

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to see that exorbitant prices are not charged for foreign seeds in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (c) In the existing central legislations there is no provision for regulating price of seeds including Bt. cotton seeds. However, some of the State Governments like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh intervene in regulating the price of cotton seeds. The price of Bt. cotton seed was initially sold in 2002 between the range of Rs. 1650 to Rs. 1850 (Bollgard-I) per packet of 450 gm., which has been brought down to Rs. 825 to Rs. 830 (Bollgard-I) and Rs. 930 to Rs. 1000 (Bollgard-II) per packet of 450 gms in 2012-13.

The Government encourages development of more varieties of different crops suitable for cultivation under different agro-climatic condition in the country so that through healthy competition among the different varieties of same crop a balance is maintained in the cost of the seeds.

Free access of Indian seeds to multinational seed companies

481. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has agreed to give access of nearly 4.0 lakh tonnes of crop seed stocks being maintained in Gene banks of National Bureau Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) to American seed multinational companies like Monsanto;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is not a fact that giving free access of Indian seeds to foreign seed companies is against seed sovereignty and threatens nation's food security?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) The public sector R&D Institutions only have access to Genebank seed for research purposes under Material Transfer Agreement and strictly as per provisions of The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.