

Critical Farm Issues Workshop GM and Organic Cotton

Identified Key questions and Issues from the group:

- What is it? How does GM work?
- Can GM and OC exist
- Need to help others understand how it works and the effects of it
- Strengths and weaknesses, ramifications of using it
- What is OE's role? Lobbying? Definition?
- Certificate that a farm is GMO free?
- What are the effects on Human/animal and land health?
- Need to break the cycle of dependence on it for farmers.

Discussion/ thoughts:

- Strengths: increased yields, feed the world
- Weaknesses: lower yields, resistance to pests
- GMO- Terminated genes (these are banned in India)
- BT cotton- genes inserted into cotton for particular purpose (kill certain pests)
- BT was created to prevent American bollworm....
- What happened: when natural enemies are eliminated, other predators come in
- REALLY aggressive marketing by Global companies in India
- Lobbying by partnering with existing organizations globally and internally in India
- Buyers need to understand issues what the thinking is against GMO's
- Need to change mindsets—how?
- OE can do the info sharing on their web site
- There are kits for testing whether your cotton has drift in it
- Need more research dollars for organic
- Strategies for dealing with: Fight and be as aggressive as them, Grow the movement of organic and make OC stronger lobby
- Need to build advocacy
- Have OE house some of the key research on their site so we can access it
- Seed issues: challenge to seed policy and what will be available in the future. Impacts on seeds.
- There are a states moving toward being GM free...but you can't regulate it really

Issues with Organic Cotton:

- Seed control and availability
- Blow over from BT fields
- Need more research around impacts