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Report Name: Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

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Report Highlights:

In 2020, The United States exported approximately US$444 million in agricultural products to Jamaica. The U.S remains one Jamaica's main trading partners. Some of the products from the United States such as grains, oilseeds used to formulate feed rations and some intermediate foods are considered biotech products. In Jamaica, the use of biotechnology and biosafety in food production and trading are guided by a National Biosafety Framework.

Jamaica's National Biosafety Framework was established to develop regulations that guide how biotechnology and biosafety is applied and traded between Jamaica and other countries. These regulations are influenced by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). The Protocol was designed to address the "*safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.*" Jamaica is a signatory to the convention and the Protocol was enforced on December 24, 2012.

Many of the products that are imported by Jamaica from the United States and other suppliers are produced using biotechnology. Considering this, the biosafety legislation that is being developed by Jamaica may eventually affect trade with the United States in the future.

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CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: Experimental efforts in crop production using genetic engineering (GE) are conducted by the Biotechnology Centre at the University of the West Indies (UWI). One of the major research efforts resulted in the development of a transgenic variety of papaya (*Carica papaya*) which is resistant to the Papaya Ringspot virus. Although the variety has been developed, it has not been approved for distribution or commercial production. No information is available on other biotech crops that are currently being developed.

b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: Currently GE crops are not produced commercially in Jamaica.

c) EXPORTS: Jamaica does not export GE crops.

d) IMPORTS: Jamaica imports bulk grain and oilseed products such as corn, soybean and wheat, which are used in feed ration formulations. These products are predominantly purchased from Brazil and the Unites States, which both produce GE crops. Apart from Jamaica's biotechnology and biosafety legislation, Post is not aware of any specific requirements for GE product imports into Jamaica.

e) FOOD AID: N/A

f) TRADE BARRIERS: None

PART B: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: In Jamaica, the legislation governing modern biotechnology and its products is not comprehensive. The Framework does not list or outline the protocols for the deregulation and commercialization of products derived from genetic engineering. Post is unaware of any regulations that affect GE imports intended for food, animal feed, or processing purposes. The importation of GE products for commercial release into the natural environment is prohibited; however, there are regulations that guide GE imports for experimental purposes.

Biosafety regulatory responsibility spans several Jamaican ministries and government agencies. Current laws affecting biotechnology regulation include but are not limited to: Animals Disease and Importation Act, Food and Drug Act, Pesticides Act, Pharmacy Act, Plant Quarantine Act, Public Health Act, Standards Act, and the Natural Resources and Conservation Act.

In November 2002, Jamaica began drafting its National Biosafety Framework. The Framework was developed under a five-year project funded by the United Nations Environmental Programme/Global Environmental Facility (UNEP/GEF) – Global Project "Development of National Biosafety

Frameworks." A National Biosafety Policy is also being developed to guide national biotechnology and biosafety regulations. The draft policy was released for public consultations in October 2020. The feedback from the public will shape the revise document which was tabled as a White Paper in Cabinet in 2021. Currently, the National Biosafety Policy explicitly mandates the compulsory labeling of GE products.

In 2007, the Jamaican Parliament passed the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST) Act. The Act outlines the Commission's role as "promoting the sustainable development and utilization of local science and technology capacities for competitive and profitable production through education of the populace, partnership with government, private sector, academic institutions and such other bodies or institutions as the Commission considers appropriate." The NCST is the National Focal Point for Biosafety and Biotechnology. As part of the agreement under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Jamaica also established a clearinghouse where information on the protocol could be accessed. This clearinghouse resides with the Institute of Jamaica. As established by the Cartagena Protocol, a competent authority is required to lead the administrative framework of the legislation. The Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) was selected to manage this area.

b) APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS: Post is not aware of any lists identifying GE plants or crops which are registered for trading or local production.

c) STACKED OR PYRAMIDED EVENT APPROVALS: No additional approval is required from the Government of Jamaica for stacked or pyramid events.

d) FIELD TESTING: Jamaica allows field-testing of GE crops. Any such research is monitored by a National Biosafety Committee, established for this purpose. While there are several draft laws that could impact biosafety regulation, The Plants (Importation) Control regulations (1997) under the Plants Quarantine Act of 1994 is the only legal instrument currently in effect that directly addresses the issues of biosafety. This was enacted in 1997 and amended in 2005. Under guidelines, the National Biosafety Committee is empowered to monitor the importation of any GE plant, seed, cutting or slip, which has been imported into Jamaica for the purpose of research.

e) INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES: N/A

f) COEXISTENCE: N/A

g) LABELING: Jamaica does not have a labeling requirement for GE products/ingredients. Labeling standards in Jamaica are based on the guidelines of the CODEX standards.

h) MONITORING AND TESTING: There is no monitoring and testing for GE traits in imported products.

i) LOW LEVEL PRESENCE (LLP) POLICY: Currently, there is no LLP policy in Jamaica.

j) ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS: None

k) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR): N/A

l) CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION: Jamaica ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) to the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity on September 25, 2012. The Protocol came into force on December 24, 2012.

m) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FORA: Jamaican officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry, Investment, Commerce and Health participate in international standard setting bodies such as:

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)
- The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex)
- The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
- The WTO Agreement on Trade Related-Aspects of International Property Rights (TRIPS)
- The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

RELATED ISSUES: N/A

PART C: MARKETING

a) Public/Private Opinions:

Post has not identified any active organizations or groups that are lobbying for or against the use of GE products in Jamaica.

b) Market Acceptance/Studies:

Presently there are some concerns regarding the marketing of GE products in Jamaica. A study conducted by Abdulkadri, Pinnock and Tennant (2007) indicated that while Jamaicans are knowledgeable about products of agricultural biotechnology, they are concerned about the safety of these products and many recommend that GE products are clearly labelled.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

Jamaica does not conduct research related to GE animals or use GE animals for food production.

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: N/A

b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: N/A

c) EXPORTS: N/A

d) IMPORTS: N/A

E) TRADE BARRIERS: N/A

PART E: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: N/A

b) INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES: N/A

c) LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A

PART F: MARKETING

Public/Private Opinions: N/A

Market Acceptance/Studies: N/A

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: N/A

b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: N/A

c) EXPORTS: N/A

d) IMPORTS: N/A

e) TRADE BARRIERS: N/A

PART H: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: N/A

b) INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES: N/A

c) LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A

PART I: MARKETING

b) Public/Private Opinions: N/A

c) Market Acceptance/Studies: N/A

Attachments:

No Attachments