

INDIA'S AGRICULTURE MINISTER SUPPORTS FIELD TRIALS OF GM CROPS

India's Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar favors genetically-modified (GM) technology to boost farm output saying scientists should not be denied the right to conduct field trials of such crops. Addressing the 84th annual general meeting of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), he said "We cannot afford to curtail the vigor of our scientific community and deny them the right to conduct trials, as has been done for some GM crops, despite being subjected to strictest controls of biosafety."

Expressing concern over declining land availability for agriculture and soil fertility, falling water-table, genetic erosion, invasive pest and diseases and climate change, Shri Pawar emphasized upon scientific research and said, "Constrained by limited availability of the natural resources, we do not have any option but to try and achieve major breakthrough in productivity to ensure food security of 1.2 billion plus population of our country." "The process of research should not be stopped as it would demoralize the scientific community," he added.

The Agriculture Minister said ICAR must prioritize technologies towards the resource of poor farmers and enable them to take advantage of new technologies.

For details visit <http://www.icar.org.in/en/node/5786>.