



Seed Connect

The monthly newsletter of Federation of Seed Industry of India

Edition 4 March 2019

The recent announcement on the reduction of Bt cotton seed price is a setback for the agriculture industry and harmful for the farmers in long term. The cotton seed price for Bollgard-II has been reduced to Rs. 730 per bag compared to Rs. 740 last year. Though there is a marginal increase in seed component of the price, the most impacted is the trait value with a 49% cut. The previous reduction from Rs.800 per bag to Rs. 740 per bag had impacted the investments of seed companies who have been seeing troubled times with increasing pressure on margins. Such an ad hoc mechanism of price fixation for Bt cotton makes cotton seed business unsustainable for several cotton seed companies who struggle to exist in these ambiguous times. The farmer's benefit is a myth as cost of seed is less than 5% of their revenue and the slight price reduction will not lead to any significant increase in their income.

The adoption of Bt cotton technology made India the second-largest producer and exporter of cotton. The reduction in R&D investment by seed companies will lead to introduction of fewer new hybrids and enhanced traits in the market in future. Cotton production in the country needs to be doubled in the next 10 years to meet the demands of the textile industry. The unpredictable climatic changes and deteriorating farm conditions make it imperative that the farmer use better seeds and technology to overcome all the hurdles. Absence of newer hybrids and traits will lead to a decline in cotton productivity in the country and there is a strong chance that we will again become a net importer of cotton in the near future and fall back in competing the global market.

The Government needs to have a forward-looking vision and its focus should be on getting new generation of seed-tech. Inaccessibility to new technologies will impact the socio -

economic development of Indian farmers and other industries dependent on their production capacity. It takes almost 10–15 years in the research and development of a new seed variety; therefore, such short-sighted decisions will hamper new seed companies to invest in India and hold back innovation of those, currently catering to the Indian market.

We hope such decisions are carefully evaluated as they will not only effect the growth of the Indian farmer but, the entire community and country in times to come.

–Shivendra Bajaj

FSII in News

[For second successive year: Centre slashes Bt cotton trait fee](#)

[The Indian Express]

The Centre has slashed the trait value (royalty) on Bt cotton seeds incorporating the US life sciences major Monsanto's proprietary Bollgard II technology from Rs 39 to Rs 20 per packet in the ensuing 2019 kharif crop season. "Such an ad hoc mechanism of price fixation makes the cotton seed business unsustainable in the long run. The reduction in seed price makes little difference to the farmer, as the cost of seed is hardly 5 per cent of his revenue. On the other hand, the reduction in sale price from Rs 800 to Rs 730 per packet over two years will cause a huge cut in the research budgets of seed companies," said Ram Kaundinya, director-general of the Federation of Seed Industry of India.

Seed News in India

[Telangana's hybrid seed exports set to increase](#)

[The Times of India]

Telangana will soon export about 1000 tonnes of hybrid seeds this year to foreign countries, particularly to African nations. Last year, Telangana exported paddy and jowar seeds to countries such as Sudan, Phillipines, Russia and Tanzania. This year, the state is preparing to export more seed to various countries through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

[Reduction in price of BT cotton seeds: Announcement a blow for global players](#)

[Money Control]

For the second consecutive year, the government has announced reduction in the price of BT cotton seed (hybrid cotton seeds) packets along with a cut in the trait fee. The government

has announced a marginal price cut on 450 gms BT cotton seeds (Bollgard-2) seeds packets from Rs 740 to Rs 730 per packet. Along with this there would also be a Rs. 19 per packet reduction in the trait fee from Rs 39 to Rs 20 per packet.

[Andhra Pradesh Suspends Licenses of Top Seed Companies](#)

[Krishi Jagran]

The matter of illegal sowing of HT (herbicide-tolerant) cotton has surfaced again with the Andhra Pradesh government cancelling the licence of one seed company while suspending the licences of 13 others for one year. The AP government, which was first amongst other States to act against the unlawful spread of the HT cottonseeds in 2018, has noticed a similar activity this year too triggering action on the errant companies.

Seed News Around the World

[Compass Minerals Plant Nutrition creates a new category of seed nutrition with launch of Rocket seeds](#)

[Seed World]

Compass Minerals Plant Nutrition has launched Rocket Seeds, a portfolio of dry and liquid seed nutritionals, featuring unique, patent-pending products. The seed nutritional portfolio is formulated to increase early growth and plant vigor, when it matters most. With the launch of Rocket Seeds, Compass Minerals creates a new category for seed nutrition by providing large-scale accessibility of seed nutrition products to distributors, retailers and growers.

[Comesa wants members to lift barriers on seed trade](#)

[The East African]

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa is pushing member states to align their laws with the bloc's regulations to abolish trade barriers. The bloc says that the Comesa Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations will lead to increased seed production, supply reliability, enhanced trade and competitiveness of the seed sub-sector.

[Seed technology company Equinom introduces patented variety of sesame](#)

[F&B News]

Equinom, Ltd, a leading-edge seed technology company, has launched its unique patented sesame variety to open new markets for the cultivation of sesame. The company has developed high-yield, high-profile sesame seeds that provide advanced organoleptic characteristics, plus a shatter-resistance trait that makes them suitable for mechanised harvesting.

[PARC recommends, approves 12 new varieties of hybrid rice seeds for cultivation](#)

[The Nation]

Variety Evaluation Committee (VEC) on Rice of Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) recommended 12 new hybrids rice and one open pollinated variety for commercial cultivation across the rice growing areas of country to promote the crop output.

[Syngenta unveils new corn hybrids and soybean varieties](#)

[Ag Daily]

Syngenta announced the addition of 17 new corn hybrids and 68 new soybean varieties to the NK Seeds portfolio. Available for the 2020 growing season from NK retailers, the new products represent the latest in technology, genetics and value to help farmers maximize their return on investment potential. The announcement comes as Syngenta marks the NK brand's 135th anniversary with a refined farmer-focused brand mission.

[Citizen science helps farmers adapt to climate change](#)

[Sci Dev Net]

The selection of seed varieties adapted to a particular climate could be refined if farmers themselves assess their performance, using their plots as small, experimental laboratories. This was the finding of a study on citizen science in agriculture using the new 'tricot' method – triadic comparisons of technologies – devised by global research organisation Biodiversity International. The approach aims to test crop varieties and other technologies on the farm, under realistic conditions, using simple, hands-on experiments.

Certification

[TSSOCA chosen model seed certification authority](#)

[The Hindu]

Telangana State Seed and Organic Certification Authority (TSSOCA) has been adjudged the model seed certification authority in the country by National Seed Association of India. The award was given in recognition of TSSOCA's contribution in supporting and strengthening of seed industry through national and international seed certification systems and also for creating awareness about seed certification among the seed industry, farmers and policy makers.



Federation of Seed Industry of India organized a workshop on the management of Fall Armyworm in Aurangabad. The workshop was attended by agriculture officials of the State of Maharashtra. The workshop was organized to address the problem of fall armyworm in corn.

Upcoming Events

March 2019

23rd Edition of EuroSciCon Conference on Biotechnology & Bioengineering

Date: March 4–6, 2019

Venue: Holiday Inn Amsterdam, Arena Towers, Netherlands

UP Kissan Vikas Sammelan

Date: March 7– 9, 2019

Venue: Ram Leela Ground, Meerut

Agri Expo 2019

Date: March 8– 10, 2019

Venue: Madurai, Tamil Nadu

World Agri – Tech Innovation Summit

Date: March 19–20, 2019

Venue: Hilton San Francisco Union Square, San Francisco, CA, USA

2nd International Conference on Industrial Biotechnology and Bioprocessing

Date: March 20 – March 21, 2019

Venue: London, United Kingdom

Sixth Annual Salinas Valley Agricultural Technology Summit

Date: March 26–27, 2019

Venue: Hartnell College, Salinas, CA, USA

April 2019

Global Forum for Innovation in Agriculture

Date: April 1–2, 2019

Venue: Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre – ADNEC, Abu Dhabi, UAE

15th ISBR Symposium Tarragona 2019

Date: April 1–4, 2019

Venue: El Palau Firal i de Congressos, Tarragona

World Biotechnology Conference

Date: April 3 –5, 2019

Venue: Gothenburg, Sweden

International Conference on Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

Date: April 2–3, 2019

Venue: New York, USA

ISER – 567th International Conference on Agricultural and Biological Science (ICABS)

Date: April 15–16, 2019

Venue: New Delhi, India

International Biotechnology and Research Conference

Date: April 15– 17 2019

Venue: Valencia, Spain

May 2019

Bioassays – Scientific Approaches & Regulatory Strategies

Date: 05–07 May 2019

Venue: Gaithersburg Marriott Washingtonian Center, Gaithersburg, USA

Swiss Biotech Day

Date: 7 May 2019

Venue: Basel, Switzerland

Genome Editing & Co-located Transgenic USA Congress

Date: May 14–15, 2019

Venue: Boston, USA

World Biotechnology Congress

Date: May 20–21, 2019

Venue: Shepton Mallet, UK

CRISPR & Genome Engineering Conference

Date: May 21–23, 2019

Venue: Boston, USA