



For more information, email;
charumayee@yahoo.co.in
b.choudhary@cgiar.org

Bt cotton technology attracting younger farmers to farming in India **ISCI releases the first comprehensive account of field realities of Bt cotton involving 2,400** **small holder farmers across the three agro-ecologically distinct cotton growing States of** **Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab**

Jalna/Maharashtra, India (Dec 15, 2013)—Contrary to the perception that young farmers are abandoning active farming, the survey conducted by the Indian Society for Cotton Improvement (ISCI) demonstrates that Bt cotton technology has attracted young farmers to cotton farming in the country. *“More than 50% of respondent Bt cotton farmers were from the lower middle age group ranging from 21 to 40 years with a mean average age of 42 years for all respondents in the three surveyed States,” noted the report.*

India’s Union Minister of Agriculture Sh. Sharad Pawar released ISCI’s survey report **“The Adoption and Uptake Pathways of Bt Cotton in India”**, co-authored by Dr. C.D. Mayee and Bhagirath Choudhary, in the presence of a massive gathering of farmers during Mahyco’s Golden Jubilee celebration on 15th December 2013 at Jalna, Maharashtra. The report is the result of the largest and most comprehensive survey involving 2,400 Bt cotton farmers across the three agro-ecologically distinct cotton growing States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab.

Lauding the commendable task of interviewing the largest sample of Bt cotton farmers in rainfed and irrigated areas, India’s Agriculture Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar emphasized that *“the unprecedented high adoption of Bt cotton is due to: substantial and significant benefits to farmers; successful control of the dreaded bollworm pests; benefits to industry; and benefits to the nation from enhanced exports and coincidentally protection of the environment through substantial reductions in pesticide use”*.

In his foreword letter, Dr. S. Ayyappan, DG ICAR referred to the survey as *“the first authentic account of field realities that is extremely useful in formulating models of technology transfer for cutting edge technologies which are knocking at the door of farmers”*.

The survey confirmed the unprecedented wide-spread planting of Bt cotton, occupying ~95% of total cotton area, in the rainfed, semi-irrigated and irrigated areas, which has taken place during the last 8-9 years in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, and 6-7 years in Punjab.

Major highlights of the report include;

- Bt cotton technology attracted young farmers to cotton farming, with more than 50% of the surveyed farmers coming from the lower middle age group in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab.
- Half of the adopters of Bt cotton were small holder cotton farmers from other backward classes (OBC) in Maharashtra, This confirmed that an overwhelming number of farmers, especially from lower strata including OBC and SC/ST category, were adopters of Bt cotton and hence no different to farmers in the general category. This reinforces the fact that Bt cotton is a scale-neutral technology and offers similar levels of protection irrespective of farmer class.
- Bt cotton technology is equally useful for small and large farmers across rainfed, semi irrigated and irrigated areas. On average, Bt cotton hybrids increased cotton yield from 4-5 quintals per hectare to 8-10 quintals per hectare in rainfed conditions. In irrigated areas cotton yields showed a steep increase from 10-12 quintals per hectares to 22-24 quintals per hectares.
- In the States surveyed a substantial decrease of 82.8% in insecticide sprays was realized, whilst achieving 99.3% control of the American bollworm pest. Farmers in Maharashtra reported 78% reduction in insecticide sprays, 82% in Andhra Pradesh and 98% in Punjab.
- Bt cotton farmers reported an average net profit of Rs. 41,837 per hectare at the national level. The highest profit was in the Punjab at Rs. 53,139 per hectare followed by Rs 39,786 in Andhra Pradesh and Rs. 32,885 per hectare in Maharashtra.
- Regarding the adoption pathways of Bt cotton technology, the survey reconfirmed that that the age old practice of field demonstrations, which facilitates active involvement of risk-taking famers followed by risk-averse farmers, is the most effective tool for achieving of wider dissemination and adoption of Bt cotton.

Recognizing the importance of knowledge sharing as a critical component of technology adoption and dissemination in rural areas, the survey calls on the Central/State(s) government in India to educate and empower small holder farmers by launching a nation-wide campaign of “An Alert Farmer is An Affluent Farmer”. In Hindi, सतर्क किसान, समृद्ध किसान.

In Punjabi, ਗੁਮਿਆਰ ਕਿਸਾਨ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਕਿਸਾਨ. In Marathi, सावध शेतकरी, सधन शेतकरी.

In Telugu, శ్రద్ధగల రైతు సంపన్న రైతు.

For more information, including access to the Executive Summary and Full Report, log on to www.circot.res.in or www.cicr.res.in

###

The Indian Society for Cotton Improvement (ISCI) established in 1974 under the charitable trust act, is a premier society of cotton researchers and is located at the Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (CIRCOT), Mumbai with regional chapters at the Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur and University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad. The Society publishes a half yearly research journal “Cotton Research Journal”, which is a leading journal for reporting research findings on cotton production technologies in India. The Society has been instrumental in publication of books on cotton including the Hand Book of Cotton in India and Bt Cotton Q&A.