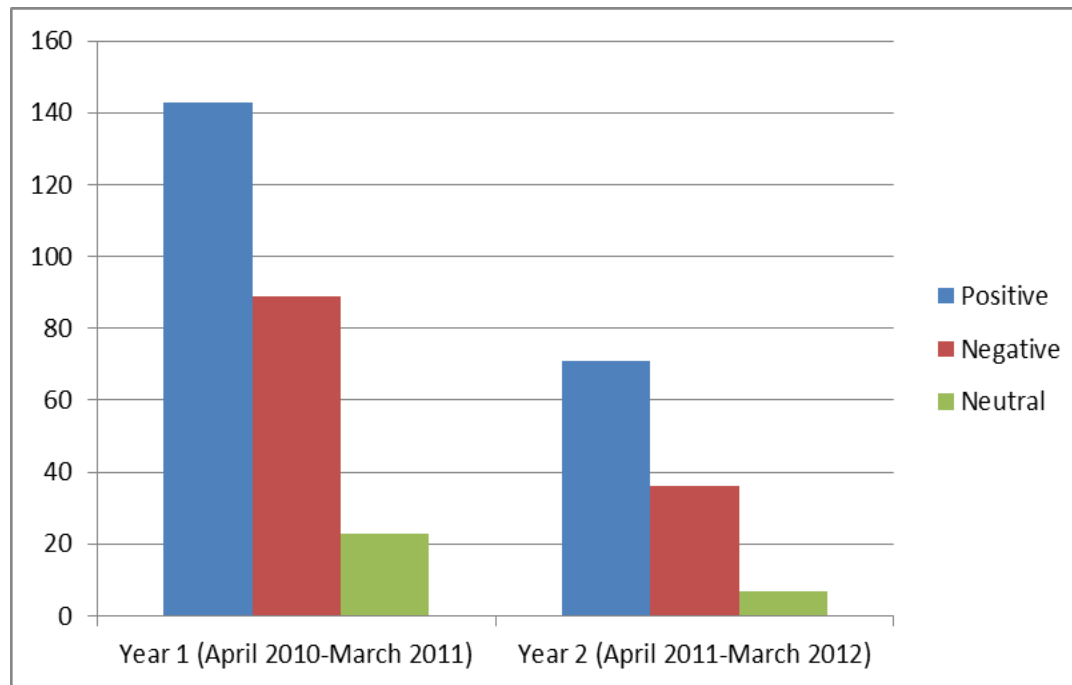
April 2010-March 2012 (Philippines)



Media Monitoring – Bt Eggplant Articles

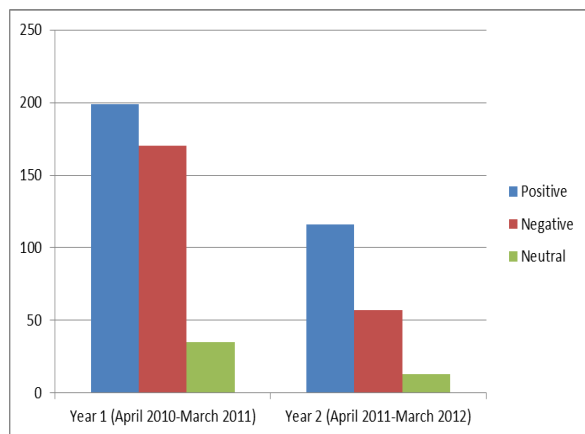
Online News Only

April 2010-March 2012 (Philippines)

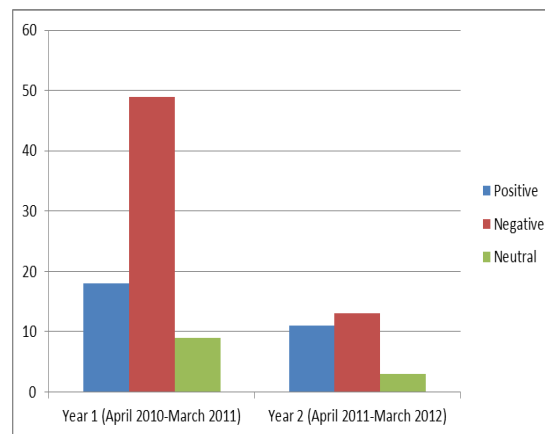


Media Monitoring – Bt Eggplant Articles

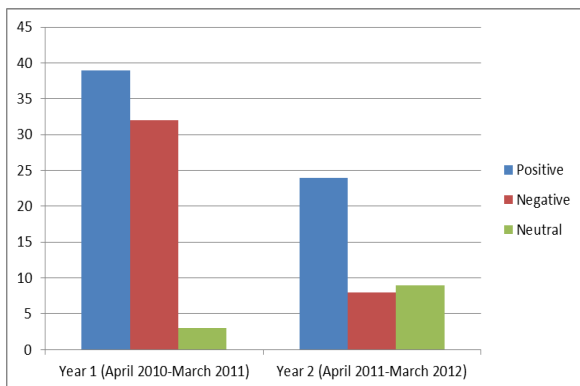
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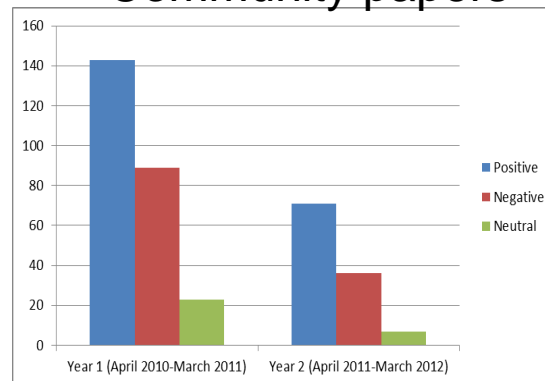
Total coverage – national papers, comm. papers, online news



Community papers



National papers



Online News

Farmers' Perception (Pangasinan survey)

- 72% believe that biotech products can help improve Philippine agriculture
- 93% believe that biotech can benefits small-scale farmers
- 22% have knowledge about Bt eggplant technology
- 50% are still skeptical of the claimed benefits of *Bt* eggplant; 58% believe the technology has an advantage over conventional varieties
- Motivating factors to plant *Bt* eggplant
 - Higher yield (67%)
 - Low production cost (33%)
 - Reduced pesticide use (25%)
 - Safe as food (8%)
- 71% of farmers who have no knowledge about *Bt* eggplant expressed willingness to plant *Bt* eggplant



Capacity Building in Communicating Biotechnology

Communication Workshops: Enhancing Skills in Addressing Issues About Bt Eggplant



National Regulators



Multi-location Trial Partners

In-country Outreach Initiatives for Capacity Building

1st ASFARNET Mindanao Agri-biotech Farmers Conference

Cagayan De Oro City, PHILIPPINES

28 Apr 2011



Seminar on Creating Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding of Biotech Crops

Pangasinan, PHILIPPINES

10 Feb 2011



Seminar on Understanding the Science, Safety & Benefits of Biotech Crops

Camarines Sur, PHILIPPINES

22-23 Jun 2011

Regional Media workshop

STATUS, IMPACTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF AGRI-BIOTECHNOLOGY IN A CHANGING CLIMATE: A REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

Jakarta, Indonesia, 20-22 July 2011




- Co-organized with **ABSP II**, **SEAMEO SEARCA**, **SEAMEO BIOTROP**, **IndoBIC**, in collaboration with **CropLife Asia**.
- **27 media practitioners and key stakeholders in the Southeast Asian region** (Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam)
- Topics focused on food security, basics of biotechnology, and biotech reporting from various experts.

Development and targeted dissemination of communication messages and materials


FAQs on Bt eggplant

Is FSBR eggplant safe to eat?




Before the FSBR eggplant is approved for commercial use, scientists and regulators ensure that it passes through many tests and safety assessments. In the Philippines, biosafety is evaluated in four stages: (1) contained research in laboratories and screenhouses, (2) small confined trials, (3) multi-location field trials and (4) commercial release. The National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) is responsible for evaluating the safety of FSBR-eggplant under contained and confined conditions. The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and other regulatory agencies under the Department of Agriculture take charge of the safety assessment and monitoring during large field trials and prior to and after commercial release. In addition, the reduced use of chemicals on Bt eggplant will mean that less pesticide residue will remain on the fruit when it is brought to market.

Is FSBR eggplant already available in the market?



In the Philippines, this biotech eggplant is not yet commercially available. The promising varieties are still under the multilocation field trials and tests are continually being done to ensure safety and performance of the product. Once it is approved for commercial release, seeds will be made available to farmers. In addition, similar FSBR eggplant varieties are near commercialization and are in the later stages of evaluation and safety assessment.

Project Partners



**Institute of Plant Breeding
College of Agriculture
University of the Philippines Los Baños**

Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II

United States Agency for International Development

Indian Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Limited


Cornell University

International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications

SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center

Department of Agriculture

Development of Fruit and Shoot Borer-Resistant Eggplant in the Philippines



Questions and Answers

For more information, contact:

Dr. Desiree M. Hautaa
ABSPI Regional Coordinator and Product Development Manager
Email: dmh.uplb@gmail.com

**Institute of Plant Breeding
University of the Philippines Los Baños
College, Laguna 4031
Telefax: (63-49) 536-5140**

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Printed June 2010

Mga kahaputan asin kacimbagan

An Pag-gibo (Pag-develop) Kan Talong na Maresistensya sa Amasok sa Prutas Asin Puon sa Pilipinas



Mga katuwang sa Proyekto



**Institute of Plant Breeding
College of Agriculture
University of the Philippines Los Baños**

Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II

United States Agency for International Development

Indian Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Limited

Cornell University

International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications

SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center

Department of Agriculture

pag-aadal sa FSBR na kapartner an Mahyco, na sinusuportahan kan United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) sa paagi kan Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSPI II), an International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) asin an Departamento de Agrikultura kan Pilipinas.

An FSBR bago safe na kakanon?

Bago an FSBR na talong matugutan para sa paggamit komersyal, an mga syantista sigurohon na ini uminagi sa manlain-lain na pag-purhar asin pag-ebalwar kan kontra katibaad kaini sa balang target na organismo. Sa Pilipinas, an byosafeti iniibalwar sa apat na estabo: (1) Pagaadal sa laog kan laboratory asin "screenhouses", (2) Saradit na "confined trials", (3) Multi-lokasyon pagadal sa lantad, asin (4) Komersyal na pag-buhi kan produkto. An National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) iyo an responsible sa pag-ebalwar kan kontra katibaad nin FSBR-talong sa irarom nin "contained" asin "confined" na kundisyon. An Byuro kan Pantonom na Industriya sa Irarom kan Departamento kan Agrikultura iyo an may mandato sa pag-ebalwar kontra katibaad asin sa pag-rekurido sa darakulan na pagtaman sa lantad bago ini iluwag para sa komersyalisasyon. Sa kadagdagan, an paghawag nin paggamit kan mga kemikal sa Bt na talong manungod na mas diit na latak kan pestisidyo an mawawalat sa prutas kun ini dadarohan na sa mercado.

Makukua na bago an FSBR na talong sa merkado?

Digdi sa Pilipinas, ining biyotek na talong dee pa komersyalizado. An mga may pag-asang klase nin talong pinag-aadalan pa asin nakatarom sa mangba-ibang lugar asin pinaghihingap pa buyo sa kontra katibaad kan produkto. Kun ini ma-aprubahan na para sa komersyal na pagpapabalak, an mga piog kaini madaling makukua kan mga paraoma. Sa India, parehong FSBR na klase nin talong an madali nang makomersyalizar asin nasa huring estado na kan ebalwasyon kontra katibaad.

An polyetong ini nagibo sa tabang kan mga Amerikano kan United States Agency for International Development (USAID). An laog kaini responsibilidad kan ABSPI II asin bakong replikasyon on kaisipan kan USAID o kan Estados Unidos.

Para sa Para sa mas dakul na informasyon, biotahan tabi:

Dr. Desiree M. Hautaa
ABSPI Regional Coordinator and Product Manager
Email: dmh.uplb@gmail.com

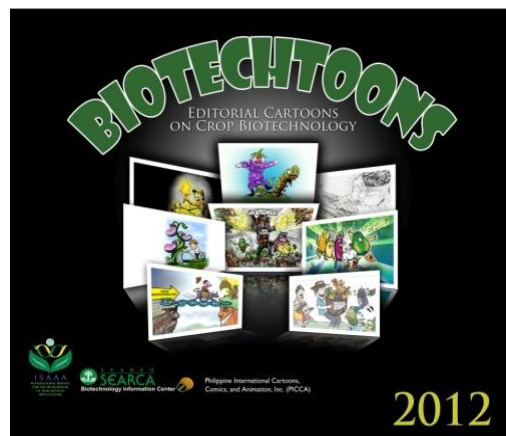
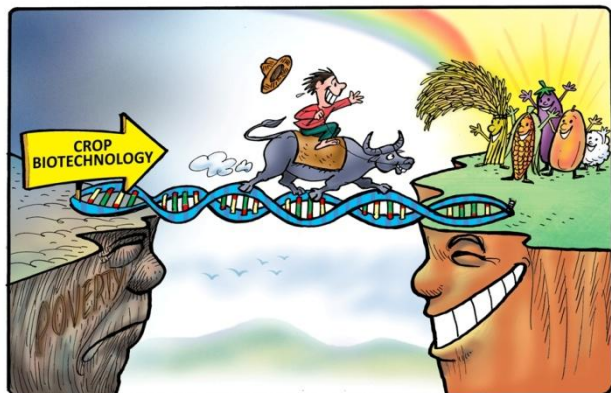
**Institute of Plant Breeding
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Inimprenta nin Mayo Dos Mil Diez

***Translated into local dialects : Tagalog, Ilonggo, Bisaya, Ilokano, Bikolano**

Development and targeted dissemination of communication messages and materials BiotechToons



JANUARY 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Discos Day	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE ACQUISITION OF
SAR BIOTECH APPLICATIONS (IRAB) <http://www.irab.org> | knowledge.center@irab.org

SEARCA
BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION CENTER
<http://www.biocenter.org> | info@biocenter.org

Pilipinas International Cartoons,
Comics, and Animation, Inc. (PICCA)



Development and targeted dissemination of communication messages and materials

- South Asia -

- ABSPII South Asia has developed a press kit which comprises brochure, fact sheets and development milestones for Bt eggplant etc.
- Multi-lingual CD Rom FSBR eggplant based outreach material has been developed and translated into Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi and Bangla to be used for training extension personnel and to orient farmers on best cropping practices.
- A video featuring Prof. P Balasubramanian of TNAU, principal investigator of FSBR Eggplant project in TNAU, providing the scientific facts and explaining the benefits of the technology has been produced and made available for the general public.
- ABSP II stalls were put up during the USAID America Week in Chittagong, Bangladesh and The International Conference on Plant Biotechnology for Food Security organized by the Society for Plant Biochemistry and Biotechnology in India.
- ABSP II FAQ leaflets were distributed among farmers attending the Farmers Day Meet organized at the university campus.

Increasing Awareness ABSP II newsletter, media releases, online news

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
BUSINESS
Agriculture/Environment
B-6 Editor: ROMAN F. FLORESCA Sunday, July 25, 2010

RP's 1st GM eggplant soon ready for commercialization

After more experimental cropping season and the country's first genetically modified (GM) or biotechnology eggplant is set for commercial production.

The penultimate phase of the

By RUDY A. FERNANDEZ
The government, through the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI), requires more experiments before a GM crop is allowed

libres, and minerals, eggplant is one of the main sources of livelihood of small-scale farmers.

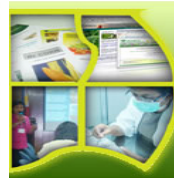
So far, there are no commercial varieties of eggplants with high resistance to FSB in the Philippines.

Bt eggplant developed with the help of biotechnology produces a natural protein that makes it resistant to FSB.

Once an FSB caterpillar feeds on the eggplant leaves, shoots, and fruits, it stops eating and eventually dies. The Bt protein in the biotech eggplant only affects FSB and not humans, farm animals, and other unwanted organisms.

Maheo has developed a highly resistant biotech eggplant now used in India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines as source of FSB-resistant traits.

DA-BPI is developing FSB-resistant eggplant in partnership with Maheo and Cornell University, and with support from USAID through ABSP II, ISAAA and DA.



SEARCHED
BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION CENTER
E-news Service

Empowerment through shared information

Tuesday 05 October 2010

In the News

NEWS RELEASE

- 1-Philippine S&T Academy supports biotechnology
- 2-Philippine science journalists partner with SEARCA and ISAAA in science communication

NEWS FEATURE

- 3-Creating options for a culture of choice by Dr. Gelia Castillo

PHILIPPINES

- 4-Go slow on GMO eggplant, government told
- 5-Existence policy for GM, organic crops pushed
- 6-UP professor bats for Bt eggplant but several groups still urge caution
- 7-Bt eggplant farmers can hike yield per hectare by 317%
- 8-UPLB takes lead in biotech education

VIETNAM



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/ ISAAA / ISAAA Programs / Support Projects / The Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSP II)



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
FOR THE ACQUISITION
OF AGRI-BIOTECH
APPLICATIONS

The Agricultural
Biotechnology Support
Project II (ABSP II)

Research
Communication
Capacity Building
Impact Assessment

Latest ABSP II Newsletter

Volume 6 No.2 (PDF)
See All Newsletters

Brochures

Questions and Answers on the
Development of Fruit & Shoot
Borer Resistant Eggplant in the
Philippines

Questions and Answers on the
Development of Bt Eggplant in the
Philippines

The Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSP II)

Promoting Dynamic Partnerships

The Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSP II), which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and led by Cornell University, aims to provide substantial benefits from agricultural biotechnology to countries in East and West Africa, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The ABSP II Southeast Asia Center is spearheading efforts to develop and commercialize biotechnology products from public research so that these can reach the Southeast Asian market. The Institute of Plant Breeding at the University of the Philippines Los Baños is the Southeast Asian Regional Coordination Center for ABSP II. It oversees project activities in the Philippines and Indonesia. The regional center in Southeast Asia collaborates with three regional centers located in East Africa, West Africa, and South Asia, and with other institutions in the north. Through synergistic partnerships, the needs and strengths of the various programs, including manpower, resources, and facilities, are matched; productive research and development (R&D) are pursued; and access to biological materials is maximized. Collaborations also hasten the development and effective delivery of both information and products from the research laboratory to farmers and other stakeholders.



Dr. Daisuke Tsukamoto, left, research professor at the Institute of Plant Breeding, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UP-LB), explains insect infestation in resistant and susceptible eggplants (FSB) eggplant crops, while members of the IPB research team show harvested FSB eggplants. Top right photo shows workers releasing more FSB eggplants. Above, Dr. Frank Dierckx shows clean, worm-free FSB eggplants. This FSB eggplant harvesting in Sta. Maria, Pangasinan, was held under strict monitoring of the Bureau of Plant Industry. LYN REJUMECAN

BusinessMirror agri-commodities@businessmirror.com.ph

Sept 16, 2010 8-4

Bt eggplant will not only increase farmers' production, but also their income

By JOEL C. PAREDES
Special to the BusinessMirror

Conclusion

Helping preserve biodiversity

FROM a biosafety perspective, Dr. Eulenio T. Rasco Jr., a biotechnology scientist from the University of the Philippines in Mindanao, said Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) eggplant differs from ordinary eggplant with respect to its ability to produce Bt protein.

"While all plant-breeding methods can produce unintended effects, there is no evidence that Bt eggplant is associated with unintended effects," he said.

Rasco, a member of the National Academy of Science and Technology, said regulatory agencies have found as lacking in merit concerns on the gene flow, weediness, horizontal transfer, loss of crop diversity, and effect on nontarget organisms.

While reducing pesticide use, Bt eggplant will eventually help preserve biodiversity, and reduce health hazards and pollution, he said.

In India, where the first transgenic eggplant was developed and known as brinjal, a total of 500,000 hectares of land had been planted to the vegetable, which has become a major item in the Indian diet.

It is also the vegetable of choice of many Filipinos, Asians and even people in the Middle East and Africa for being a good source of vitamins, fibers and minerals.

As early as the 1980s, Hautea said the UPLB Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) had hundreds of eggplant accessions or collection of different eggplants from all over the country.

The IPB had been trying to use new tools of science and technology to develop new eggplant varieties that can be FSB-resistant.

Through biotechnology, with the breakthrough in Maheo's highly resistant biotech eggplant in 2003, they are confident that the farmers may soon benefit from higher yield of good-quality fruits, with less pesticide.

Hautea said the coexistence between the conventional eggplant farmer and organic agriculture is also really possible and attainable.

In the case of eggplants, she said backyard farming can use organic materials, like the local soil (pepper), to control pests.

The problem is the commercial planting of eggplant, with production at plantation levels to generate bigger volumes at lesser costs.

In their research on the Bt eggplant, they considered the need for the farmers to have a choice.

For that, she said, they have come up with two varieties—the open-pollinated variety (OPV) and the hybrid.

Being a conventional seed, the OPV allows the subsistent farmers to use the next generation of Bt eggplant seeds. The hybrid variety, on the other hand, promises to double the yield of the farmers.

Media interviews/Briefings



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Breaking News / Regions

<http://www.google.com/search?sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&q=agri+boss+to+ban+growing+of+bt+eggplant>

Agri boss to ban growing of genetically modified eggplants

By Germelina Lacorte

Philippine Daily Inquirer

Posted date: August 13, 2010

DAVAO CITY, Philippines—Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala said here on Thursday he will ban the commercial production of genetically modified eggplants in the country.

After years of development and field testing in India, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) Eggplant, is cultivated by the University of the Philippines Mindanao here; and at the University of Southern Mindanao in Kalamang, Zamboanga.

Earlier field testing has resulted in harvests in Santa Rosa, Pangasinan and Camarines Sur.

Environmentalists led by Go Organic Philippines raised the alarm over genetically modified organisms (GMOs) after the Department of Agriculture (DA) announced the commercial testing of Bt Brinjal in India unless established by independent scientific studies that it is safe.

She lamented that instead of being cautious about it, the Philippines has been rushing the crop to the market.

If plans at the Institute of Plant Breeding push through, the Philippines will be the first in Asia to commercialize Bt eggplant.

But Alcala said Bt eggplant could not be sold in Philippine markets unless it was proven that it is safe.

Alcala, who authored the country's Organic Agriculture Act, said he was allowing the field testing of Bt eggplant to determine whether it is safe for consumption.

He said the tests on Bt eggplant are being undertaken precisely to determine whether it is safe for consumption.

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Friday, December 10

DA Biotech Chief Backs Testing of Bt Eggplant

By FREDDIE C. VELEZ
September 16, 2010, 9:19pm

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ, Nueva Ecija — Multi-location tests on *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) eggplant must be pursued to determine its safety and performance, the director of the Biotechnology Program Office of the Department of Agriculture (DA-BPO) said Thursday, citing the Biolife News Service.

Dr. Candida Adalla, DA-BPO director, said the country could not develop a variety of eggplant that resists the deadly fruit and shoot borer (FSB), without these tests.

Bt eggplant has been touted as the type of vegetable that uses practically no pesticide against the FSB, which could eat up to 100 percent of the fruits.

Adalla noted that the only scientific way to find out whether or not Bt eggplant is appropriate for commercialization is when scientists are sure that it has nutrients beneficial to health, and that it does not pose any risk to consumers and the environment.

She said the tests on Bt eggplant are being undertaken precisely to determine whether it is safe for consumption.

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Iloilo town suspends field testing of genetically modified eggplants

Cebu Daily News
First Posted 07:27:00 10/22/2010
Filed Under: [Agriculture](#)

ILOILO CITY — The municipality of Sta. Barbara in Iloilo has stopped the testing of genetically modified eggplants.

In a resolution passed on Oct. 6, the Sta. Barbara municipal

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AGRICULTURE

Farmers back field trials for GM eggplant

By Rudy A. Fernandez (The Philippine Star) Updated November 07, 2010 12:00 AM Comments (0)



LOS BAÑOS, Laguna, Philippines — Farmer-leaders from across the country have expressed strong support for the multilocation trials of genetically modified (GM) eggplants now being conducted by government researchers.

The farmers endorsed the continuation of the field trials of the Gm or BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) eggplants in a resolution they unanimously passed at the 'Second National Agri-biotech Farmers Conference: Productivity and Sustainability through Agri-biotechnology' held recently in Reina Mercedes, Isabela.

The conference was organized by the Asian Farmers Regional Network (ASFARNET)-Philippines. It was supported by the Department of Agriculture-Biotechnology Program Office (DA-BPO), Philippine Maize Federation (PhilMaize), the Los Baños-based Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture-Biotechnology Information Center (SEARCA-BIC), and International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

Farmers from the country's 15 regions approved unanimously a resolution supporting the continuation of the multilocation trials of the fruit and shoot borer (FSB)-resistant Bt eggplant.

Farmers urge continued trials for Bt eggplant

By JENNIFER A. NG
Reporter

A COALITION of farmers from different regions in the Philippines is urging the government to continue the multilocation field trials of fruit-and-shoot borer resistant (FSB) eggplant.

In a resolution endorsed during the Second National Agri-Biotech Farmers' Conference in Isabela held last week, the Asian Farmers Regional Network (Asfarnet) Philippines said the trials for Bt eggplant will provide a basis to evaluate its performance and safety.

"[We] endorse the continuation of multilocation field trials of the FSB/Bt eggplant as a regulatory requirement for its eventual approval for commercialization," the resolution read.

Asfarnet Philippines noted that Bt eggplant is "a very important crop that will help us farmers raise our productivity and thus improve our livelihood."

Earlier, a study undertaken by Dr. Cesar B. Quicoy, assistant professor of the College of Economics and Management at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, noted farmers who will plant FSB eggplant could increase their net income by as much as 317 percent.

Quicoy said the increase in net income would come from substantial savings from the nonuse of pesticides, pesticide labor cost, as well as increase in yield.

The study, titled "Economics of Eggplant Production and Potential Impact of Bt Eggplant," noted that for every hectare planted to Bt eggplant, the yield is estimated at 12,082 kilograms.

"Bt eggplant technology is economically acceptable. [It] minimizes the use of insecticides. Also, consumers would be safer because the insecticide residues in the product is also minimized," said Quicoy during a presentation before participants in a seminar on the benefits and impact of a promising public-sector crop biotechnology held last month.

At P10.77 per kilo, the gross revenue...

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The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc.



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AGRICULTURE

UP scientists blast raid on Bt eggplant test site

(The Philippine Star) Updated January 02, 2011 12:00 AM [Comments \(1\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines - The forcible uprooting of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) eggplant planted at the UP Mindanao campus has earned the ire of academics and scientists who were appalled at what they describe as an "invasion," saying it amounts to an "assault on the quest for truth."

The raiders justified their action on the ground that there was no consultation with the local government when the test sites were planned and experiments set up in the UP Min's Bago Oshiro campus.

UP scientists noted that Mayor Sara Duterte may have been misled into allowing the raid, "which was carried out to the complete surprise of biotechnology advocates who were working on environmental safety and risks assessments associated with cultivation of Bt eggplant."



Crop Biotech Update

A weekly summary of world developments in agri-biotech for developing countries, produced by the Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology, International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications SEAsiaCenter (ISAAA).



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FILIPINO SCIENTISTS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CRITICIZE BT EGGPLANT FIELD TRIAL PRE-TERMINATION

Scientists and experts in the country expressed indignation over the unanticipated pre-termination of the fruit and shoot borer (FSB) resistant Bt 'talong' (eggplant) trial in the University of the Philippines Mindanao (UP Mindanao) last December 17, 2010.

Dr. Candida Adalla, chief of the Biotechnology Program Office (BPO) of the Department of Agriculture said that the uprooting "is an assault to scientific inquiry and independence of responsible scientists in quest for truth. This is the first time it happened to the university, touted as the bastion of scientific research and technological innovations." She also said that the experiment was "legitimate, consistent and compliant with the government-set guidelines noted as one of the strictest in the world and (used) as reference by nearby Asian countries."

In a statement released after the uprooting, UP Mindanao clarified all the allegations hurled at the Bt talong project. Among the points explained was how the field trial was confined, and that the university is complying with all conditions imposed by the regulatory agencies. Prof. Nilo Oponda, UP Mindanao chancellor officer-in-charge, wrote in his letter to the media "UP Mindanao has not violated any requirements that would impact on biosafety and public health," and added that the university has complied with all the conditions set by the regulatory agencies.

In their statement, the university also cleared details of institutions involved the project. It was stated that the project's rationale was "the need to address a common problem among eggplant farmers in the Philippines," which is the high infestations of the FSB pest.

The full statement of UP Mindanao after the uprooting may be found

Philippine Star News Item and Cartoon

May 1, 2012

Science Community Defending Bt Eggplant

Eggplant war: Scientists defend GMO

[By Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) Updated May 01, 2012 12:00 AM



MANILA, Philippines - Top Filipino scientists have urged the Supreme Court (SC) to junk a petition filed by environmental groups against the field testing of genetically modified (GMO) eggplant in the country. Emil Javier, president of the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and former president of the University of the Philippines, said “*Bacillusthuringiensis* (Bt) eggplant is potentially the best environmentally friendly technology for eggplant production.”

Javier asked the high court not to act hastily but also consider the scientific side regarding the petition for the writ of *kalikasan* and writ of continuing *mandamus* filed by a group of non-government organizations (NGOs) against the field trials.

Outreach to Local Governments and Policymakers



Pangasinan



Leyte

Outreach to Local Stakeholders

Davao City field trial site visit



Local Legislator



NGO

Cotabato Council and USM Community Briefing

January 12-13, 2011



Farmer Field Days

Rahamatpur & Jessore, Bangladesh



CONFINED FIELD PRODUCTION TRIAL OF Bt BRINJAL, 2011-2012

Objectives:

1. To assess the horticultural performance and yield potential of Bt brinjal lines against its non-Bt counterparts in the field level.
2. To evaluate the field infestation levels of target insect brinjal shoot and fruit borer (*Leucinodes orbonalis*) on transgenic brinjal.
3. To assess the effect of Bt protein on non-target pests and beneficial insects.

Materials : Bt Uttara, Non-Bt Uttara, Bt Chaga, Non-Bt Chaga

Replications: 4

Design : RCB

Planting Date: 24 November 2011

Location : RARS, Jessore



Farmer Field Day - Bangladesh



Dr. Dil Afroza,
addressing the
farmers during the
field days

A key lesson: Never be complacent; do much more; network; partner; and collaborate

- Do much more than the minimum legally required, and do it early
- Make effective and extensive use of local knowledge and contacts, particularly the scientific community, organized farmer groups and farmer leaders, local leaders, and the media
- Build confidence among the public/various stakeholders on modern agricultural biotechnologies
- Learn to mobilize political support

Other Lessons Learned

- Continuously monitor public understanding, knowledge, and opinion, with particular attention to issues raised against biotechnology. In short, always keep ears very close to the ground.
- Situate communication efforts within a broader context that may include socio-political, scientific and related issues to which the public relates to. Focus on public values more than on information itself. These values could include high trust in science and regulations, credibility, freedom of choice
- Identify and nurture key publics and champions from different stakeholder groups (policy makers, scientists, academics, regulators, media and farmers) who are well-informed, have high credibility in the community and are willing to advance the cause of the technology among their peers
- Invest in capacity building in science communication, media relations, public engagement, science popularization, and media development and production
- Strengthen availability and access to information.

Epilogue

Philippine Star Editorial Cartoon

May 18, 2012





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