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## GM crops chronology

1990: Cotton plants are first genetically engineered to produce enough Bt toxin (derived from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* bacterium) to be protective against insects

1996: The first Bt cotton varieties, known as Bollgard Cotton in the U.S., are introduced commercially by Monsanto and Delta and Pine Land Company

1997: China begins cultivating Bt cotton, increasing the area of the crop planted to 1.8m hectares worldwide

2003: Large scale field trials of herbicide-tolerant GM crops in Britain show that changes in herbicide use have an impact on weeds and insects that might also affect country wildlife

2009: 49 per cent of cotton production worldwide is Bt cotton — using 16m hectares

2010: Pakistan, the world's fourth largest cotton-grower, becomes the latest country to adopt Monsanto's Bt Cotton

2010: No GM crops are grown commercially in the U.K. Spain is the biggest producer in Europe, but there are also significant amounts of crops grown in France, Germany and the Czech Republic.

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## **Pests explosion leads to call for GM review**

*Farmland struck by infestations of bugs following widespread adoption of Bt cotton made by biotech giant Monsanto.*

Scientists are calling for the long-term risks of GM crops to be reassessed after field studies revealed an explosion in pest numbers around farms growing modified strains of cotton.

The unexpected surge of infestations “highlights a critical need” for better ways of predicting the impact of GM crops and spotting potentially damaging knock-on effects arising from their cultivation, researchers said.

Millions of hectares of farmland in northern China have been struck by infestations of bugs following the widespread adoption of Bt cotton, an engineered variety made by the US biotech giant, Monsanto.

Outbreaks of mirid bugs, which can devastate around 200 varieties of fruit, vegetable and corn crops, have risen dramatically in the past decade, as cotton farmers have shifted from traditional cotton crops to GM varieties, scientists said.

Traditional cotton farmers have to spray their crops with insecticides to combat destructive bollworm pests, but Bt cotton produces its own insecticide, meaning farmers can save money by spraying it less. But a 10-year study across six major cotton-growing regions of China found that by spraying their crops less, farmers allowed mirid bugs to thrive and infest their own and neighbouring farms.

The infestations are potentially catastrophic for more than 10 million small-scale farmers who cultivate 26m hectares of vulnerable crops in the region studied. The

findings mark the first confirmed report of mass infestations arising as an unintended consequence of farmers using less pesticide — a feature of Bt cotton that was supposed to save money and lessen the crops' environmental impact. The research, led by Kongming Wu at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing, is published in the US journal, Science.

“Our work highlights a critical need to do ecological assessments and monitoring at the landscape—level to better understand the impacts of GM crop adoption,” Dr Wu told the Guardian.

Environmental campaigners seized on the study as further evidence that GM crops are not the environmental saviour that manufacturers have led farmers to believe. “This is a massive issue in terms of the environment, but also in terms of costs for the farmer. The plan with GM crops was to reduce costs and environmental impact, but neither of these things seem to be happening, because over time, nature takes its course, and that was bound to happen,” said Kirtana Chandrasekaran, a food campaigner at Friends of the Earth.

Dr Wu's team monitored insecticide use from 1992 to 2008 at 38 farms throughout six northern Chinese provinces. They also kept records of mirid bug populations at the farms between 1997 and 2008.

Before switching to GM cotton, farmers used more broad—spectrum insecticides to kill bollworms and other pests. But as more farmers began growing Bt cotton, their use of sprays declined, leading to a steady rise in pests, including mirid bugs.

“The proteins in Bt cotton control major pests, replacing most of the chemical insecticide used for their control in traditional cotton. Removal of these broad spectrum insecticides means secondary pests, such as mirids, will not be controlled by the insecticides and may need specific measures to control them in some seasons,” said Mark Buckingham at Monsanto U.K.

While many countries around the world have embraced GM crops, they have never taken root in Britain, where multinational companies have faced protests and vandalism to crop trials in recent years.

Britain's large-scale field trials of herbicide-tolerant GM crops in 2003 found changes in herbicide use had an impact on weeds and insects that might also affect country wildlife. — © Guardian Newspapers Limited, 2010

( Additional reporting by Celia Cole.)

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## **Training in quail farming**

MADURAI: A free training in 'Japanese quail farming' will be conducted by the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Science University on May 17 and 18.

The programme is intended to combine the efforts of rural youth and farmers in poultry husbandry with special reference to quails to increase farm revenue and enrich land sources. Various types of quail farming practices on rearing would be taught.

The training sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Further information can be obtained from 0452 248 3903, a press release said.

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## Inflation eases to 9.59 pct in April

**Agencies** Posted online: Fri May 14 2010, 11:20 hrs



**New Delhi** : Inflation eased marginally to 9.59 per cent in April, but cost of some vegetables and metals remained high.

The wholesale price-based inflation cooled from 9.90 per cent in March mainly on account of decline in prices of fruits, onions, wheat and cereals.

On Year-on-Year food price index was up 16.87 per cent, while fuel price index rose 12.55 per cent.

According to the monthly inflation data, potato prices fell 28.70 per cent in April, and onion prices dropped 11.62 per cent.

Iron and Steel prices rose by 11.40 per cent in April compared to March.

Sugar prices fell by 5.74 per cent on monthly basis, but turned costlier compared to last year

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*By Rajesh Kumar Singh*

*14 May 2010 12:07:34 PM IST*

Inflation eases in April, above the forecast



NEW DELHI: India's annual headline inflation in April eased in line with expectations, adding to the likelihood that the Reserve Bank will hold off on further monetary policy tightening ahead of a scheduled review in July.

Wholesale prices rose 9.59 percent from a year earlier, data released on Friday showed, a tad above the median forecast for a 9.5 percent rise and compared with March's pace of 9.9 percent.

The data showed annual food inflation rose to 16.87 percent in April from 16.65 percent in the prior month.

Fuel inflation eased to 12.55 percent in the same month from 12.7 percent in March.

Manufacturing inflation cooled to 6.70 percent from 7.13 percent in March.

Any rise in fuel prices runs the risk of stoking manufacturing inflation as companies may look to pass on any increase in their input cost, making inflation a more generalised phenomenon.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which has described inflation as "worrisome", has said manufacturing inflation would determine its future policy response. The bank raised key rates by a total of 50 basis points in two moves since March and analysts expect further tightening along the year.

The central bank has not ruled out off-cycle policy action, but the possibility of any move before a scheduled July review has eased following a weaker-than-expected industrial data in March and uncertainties over euro zone debt problems.

India's five-year swap rate fell to a 5-½ months low of 6.47 percent on Thursday after central bank Deputy Governor Subir Gokarn reiterated that the RBI favours a gradual exit from loose

monetary policy.

Containing rising inflation has become a policy challenge in the world's second-fastest growing major economy after China. Rapid economic growth is boosting consumer demand far ahead of what can be met by existing supply capacity.

Rising cost pressures are dragging down the pace of manufacturing growth, the HSBC Markit Purchasing Managers Index in April has indicated.


The RBI expects inflation to ease around mid-2010 and has forecast March 2011 WPI inflation of 5.5 percent.

A strong rupee, which has appreciated over 13 percent since early March 2009 on capital inflows, is also seen helping in containing the crude import bill and thereby managing its impact on domestic inflation.

However, any run up in global crude oil prices on the prospects of an improvement in the global economy has the potential of further widening India's trade and current account deficits, which would be a negative for the rupee.

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**hindustantimes**

 Sat, 15 May 2010

## Weather






	<b>Saturday, May</b>	
Partly Cloudy	<b>15</b>	
	Max    Min	
	38.8°   28.7°	
	Rain: 00mm in24hrs	Sunrise: 05:44
	Humidity: 42%	Sunset: 18:27
	Wind: Normal	Barometer:

### Tomorrow's Forecast

	<b>Sunday, May 16</b>
Partly Cloudy	Max    Min
	38°   29°

1008.1mb

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
May 17	May 18	May 19	May 20	May 21
				
37°   29°	37°   30°	35°   28°	34°   28°	36°   29°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Tstorm	Tstorm	Partly Cloudy