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Motia for developing GM crops to boost output

Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury yesterday said the government will intensify its efforts to develop genetically modified varieties of crops to meet growing demand of foods, reports BSS.

"We have to go for GM crop cultivation to boost production from our limited arable land for fulfilling food demand of people," she told a seminar on "Expansion of appropriate agriculture technology: Experience of PKSF" in the capital. Palli Karma -Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) organised the seminar in its auditorium.

Fisheries and Livestock Secretary Shelina Afroz, Managing Director of PKSF Abdul Karim, Director General of Bangladesh Development Research Centre Mostafa K Mujeri, agriculture scientists, representatives of different non-government organisations and farmers, among others, addressed the seminar with chairman of PKSF Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad in the chair.

Deputy Managing Director (programme) of PKSF Golam Touhid placed the keynote paper at the seminar.

Motia said the government is attaching priority to research and development to enhance agricultural production through inventing high yielding varieties of crop as well as introducing appropriate technology.

Agriculture sector is getting high yielding

of different crop varieties as the government took initiatives to expand hybrid seeds, she said adding, "There is no alternative to introduce genetically modified varieties of crops to meet our food demand."

"Our scientists have successfully decoded the genome sequence of jute and developed genetically modified Bt Brinjal," the minister said expressing her hope the agriculture sector of the country will get a boost because of these landmark inventions of the scientists.

The country has achieved self-sufficiency in food production as the present government has made available of all necessary agri-inputs including quality seeds and fertilizers, Motia added.

"Nearly two crore farmers across the country have bank accounts, which will help them to get loan facilities at low interest," she said.

Mostafa said alongside developing high yielding varieties of crop, traditional agriculture practices need to shift into modern ones to make Bangladesh a food surplus country.

Other agriculture experts said the country has to overcome many obstacles of agriculture sector including storage and marketing problems of produced crops as well as poor irrigation efficiency to ensure better contribution to national economy.