



I'MO Always Informed

IMO Control Private Limited, 3627, 7th Cross, 13th 'G' Main, HAL 2nd Stage, Bangalore-:



For Private Circulation Only

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Genetically modified crops and products in India

Till date, cotton is the only genetically modified (GM) crop that has been released for commercial cultivation in India. GM cotton is popularly known as Bt Cotton due to the presence of the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) gene. GM cotton is marketed in India by nearly all the major seed companies under different brand names. It is estimated that more than 85% of the cotton seed currently available in India is genetically modified.

As you are well aware, all GM crops or products are prohibited under the NPOP and we inform you to exercise utmost caution while procuring seeds, other planting materials or any off-farm inputs for use in your certified operations. When you are in doubt regarding the GM free nature of any of the materials you may want to use, please contact us immediately with the complete details of the concerned materials and use these only after getting our clearance to do so.

Further, please be aware that the presence of the Bt gene in cotton can be detected only by the analysis of seeds or plant tissues. Though theoretically possible, the GM analysis of cotton lint or fibre would require such enormous quantities of these materials that it is practically impossible to detect traces of GM in them even if present. This knowledge has been cynically exploited by certain unscrupulous entities that submit only cotton lint or fibre for GM analyses. Therefore, in case you are planning to procure cotton from other operators, please ensure that the GM analysis is done on materials containing seeds or plant materials.

We will inform you whenever GM crops are released for commercial cultivation in India.

TRACENET

As you are aware from our various forwarded messages, APEDA has introduced TRACENET, a web based system from June 15, 2010. As per the circular issued by APEDA, all the Master

certificates/scope certificates and transaction certificates are to be issued only through this system. We have registered all IMO certified operators in Tracenet and your user name (s) and password(s) have been generated and sent to you. Please visit the website www.apeda.com and on the left side, you will see portal Tracenet. Please login with your user name and password provided to you for making the request for TCs.

All growers' groups with ICS have to complete the entry of all necessary details in Tracenet before IMO can carry out the external inspections.

Number of farmers in an ICS operation

As per communication from APEDA dated June 16, 2010 (see box), the maximum number of farmers in a growers' group with ICS certification has been restricted to 500. This means that all ICS operations with more than 500 farmers have to be divided into sub-groups of up to 500 farmers and get each of these sub-groups separately certified from 2010.

Communication with IMO

In the past few months, we have had a few cases of missing communications from certain operators. On further investigation, we found that these communications were made to the personal phones or email addresses of IMO staff. To prevent crucial communication from being missed out in future we request you to communicate everything related to your certification activities directly to the IMO Office using only the office address, landline phones and email.

REMINDERS

Approving provisional cost estimates

We request those operators who have not yet done so, to approve and return, at the earliest, the provisional cost estimates for the inspection and certification of your projects in 2010. The

inspections will be planned as soon as the approved and signed cost estimates are received by us. We are aiming for optimally timed inspections at appropriate times based on the crop cycles. As always, we look forward to your cooperation in accepting the inspection dates proposed by us so that the visits may be combined and carried out efficiently in a cost effective manner.

IMO India Webpages

IMO India's web pages are hosted on the IMO Group website www.imo.ch. These pages list all the IMO India certified operations & products, approved off-farm inputs, news letters and provide relevant information on organic certification, links to standards etc.

IMO India's web-pages are frequently used by buyers and traders seeking suppliers. Please inform us of any change in your contact details at the earliest so that these can be updated in our web-pages.

Notify any changes in your operations to IMO

Please notify any changes in your operations IMMEDIATELY to IMO India. Such changes may be related to crops, fields, inputs, suppliers, products, processing facilities or methods, recipes, warehouses, addresses, clients etc. Where possible, please update your Operator's Profile with the relevant information and send the updated document to IMO India.

Course on Biodynamic Agriculture

The Biodynamic Association of India (BDAI) is organizing a 6-day basic course on Biodynamic Agriculture from September 20 to 25, 2010. There is also an advanced 3-day course on BD prep making from September 27 till 29.

The last date for registration is September 10, 2010. Please contact Mr. Jeyakaran, President - BDAI for more details and registration. email: jakesjayakaran@gmail.com

Communication from APEDA dated June 16, 2010

Dear Certification Bodies,

During evaluation/surveillance of CBs, it has been reported that there is no uniformity in the procedures in certifying grower groups. In most cases, it has been seen that the CBs are not following the NPOP group certification norms, risk assessments are not being carried out and the numbers of farmers have been found to be in the range of 5000-8000. This has resulted in many infringements in the organic trade affecting the credibility of group certification in India.

In light of the above, the NAB, in its 15th meeting held on 13th April 2010, has decided to reduce the size of the number of members in a grower group to a maximum of 500 as this will help in maintaining the credibility of the production and certification of organic products. You are, therefore, requested to follow this norm w.e.f. 15th July 2010. The Tracenet is also being modified accordingly.

You are also advised to comply with the following instructions for implementing this new norm as per the status of the ICS:

a) In case the grower group project is yet to be registered under the CB (New project/s), the norm for the number of farmers in an ICS (minimum 25 farmers and maximum 500 farmers) is to be followed with immediate effect.

b) In case the CB has already registered the grower group (entry into the TRACENET is also completed) with more than 500 farmers (New Project/Existing Project), either the Scope certificate issued/yet to be issued, the cap of 500 farmers per ICS will be applicable on the renewal of the project.

Please note that the other norms of group certifications related to similar production, geographical proximity and separate inspection of four hectare farms remain the same as given in the NPOP (chapter V).

With regards,

S. Dave
Director-APEDA