



Office of Agricultural Affairs  
U.S. Embassy, Paris

## Agricultural Biotechnology in the United States Newsletter - October 2007

**To our readers:** We in the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the U.S. Embassy in Paris would be happy that you inform us of your visits to the United States, so that we can help you organize your meetings and your administrative procedures. Please do not hesitate to share any questions with us on these issues, as we are here to facilitate these exchanges!

### 1. U.S. Policy:

- **USDA announces plan to improve quality compliance of genetically engineered products:**

On September 20, Acting Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner announced a new program to help universities, small businesses and large companies develop sound management practices to enhance compliance with regulatory requirements for field trials and movements of genetically engineered (GE) organisms. The new Biotechnology Quality Management System, a voluntary compliance assistance program, is scheduled for initial implementation in spring 2008.

News Release:

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB/cmd/ad/.ar/sa.retrievecontent/c/6.2.1UH/ce/7.2.5JM/p/5.2.4TQ/d/4/th/J.2.9D/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?PC.7.2.5JM\\_contentid=2007%2F09%2F0257.xml&PC.7.2.5JM\\_parentnav=LATEST\\_RELEASES&PC.7.2.5JM\\_navid=NEWS\\_RELEASE#7.2.5JM](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB/cmd/ad/.ar/sa.retrievecontent/c/6.2.1UH/ce/7.2.5JM/p/5.2.4TQ/d/4/th/J.2.9D/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?PC.7.2.5JM_contentid=2007%2F09%2F0257.xml&PC.7.2.5JM_parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&PC.7.2.5JM_navid=NEWS_RELEASE#7.2.5JM)

Fact Sheet:

[http://www.usda.gov/documents/fs\\_bqms9-2007.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/documents/fs_bqms9-2007.pdf)

- **USDA seeks public comment on deregulation of genetically engineered soybean:**

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service started seeking public comment on October 11 on a petition to deregulate soybean line 356043, genetically engineered (GE) for herbicide resistance. □ The petition for deregulation, submitted by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., is in accordance with APHIS' regulations concerning the introduction of GE organisms and products. APHIS has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) to determine whether deregulating the soybean could have a significant impact on the environment. After a thorough review of the scientific evidence, APHIS' current preferred action is to deregulate the soybean based on the fact that it does not present a plant-pest risk.

News release: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2007/10/Piodereg\\_brs.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2007/10/Piodereg_brs.shtml)

## 2. International Organizations:

- **FAO published a report on marker-assisted selection in crops, livestock, forestry and fish:** <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1120e/a1120e00.htm>
- **Codex proposes guidelines for non-approved GMOs:**

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is to create guidelines for assessing the risk of imported food made with non-approved genetically modified plant material, which would help relax trade barriers. Because of the differences in the GMO authorisation regimes between the EU and exporting countries, conflicting authorisations of GMOs have occurred. Codex said these could become more frequent and affect a greater range of crops in the future.

It has decided to advance a proposal that addresses the risk assessment of low-level presence of biotech plant materials, found in food or feed, which have been authorised in one or more countries but not yet in the importing country. This decision followed negotiations by members of the Codex ad hoc Task Force last week in Chilba, Japan.

Codex's proposal will be submitted to the Codex Commission next July for approval, and will subsequently be incorporated in the Codex Plant Guidelines as an annex including information-sharing mechanisms.

<http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=80340-odex-gm>

## 3. Biotech and Consumers:

- **New Book: The Public, The Media and Agricultural Biotechnology (University of Wisconsin-Madison):**

As the use of biotechnology in the agriculture industry rises, examining the feelings of the public towards this controversial issue and understanding how public opinion has formed has become increasingly more important. It has become apparent that there are more factors involved than just a lack of scientific knowledge about biotechnology and genetically modified foods that affect public acceptance of this technology.

[http://www.cabi.org/bk\\_bookdisplay.asp?action=display&openMenu=search&PID=2004](http://www.cabi.org/bk_bookdisplay.asp?action=display&openMenu=search&PID=2004)

## 4. Research Results Recently published:

- **Plant biofactory ramps up relief for dairy cows**

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists are testing a plant-produced, therapeutic protein, which thwarts bacteria that cause inflammatory udder disease in dairy cows.

[http://www.checkbiotech.org/green\\_News\\_Genetics.aspx?infol=15772](http://www.checkbiotech.org/green_News_Genetics.aspx?infol=15772)

- **Hydrogen from GM algae**

Genetically modified algae could be efficient producers of hydrogen and biofuels.

[http://www.checkbiotech.org/green\\_News\\_Genetics.aspx?infol=15760](http://www.checkbiotech.org/green_News_Genetics.aspx?infol=15760)

## **5. Biotech Industry Perspectives:**

- **Pioneer offers 23 new soybean varieties for 2008**

Pioneer Hi-Bred is adding 23 new soybean varieties to its lineup for 2008. These new Pioneer® brand soybean varieties offer growers protection against yield-robbing pests such as soybean cyst nematode (SCN), sudden death syndrome (SDS), Phytophthora root rot and brown stem rot (BSR).

[http://www.checkbiotech.org/green\\_News\\_Genetics.aspx?infol=15921](http://www.checkbiotech.org/green_News_Genetics.aspx?infol=15921)

## **6. U.S. Biotech Production:**

- **2007 Production**

U.S. crop production in 2007: 73% of corn acreage, 87% of cotton acreage, and 91% of soybean acreage. See full report at:

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/nass/Acre//2000s/2007/Acre-06-29-2007.pdf>

- **U.S. corn yields soar thanks to stellar genetics**

Stellar genetics and favorable weather are boosting corn yields to extremely high levels this harvest season in the United States, agronomists and grains analysts said.

[http://www.checkbiotech.org/green\\_News\\_Genetics.aspx?infol=15825](http://www.checkbiotech.org/green_News_Genetics.aspx?infol=15825)

## **7. Background information:**

- U.S. regulatory framework: <http://usbiotechreg.nbio.gov>
- List of regulated and deregulated products:  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/brs\\_main.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/brs_main.shtml)  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/not\\_reg.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/not_reg.html)
- Adoption of biotechnology and its production impacts:  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Biotechnology/chapter1.htm>

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