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- ▶ 2010
- ▶ 2009

Home > Cotton Grower News

### Bt Cotton Seeds Will Be in Short Supply in India

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By **Dr. Seshadri Ramukumar**

**Texas Tech University, USA**

India's cotton production increases in recent years have been due to the use of *Bt* cotton and hybrid seeds. There is a danger to this enhanced output due to predicted short supply of *Bt* cotton seeds.

Dr. Shanthu Shantharam, Executive Director of the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises-Agricultural Group (ABLE-AG) advised that there is a predicted shortfall of 50 lakh (5 million) packets of *Bt* cotton seeds (450 gram each) for the 2011-12 planting season. He commented that the requirement for the next season will be around 4 crores (40 million) packets and it is estimated that seed companies can produce about 3.5 crores (35 million) packets.

Dr. Shantharam said there are several issues and complexities with regard to the short supply of *Bt* cotton seeds. Among those, he emphasized the fact that seed companies are not able to supply seeds to growers at a subsidized rate when the cost of production is going up. Estimates are such that the seed production cost has gone up by 30-40 percent, whereas the seed prices have not kept in pace with the production cost increases.

Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises-Agricultural Group has 12 companies that include names such as Monsanto, Syngenta, Dupont, Bayer CropScience, BASF, Metahelix, JK Agrigenetics, Mahyco, etc.


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