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Paraguay

Biotechnology

Paraguay Renews GMO Planting Restrictions

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Report Highlights:

Paraguay has recently renewed its prohibition on the commercial use of genetically modified organisms, especially soybean planting seed. This action results from concerns that these products, which play a key role in generating foreign exchange, could be denied entry into world markets, especially Brazil, which takes the majority of Paraguayan output.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Buenos Aires [AR1], PA

Paraguay Renews Prohibition on GMOs

As a follow-up to two resolutions promulgated by Paraguay's Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) in August 1999 which restricted planting for the 1999/2000 market year, the use of genetically modified organisms in Paraguay's agricultural sector has once again been prohibited for 2000/2001. The resolution is signed by the Minister of Agriculture and reflects the government's concern over the negative effect that these products would have on its export trade.

Specifically, by virtue of resolution #397, planting for sale or use in either the domestic or international market of any genetically modified organism for the 2000/2001 crop year is not allowed. Thus, any GMO soybean harvested from the 1999/2000 crop (some estimate that about 5-10,000 hectares of GMO soybeans were planted in 1999/2000) cannot be used for planting during the next crop year, nor can biotech planting seed be imported for commercial purposes. Any GMO seed that exists must be disposed of according to Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) guidelines which state that the product must be milled into oil and meal or exported. Although the resolution's article #1 prohibits the use of all GMOs, the importance of soybeans for the country is reflected in Article #2 which specifically restricts their planting. The MAG will be responsible for control, and has been receiving training in the relevant testing procedures.

In general, Paraguay does not oppose the concept of biotechnology, a viewpoint supported by the fact that the resolution applies only to commercialization of GMOs and not to scientific or research purposes. As their knowledge of transgenic products increases over time, Paraguayan officials state that they will have a more refined scientific basis and more background information for making decision for the next campaign.

Some sectors of the Paraguayan soybean industry clearly remain concerned about the potential for rejection of GMO products in world markets, and the reactivation of this prohibition is a step taken by the government to allay concerns over possible economic damage to a sector that plays a critical role in generating foreign exchange. The measure was also taken in order to control the illegal access of non-authorized GMO seeds from Argentina into Paraguay.

Contrary to some private sector officials who are strongly opposed to this measure, others believe that the negative commercial impact related to the prohibition should not be significant, as the GMO seeds entering illegally into Paraguay are not well adapted to local weather and soil conditions, lowering the quality and yield of crops which negatively impacts competitiveness.

For further background information, please see GAIN Report PA9014 [Paraguay Restricts Planting of GMOs](#).