



MESSAGE

The majority of people in Bangladesh depend heavily on agriculture sector for their sustenance and livelihood. With the limited arable land of 9 million hectares, the country produces 37 million metric tons of food grains annually. However, agriculture is becoming highly vulnerable to climate change with a large stretch of cultivated land facing unfavorable environment including tidal surge, floods and droughts. On the income side, half of the country's population lives on one fifth of the country's US\$115 billion GDP with agriculture contributing less than 20%. In an attempt to bridge income disparity, the Government of Bangladesh has made concentrated efforts to create enabling policy, increase investment and enhance R&D capacity to address challenges associated with agriculture and climate change. In 2013, the National Agriculture Policy 2013 was introduced to embrace a new value chain focusing on agricultural productivity, production and poverty alleviation by generating jobs and ensuring food security.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) has collaborated with many international institutions to deliver the benefits of biotechnology to farmers and consumers in Bangladesh. Insect resistant Bt brinjal, late blight resistant potato and nutritionally enriched golden rice have demonstrated the usefulness of biotechnology during the field trials conducted by BARI/BIRRI in different parts of Bangladesh.

The commercial approval of Bt brinjal is a step in right direction. First 20 farmers who received Bt brinjal seedlings from BARI have successfully raised the crop. They realized the significance of insect resistant Bt technology that helped them reduce chemical sprays and combat the infestation of a major insect pest of brinjal. Farmers successfully harvested fresh and blemish free brinjal. In the future, our institutes will produce enough quantity of Bt brinjal seeds and undertake large scale distribution to farmers across brinjal growing areas. The Government will also ensure that the experts regularly monitor Bt brinjal crop and report its performance. We accord the highest priority to the safety and benefits to the society but shun any activity that intends to spread misinformation and misguide the public about Bt brinjal or other products that are evaluated by public sector research institutions.

It is worth mentioning that Bt brinjal being open pollinated variety, farmers will be able to keep their seeds and will not be dependent on company at all. Bt brinjal is not a panacea to protect all biotic/abiotic stresses. Scientists should develop varieties to address other problems as well. Until then, the farmers need to take usual care to protect them.

ISAAA Brief 47 "The Status of Commercialized Bt Brinjal in Bangladesh" is a comprehensive report on development, regulation, approval, adoption and economics of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh. This document will help readers understand the rationale for commercial release of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh, where farmers often spray chemical pesticides every other day to save brinjal crop from damage. The document will also be useful to those who are directly and indirectly involved in sustainable agriculture and environment protection. I wish to congratulate the authors for bringing facts on Bt brinjal out to the people of Bangladesh and to the global society.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu
Long live Bangladesh.

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