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Thailand

Biotechnology

Cabinet to Allow Biotech Field Trials with Restrictive Measures

2008

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Report Highlights:

On December 25, 2007, the Thai Cabinet agreed to reverse its 2001 ban on biotech field trials in Thailand. However, the Cabinet will require new restrictive controls on future field trials.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Trade Report
Bangkok [TH1]
[TH]

Executive Summary

According to contacts in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), and the Biotechnology Alliance Association (BAA), on December 25, 2007, the Thai Cabinet revoked the biotech field trial ban in Thailand. Reportedly, the Cabinet required that future field trials will be conducted under new restrictive controls and surveillance, including confining trials to government properties only and conducting public hearings prior to initiating new field trials. Furthermore, field trials must be submitted to the Cabinet for case-by-case approval.

The specifics of the Cabinet's approval to allow biotech field trials have not been publicly released as this action was part of a confidential order to the MOAC to develop guidelines for control and surveillance of future trials. An official report is expected to be available once the guidelines are finalized.

Biotech field trials were banned by the Cabinet in April 2001 in response to pressure from anti-GMO groups. In early 2007, the MOAC initiated efforts to revoke the 2001 ban. In May 2007, the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives met with representatives from the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Kasetsart University to discuss guidelines for re-opening field trials of biotech crops. Although the MOAC reportedly finished its draft proposal in mid 2007, its plan to submit the proposal to the Cabinet was repeatedly delayed.

End of Report.