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Report Name: Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

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Report Highlights:

U.S. agricultural exports to Jamaica in 2022 totaled approximately $636 million, making the United States a key trading partner for the Caribbean nation. Currently, Jamaica imports some genetically engineered (GE) livestock feed inputs and intermediate foods from the United States.

Executive Summary

In 2020, Jamaica established a Biosafety Policy to develop regulations that guide how biosafety is applied and how products of biotechnology are traded with other partner countries. The Cartagena Protocol influences the biosafety regulations in Jamaica. The Protocol addresses 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.

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CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: The Biotechnology Centre at the University of the West Indies (UWI) conducted experiments in crop production using genetic engineering. This research produced a transgenic variety of papaya (*Carica papaya*), which is resistant to the Papaya Ringspot virus. The developed variety of papaya is not approved for distribution or commercial production. Post is unaware of any other biotech crops that were produced or are currently under development through research in Jamaica.

b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: Currently genetically engineered (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 wheat, corn, soybean, 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:

Legal Term	**Laws and Regulations where term is used**	**Legal Definition**
Living Modified Organism (LMO)	• Biosafety Policy (2020)	Any living organism that possesses a novel combination of genetic material obtained through modern biotechnology.
Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)		
Genetically Modified (GM)		Molecular-level techniques used to move genetic material from the cells of one organism to those of another
Genetic Engineering		The selective, deliberate alteration of genes (genetic material) by man.

In 2020, Jamaica enacted legislation (Biosafety Policy) that governs the use of modern biotechnology and its products. Although, the legislation is in place, Post is unaware of any specific regulations that affect the importation of GE products 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. The biosafety policy currently mandates the compulsory labeling of genetically engineered products.

Biosafety regulatory responsibility spans several Jamaican ministries and government agencies. Current laws affecting biotechnology regulation include but are not limited to the following: 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 drafted a 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."

Other legislation that addresses the use of biotechnology is the National Commission on Science and Technology Act (NCST). The Jamaican Parliament passed the Act in 2007 and it outlined 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.

Additionally, the Biosafety Policy outlines that the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) has been designated as one of the four competent authorities, which includes the ministry responsible for the environment and the ministry responsible for agriculture. These competent authorities are established for different types of "LMOs" and for executing the administrative functions required by the Cartagena Protocol. Under the Biosafety Policy, a National Biosafety Committee determines any proposed releases to the environment. All final decisions will be posted on a biosafety clearinghouse which is hosted at the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ).

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 the NBC, which was established for this purpose. While the biosafety policy regulates how biotechnology is utilized in Jamaica, another law that affects the impact of biosafety in the environment is the Plants (Importation) Control regulations (1997) under the Plants Quarantine Act of 1994. This legal instrument was enacted in 1997 and amended in 2005 and directly addresses the issues of biosafety. Under guidelines, the NBC 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 AND TRACEABILITY: Jamaica does not have a specific labeling requirement for GE products/ingredients. However, the 2020 Biosafety policy states that local standards for the labelling of "LMOs" must be developed in keeping with the relevant international rules and standards. Labeling standards in Jamaica are based on the guidelines of the CODEX standards.

h) MONITORING AND TESTING: Currently, 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/FORUMS: 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 (WOAH)

n) 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: The most recent study on public perception of GE food in Jamaica that Post is aware of was conducted in 2007 by Abdulkadri, Pinnock and Tennant. The study indicated that although Jamaicans are knowledgeable about products of agricultural biotechnology, they are concerned about the safety of these products, and many supported mandatory labeling for these products.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: Jamaica does not conduct research related to GE animals or use GE animals for food production.

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) APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS: N/A

c) INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES: N/A

d) LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A

e) ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS: N/A

f) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: N/A

g) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND FORUMS: *See Chapter 1 part b sub-paragraph 'm'*

h) RELATED ISSUES: N/A

PART F: MARKETING

a) PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS: N/A

b) MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES: N/A

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: Some conventional microbial fermentation techniques are utilized in food production in Jamaica. Products including alcoholic beverages, breads, and dairy

products such as cheese and yogurt are produced using fermentation and bacterial cultures. Post is not aware of any commercial production of genetically engineered microorganisms for use in the food industry. However, products utilizing conventional microbial fermentation are used to produce alcoholic beverages, bread, and cheese on a commercial basis.

b) EXPORTS: Cheese and alcoholic beverages that are produced using conventional microbial fermentation methods are exported. The cheese that is produced in Jamaica is a favorite of the locals and popular in the Jamaican diaspora across the world.

c) IMPORTS: Jamaica imports food ingredients such as enzymes and additives for different food processing activities, as well as processed foods containing these ingredients. However, the volume or value of these imports, and whether the products are derived from microbial biotechnology could not be determined.

d) TRADE BARRIERS: N/A

PART H: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:N/A

b) APPROVALS AND AUTHORIZATIONS: N/A

c) LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A

d) MONITORING AND TESTING: N/A

e) ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS: N/A

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

g) RELATED ISSUES: N/A

PART I: MARKETING

a) PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS: N/A

b) MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES: N/A

Attachments:

No Attachments