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France

Biotechnology

Eight Biotech Crops Approved for Open Field Tests 2002

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Report Highlights:

On July 4, 2002, the French Ministry of Agriculture approved 8 applications for open field testing of biotech products, 3 of which will be planted in 2002. The 3 biotech corn products to be tested this year are two male-sterile corn hybrids and a high-digestibility corn. These new approvals increase the number of test plots in France to 41, mainly corn. MONSANTO and the French company BIOGEMMA are conducting most of the open field research programs underway in France.

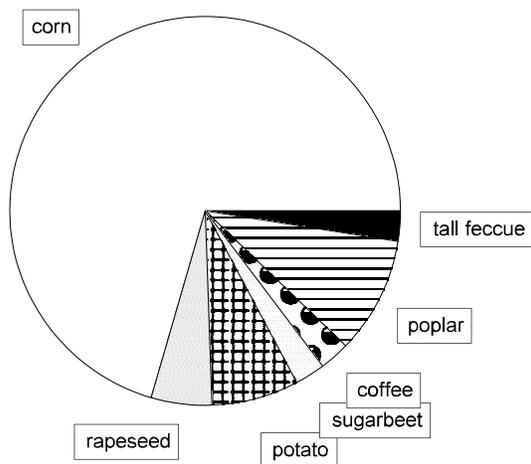
Note: There is still no commercial production of biotech crops in France.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Paris [FR1], FR

1. Biotech Crops Tested in France in 2002

With these new approvals, there will be 41 open field test plots of biotech crops conducted in France this year. There are test plots in 19 "départements" (administrative areas) across the country, but most are in Southwestern France, the Loire Valley and the Center region. These test plots include 1 testing program approved in 1995, 1 approved in 1998, 14 approved in 1999, 11 approved in 2000, 10 approved in 2001, and 4 approved in 2002 (3 biotech crops are tested on 4 test plots). Most of the biotech crops tested are corn, as shown in the graph below.

Biotech Crops Tested in France in 2002



The companies conducting these research programs are:

- MONSANTO: 13 corn programs
- RAGT Génétique: 1 tall fescue program
- BIOGEMMA: 13 corn programs
- AGPM Technique: 2 corn programs
- CETIOM: 2 rapeseed programs
- MERISTEM THERAPEUTCS: 1 corn program
- INRA: 3 potato, 4 poplar programs
- ADVANTA France: 1 sugarbeet program
- CIRAD: 1 coffee program

Note: BIOGEMMA is a subsidiary of the French seed company LIMAGRAIN, the cooperative PAU-EURALIS, the oilseeds growers financial company SOFIPROTEOL, and the grain growers financial company UNIGRAINS.

A complete description of these field trials is available on the French MinAg website at:
http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr/OGM/espace_info/essais_france/fip/fip2002.htm

2. Recently Approved Biotech Crops for Testing

On July 4, 2002, the newly appointed French Minister of Agriculture Hervé Gaymard authorized 8 additional open field tests of biotech corn and soybeans, three of which are going to be planted this year. They are:

Petitioners	Dossier #	Characteristics	Test plots in 2002
Biogemma	B/FR/02.03.05	Corn with a reduced content of lignin to increase its digestibility by ruminants (3 year program)	1 in Blagnac (close to Toulouse)
Biogemma	B/FR/02.03.06	Production system of hybrid corn with male-sterile corn, to reduce costs of production of hybrid corn seeds (4 year program)	1 in Blagnac (close to Toulouse) 1 in Artonne (Close to Clermont Ferrand)
Biogemma	B/FR/02.04.02	Male-sterile corn and system eliminating antibiotic-resistance gene used in selection (3 year program)	1 in Artonne (Close to Clermont-Ferrand)

For the other five open field tests authorized, no testing will be possible in 2002 because the approval occurred too late to plant the seeds. They will be planted in 2003. They are the following:

Petitioners	Dossier #	Characteristics	Test plots in 2002
PIONEER GENETIQUE	B/FR/02.03.02	Hybrid corn resistant to the corn root worm and tolerant to the glufosinate-ammonium herbicide (4 year program)	None
PIONEER GENETIQUE	B/FR/02.03.03	Hybrid corn resistant to the corn borer and sesamia, and tolerant to the glufosinate-ammonium herbicide (4 year program)	None
AGPM Technique	B/FR/02.04.02	Impact of corn borer resistant corn, glufosinate resistant corn, and glyphosate resistant corn in cultivation practices (3 year program)	None
AVENTIS CROPSCIENCE France SA	B/FR/02.03.07	Soybean tolerant to the glyphosate and isoxaflutole herbicides (2 year program)	None
AVENTIS CROPSCIENCE France SA	B/FR/01.06.02	Corn tolerant to glyphosate (3 year program)	None

The characteristics of these products are available on the French MinAg website:
http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr/OGM/ogm_france/surveillance/surveillance.htm