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BT Allergy in North India Crying Out for Attention

As follow up to your articles More Illnesses Linked to Bt Crops, and Mass Deaths in Sheep Grazing on Bt Cotton (SiS30) describing health problems associated with genetically modified (GM) Bt cotton in India, I draw your attention to further symptoms of allergy reported this year in Sadalpur Village near Hisar in Haryana State, India. Farmers say skin itching is very common and even buffaloes and dogs are affected.

The itching started to appear during the Bt cotton season this year. The village Ayurvedic Hospital Compounder says that on average, 10 cases of skin allergy/itching symptoms in humans come to the hospital every day, and there is an increasing trend over the past three or so years. Even cotton factory workers in the area are complaining of itching problem. Itching is observed mainly on the skin and in reproductive organs.

Animals are also affected. On average, 5-10 cases of skin allergy/itching in buffaloes are presented at the village veterinary hospital daily.

Thousands of sheep have died in Andhra Pradesh in past years, but there is still no real action on the part of Indian Government. Even the local and national media are not paying any attention to this problem. We have asked the local and national TV channels and newspapers to investigate into the problem caused by Bt cotton in humans and animals.

I am really afraid for the future of India and our farmers. Sooner or later, the effects of transgenic pollution will be more pronounced and will affect people who do not live in cotton fields or villages next to cotton fields.

Why do we still allow Bt cotton to be grown in India? Isn't the death of thousands of sheep enough for us to wake up and speak and support the truth?

How can the scientific community be so dead to issue like deaths and health problems due to Bt cotton? I am really ashamed at the silence of scientific community though I am one among them.

In India, we are really fed up with the insensitivity of our Government and other regulatory authorities. People say that India is one of the largest democracies, but I feel we do not deserve this reputation if that means the Government cannot protect its citizens against this poisonous crop.

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