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Genetically Modified Crops: A Pre-Introductory Assessment of Farmer Readiness, Its Determinants and Extent of Support in India

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ABSTRACT India has become the focal point of biggest debates on GM Crops and their Risk benefit analysis. The present study reveals extent of farmer readiness and support for Genetically Modified crops and biotechnology applications in Indian agriculture. A set of new indices developed could reveal farmers' readiness towards GM Crops, willingness to pay for GM seeds, to trial in time, to invest additionally and to substitute available area. 5 factors namely Biotechnology awareness, innovativeness, extension participation and cosmopoliteness were found to determine farmer readiness towards GM crops. A model was developed for predicting GM readiness which explained up to 78.4 per cent variation. A set of 14 biotechnology applications were rated for their farmer acceptability. Farmer support for ongoing GM research was found highest for crops requiring lesser chemical fertilizers followed by crops requiring less water for growth, crops having longer shelf life periods, drought tolerant crops and saline tolerant crops. The findings will serve researchers, industry and Government in developing biotech communication strategies, pricing, production and timing of market entry as well as development of GM crops based on farmer needs in future.