International Biodiversity conference 2012 Third Day on 3rd October 2012 in Hyderabad International Convention Centre

హైదరాబాద్ ఇంటర్నేషనల్ కన్వెన్షన్ సెంటర్ లో మూడవ రోజు అంతర్జాతీయ జీవవైవిధ్యం సదస్సు

Studies on the impact of GM crops at farm level in Africa, Asia and Latin America have shown that the gross incomes of farmers who adopted them were higher than those who had not cultivated them.

The studies were conducted by the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute, which is part of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

'Side event'

Talking to The Hindu after participating in a 'Side Event' on 'Socioeconomic considerations and bio safety decision making: assessments, positions, processes and practical experiences', Jose Falck-Zepada, senior research fellow and leader, Policy Team PBS (Program for Bio-safety Systems) , said " we have seen overall that GM crops were more profitable than conventional crops".

Corn, maize, cotton, rapeseed, canola and soyabean were the main GM crops being grown in different countries.

However, there were large variations at crop and farmer levels because of the agronomic practices. For instance in a group of 10 farmers, one might lose by using the technology while others end up with profits.

Differences in farmers' education, access to credit and experience with technologies were the reasons for such variations.

He said the cultivation of GM crops had seen a deceleration in the United States and Canada as they reached a plateau.
However, they would continue to increase in the developing countries. In Argentina, 99 per cent of soyabean production consisted of herbicide-tolerant GM crop. In all, GM crops were being grown in 26 countries. Evaluation was on for drought-tolerant sugarcane in Brazil and water-efficient maize for introduction in Africa.

Commercially approved

He said the water-efficient maize was commercially approved in the United States and it offers a potential solution for food security.

According to Samuel E. Timpo, senior program officer, Socioeconomics Communications, African Union- NEPAD/ African Bio safety Network of Expertise (ABNE), GM crops were being cultivated in three of the 54 African countries— South Africa, Burkina Faso and Egypt. In many other countries, field trials were on.

He said most studies showed that farmers were benefiting from GM technology. Similar views were echoed by Lucia Helena Oliveira de Souza, vice-president, Brazilian Bio-safety Association. She said that 39 per cent of cotton, 50-80 per cent of corn and 36 per cent of soyabean were cultivated in Brazil through GM technology. She said GM crops were increasing because farmers were benefiting from it. She said Brazil was the second largest producer of GM crops and the GM technology was introduced after a vigorous risk assessment.