

## GM food crops: India in no hurry to grow GM food crops

NEW DELHI: The government is in no hurry to introduce genetically modified food crops in the country, three months after the sector regulator gave its nod to commercialisation of [GM mustard](#), because of widespread opposition from different quarters.

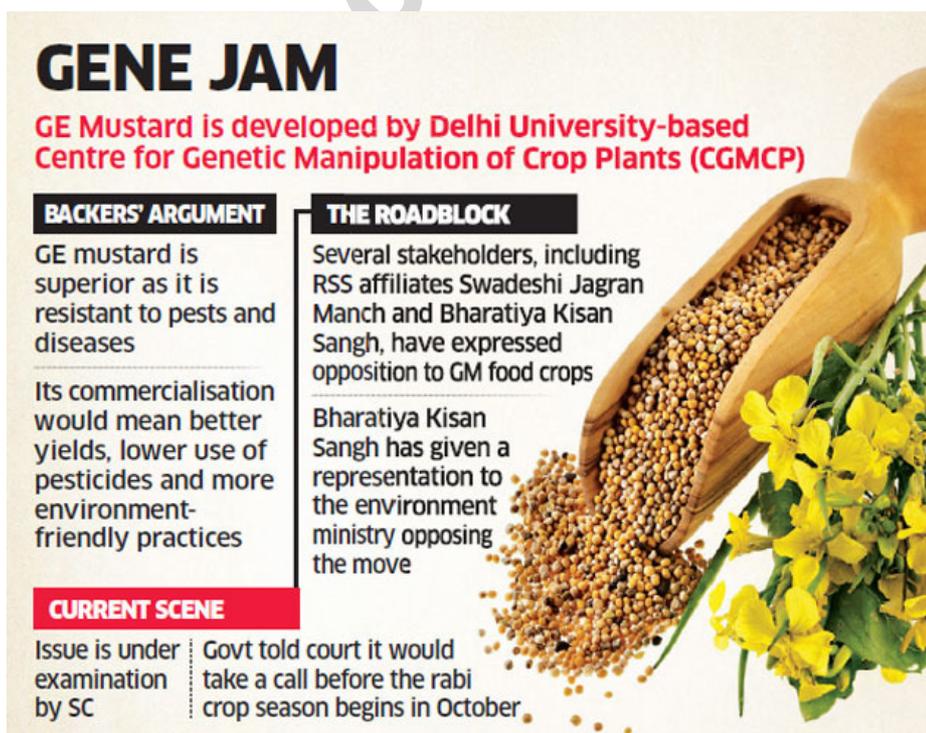
The government has decided to examine all objections raised by scientists and farmers before taking a decision on genetically engineered (GE) mustard, environment minister Harsh Vardhan has said. "Pursuant to recommendation of GE mustard by [GEAC](#) (Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee), several representations and concerns have been raised by a wide range of stakeholders including scientists, policymakers, farmers and NGOs," Vardhan told ET. "The issues raised are manifold, like long-term health and environmental impact, herbicide tolerance, loss to honey bees and pollinators, outperformance of native varieties, no enhancement in yields, etc. All these issues are under examination," he said.

GEAC, India's regulator for transgenic products, had given a green signal to GM mustard in early May, paving way for introduction of genetically modified food crops. After the regulator's nod, the final call is taken by the government.

Developed by Delhi University-based Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP), GE mustard is argued to be superior as it is resistant to pests and diseases. Support Supporters also claimed that its commercialisation would mean better yields, lower use of pesticides and more environment-friendly practices.

But several stakeholders, including Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ( [RSS](#)) affiliates Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, have expressed opposition to [GM food crops](#). Bharatiya Kisan Sangh has already given a representation to the environment ministry opposing the move. Though impact of these organisations on Narendra Modi government's decision making is questioned, sources believe this is one of the reasons for the government's cautious approach.

Also, in its 2014 election manifesto, BJP had said, "GM foods will not be allowed without full scientific evaluation on its long-term effects on soil, production and biological impact on consumers."



### GENE JAM

**GE Mustard is developed by Delhi University-based Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP)**

**BACKERS' ARGUMENT**

GE mustard is superior as it is resistant to pests and diseases

Its commercialisation would mean better yields, lower use of pesticides and more environment-friendly practices

**THE ROADBLOCK**

Several stakeholders, including RSS affiliates Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, have expressed opposition to GM food crops

Bharatiya Kisan Sangh has given a representation to the environment ministry opposing the move

**CURRENT SCENE**

Issue is under examination by SC

Govt told court it would take a call before the rabi crop season begins in October

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Its commercialisation would mean better yields, lower use of pesticides and more environment-friendly practices	Bharatiya Kisan Sangh has given a representation to the environment ministry opposing the move

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