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Denmark

Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

Standing Biotech Report for Denmark

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Report Highlights:

This report provides an overview of the situation for genetically engineered products with regard to regulation, policy, and the marketing environment in Denmark. For information on the general EU situation, please refer to the USEU Agricultural Biotechnology Report.

Section I. Executive Summary:

As a member of the European Union (EU), Denmark fully applies EU regulations regarding approvals, traceability and labeling of genetically modified (GM) products.

While GM feed (soy) is widely used in Denmark, there are no GM food products available in Danish retail stores. This is probably due to concerns over the possibility of negative consumer reactions.

Section II. Plant Biotechnology Trade and Production:

There is no commercial cultivation of biotech crops in Denmark. Nevertheless, the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries has set up a system for registration of biotech crop fields for commercial cultivation. In the event of future cultivation, the positions of the fields will be disclosed for the public on the web site of the Danish Plant Directorate (link:

http://gmomark.pdir.dk

The Danish meat industry has long been using GM feed in its animal production. Especially GM soybean products are an important source of protein for pigs, poultry and cattle. Denmark imports most of its soybean meal from Argentina (70%) where the cultivation of GM soybeans is widespread.

Section III. Plant Biotechnology Policy:

Regulatory Framework

As an EU member, Denmark applies EU regulations to biotechnology. For information on EU regulations, please refer to the USEU Agricultural Biotechnology Report.

Responsibility for the monitoring and enforcement of laws and regulations on biotech in Denmark is divided between the Family and Consumer Affairs, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of the Environment. The Plant Directorate, under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, controls the traceability and labeling regulations for feed, while the regulations for food are controlled by the Veterinary and Food Administration under the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under the Ministry of the Environment, is involved in the approval process for cultivation of GM crops.

The Danish government recognizes the potential advantages of biotechnology and believes it is crucial that Denmark invest in biotech research to take advantage of the technology and maintain the competitive position of Danish companies. It also believes that it is of great importance that any new legislation imposed by the EU work in practice and is compatible with WTO agreements. The Danish position on approvals of individual GMO applications is decided by the "European Committee" of the Danish Parliament. In general, the Danish position is decided case-by-case. An exemption is the approval of GMO's containing antibiotic resistance markers where Denmark as a principle always votes against.

Approved Biotech Crops

Please refer to the USEU Agricultural Biotechnology Report.

Field Testing of Biotech Crops

Danish agricultural researchers are conducting biotech field research at research stations. These include biotech wheat and barley with improved digestibility for animals. Also, Danish companies have been developing genetically engineered rapeseeds, beets and grass seeds in Canada, China and Sweden.

Field trials of GM plant are registered by the Ministry of Environment. Information on the trials is disclosed on a web page from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Table 1. Field Trials with Genetically Modified Plants in Denmark 2011

Crop	Genetic modification	Area (ha)	Permit owner
Sugar cane	Glyphosate-resistance	2	Monsanto
Corn NK603	Glyphosate-resistance	8	Monsanto
Corn GA21	Glyphosate-resistance	2	Syngenta

Co-existence

Denmark was the first EU member state to impose coexistence rules. In June 2004, the Danish parliament passed legislation on coexistence between biotechnology and non-biotechnology crops (including organic agriculture). The act was implemented in 2005. Under the law (Law No. 436 of June 9, 2004 on the cultivation of genetic modified crops), growers of GM crops are responsible for maintaining the proper distances vis-à-vis conventional or organic producers. Producers of conventional or organic crops who believe their production has been damaged by genetic drift from a GM field may apply to

the government for compensation, provided they have a minimum loss of DKK 5,000 (about USD 890). Compensation will be financed by a fund, partly based on taxes paid by farmers and partly by a tax of DKK 60 (about USD 11) per hectare on GM crop plantings.

The Danish government is currently reviewing the coexistence legislation. An update might be made to reflect newest research.

Labeling

Please refer to the USEU Agricultural Biotechnology Report.

Biosafety Protocol

Please refer to the USEU Agricultural Biotechnology Report.

Biotech-related Trade Barriers

Please refer to the USEU Agricultural Biotechnology Report.

Section IV. Plant Biotechnology Marketing Issues:

The Danish meat industry has long been using GM feed in its animal production. Especially GM soybean products are an important source of protein for pigs, poultry and cattle. Denmark imports most of its soybean meal from Argentina (70%) where the cultivation of GM soybeans is widespread. In 2010, Denmark imported about 1.6 million tons of soybean meal valued at USD 650 million. Less than 2% originated in the US.

The food processing and retail sectors remain concerned about the possibility of negative consumer reaction and anti-biotech demonstrations.

Section VI. Animal Biotechnology:

Development and Use:

Genetic engineering for the development of farm animals is not being used in Denmark. However, transgenic pigs have been developed at Aarhus University to be used in research on Alzheimer's disease. The pigs have been genetically modified to function as animal models for Alzheimer's disease. Thereafter the pigs are cloned with the use of these somatic cells.

Regulation:

Denmark was the first EU member state to issue legislation on cloning and genetic modification of animals in 2005. The legislation allows genetic modification of animals for the purposes of research on improving human health on certain conditions.

Stakeholder/Public Opinion:

The use of genetic engineering of animals for use in agriculture would most likely not be supported by the public in Denmark. The use of animals for medical research aimed at finding cures for diseases is found more acceptable.

International Organizations:

Denmark is an active member in OIE and Codex. The GE animal issue has so far not been one of Denmark's areas of interest in these organizations.