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Denmark

Biotechnology

Denmark Expected to Vote for Approval of GM Corn Event

2005

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Report Highlights:

For the first time since 1999, Denmark has signaled its plans to vote for EU approval of a biotech event next week in the EU Council.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
The Hague [NL1]
[DA]

For the first time since 1999, Denmark has signaled its plans to vote for EU approval of a biotech event next week in the EU Council. For the last four years, the Danish minority government has been in favor of voting for EU approvals of GM products. However, the government's generally favorable view of biotechnology has been offset by the opposition parties in Parliament, who have commanded a majority of votes to block all government intentions to vote for biotech approvals at EU Council meetings.

Overnight, two opposition parties (The Social Democrats and the Radical Left Party) changed position on the approval of new GM products and declared on September 16, 2005, that they are lifting their moratorium. In the future they will support the government in its efforts to vote for EU approvals. However, the two parties maintain that they will evaluate each future approval request critically. This change in policy comes on the same day the Danish Parliament EU Committee must give a mandate to the Danish government plans to vote for the approval of the application for Pioneer corn 1507 in the EU Agriculture Council next week.

The sudden change in the position of the two parties is partly attributed to the implementation of legislation on GM labeling, traceability and coexistence. In earlier years, the lack of regulation in these areas had been cited as a reason for opposing new biotech approvals. Another important factor causing the shift in position may be the fact that they now realize that EU (and Danish) research is falling far behind that of other countries, which have been more supportive of biotechnology research, product approvals and commercial applications. It is also hoped that more EU money will be allocated for research in GM crops, especially for tropical crops that can aid food production and promote economic development in developing countries.