

## Insect-tolerant brinjal, rice crops in India soon

India will soon start cultivating crops of insect-tolerant brinjals and rice as a group of scientists with a seed firm are close to developing a genetic technology.

The new technology for developing insect-tolerant food and vegetables would help in making available qualitative and nutritious food available to India's fast growing population at cheaper rate, Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Ltd (Mahyco) said in a statement Sunday.

'China has developed many insect-tolerant crops to reduce the environmental burden of pesticides that will be commercialised shortly. Now India too is not far behind as Mahyco scientists are close to achieving success,' Usha Barwale Zehr, joint director (research), said in the statement.

'Mahyco has completed extensive animal testing studies and food and feed safety studies in laboratories with fruit and shoot borer (FSB) as part of the regulatory requirements. These studies have shown encouraging results to develop a technology for insect-tolerant brinjal and rice crops,' Zehr said.

'Initial multi-location trials have been completed for the rice that is cultivated in about 44 million hectares in India and the bio-safety package is being completed,' the statement read.

Mahyco, established in 1964, is engaged in research, production, processing and marketing of 115 products in 30 crop species including cereals, oilseeds and vegetables.

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