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Report Highlights:

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) 2009 “Law on Genetically Modified Organisms” (GMOs) and associated bylaws authorize the import of genetically engineered (GE) products. To date, the only GE product approved for import is soybean meal for feed. BiH’s anti-GE border practices, which include random testing, can occasionally influence commercial imports of grains. Knowledge about agricultural biotechnology remains limited in BiH, even among scientists and agricultural officials. As a result, BiH follows European Union biotech policies and scientific opinions.

Executive Summary

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) imports approximately two-thirds of its overall food needs. Agri-food imports in 2023 totaled \$2.6 billion with exports valuing \$592 million. Principal trading partners are neighboring countries such as Serbia and the European Union (EU).

In 2023, total U.S. agri-food exports to BiH were \$17 million and consisted of various food preparations, tree nuts (almonds, pistachios, and walnuts), whiskey, frozen hake, and peanuts. Due to limited information and understanding of agricultural biotechnology, BiH consumers have reservations on the safety of U.S. food products.

Currently, soybean meal is the only GE product permitted for import. No GE crops are cultivated in BiH. A regulation outlining the process for approving GE field trials and cultivation is absent from the legislation.

BiH has no trade in GE animals, livestock clones, or related products. No GE animals or cloned animals are being developed in BiH for agricultural livestock production.

In general, GE products are viewed as undesirable in BiH. The anti-GE position of many EU Member States has influenced both regulators and consumers. Additionally, both the government and farmers promote organic production as an important driver of BiH's economy. In BiH, traditional agricultural production practices dominate, and the use of agrochemicals is generally lower than elsewhere in Europe due to cost. Many agricultural policy makers believe the country's export markets, especially its organic export markets, would be threatened if GE production were allowed.

No changes in BiH policy or position on agricultural biotechnology are expected for the upcoming year.

For more information on BiH laws and regulations please see the latest [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Annual](#) and [FAIRS Export Certificate](#) reports.

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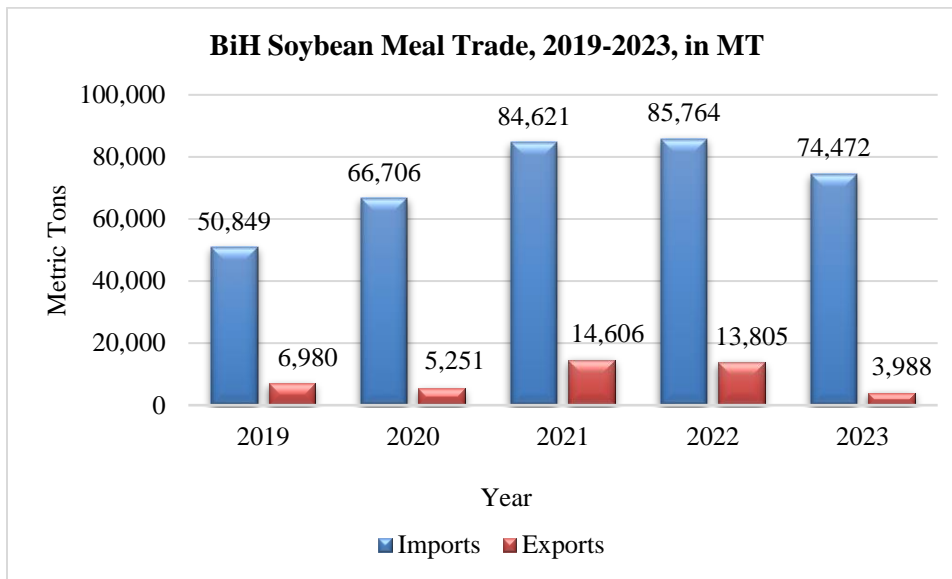
CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

- a) RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: BiH does not produce GE crops, and there are no GE crops being researched.
- b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: There is no commercial production of GE plants in BiH.
- c) EXPORTS: BiH does not export GE plants or plant products.
- d) IMPORTS: Genetically engineered products may be imported must first be reviewed and approved by the Food Safety Agency (FSA).

Importers must seek authorization from the FSA by submitting basic documentation for GE products that have been reviewed and approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Importers must then obtain a formal permit from the FSA. To date, BiH's FSA has issued 95 approvals for placing GE soybeans on the market for animal feed use.

In 2023, BiH imported 74,472 metric tons (MT) of GE soybean meal and produced 26,000 MT of non-GE soybeans. Brazil was the main supplier with over 90 percent of the total imported quantity. Production of soybeans has doubled over the last ten years because of BiH's active participation in the Danube Soya Initiative, an international non-profit association that promotes sustained GE-free soybean cultivation in Europe, and the subsidies provided by the agricultural ministries to soybean producers.



Source: BiH Agency for Statistics

BiH does not import GE seeds as there is no legislation permitting biotech cultivation.

e) FOOD AID: BiH is neither a food aid recipient nor a donor.

TRADE BARRIERS: Food imports from the United States are limited; however, if trade volume were to increase so would the likelihood of import inspection and testing.

PART B: POLICY

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: Following a 2004 BiH food law that placed a five-year moratorium on GE products a new “Law on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)” was adopted in 2009. This law, mirroring EU regulations, permitted the licensed use of GE products. In August 2015, BiH’s Food Safety Agency issued the first permits for import and marketing of GE feed.

Official laws regulating agricultural biotechnology are the Food Law (BiH Official Gazette # 50/04) and “Genetically Modified Organisms” (BiH Official Gazette #23/09). The law on “Genetically Modified Organisms” is the overarching policy governing biotechnology in BiH. This law establishes conditions for limited use, importation, deliberate release into environment, and marketing of plant products that are composed of “GMOs,” contain “GMOs,” or are derived from “GMOs.”

The Food Safety Agency (FSA) is the national umbrella agency and coordinating body for all agricultural biotechnology issues. In addition to the FSA, other responsible agencies include the national State Veterinary Office (SVO), the national Plant Health Administration (PHA), and the entity-level and canton-level ministries of agriculture, science, health, and environment. BiH has two entities, the Federation and the Republika Srpska (RS), and the Brcko District as a special

administrative unit. The Federation is further divided into ten cantons. The entities, the district, and the cantons each have separate ministries or departments for these issues.

FSA is responsible for placing GE food and feed on the market. PHA is responsible for approving GE seeds and seedlings and plant protection chemicals; however, this process is run in conjunction with canton and Brcko District agricultural authorities.

The SVO is responsible for approving veterinary medicines and genetic material produced through GE.

The ministries of agriculture, science, health, and environment are responsible for regulating the safeguarded use of “GMOs” or the deliberate release of “GMOs” into environment; however, most of the implementing regulations are yet to be drafted.

The ministries of health are responsible for approving cosmetics and pharmaceutical products containing “GMOs.” The entity and cantonal inspectorates and the Brcko District inspection department are responsible for checking proper labeling of GE products placed on the market.

The “Law on GMOs” (available in local language only) sets general guidelines for the issuance of “GMO” permits. The following bylaws further regulate this area (available in local language only):

- The Bylaw on the Conditions and Procedure for Issuance of Approvals for Placing “GMO” Food and Feed on the BiH Market for the First Time and the Conditions Regarding their Traceability and Labeling
- The Bylaw on the Content of the Application and the Technical Documentation for Placing on the Market, and the Conditions for Labeling and Packaging of “GMOs” or Products that Contain or are Derive from “GMOs”
- The Bylaw on the Methods for Maintenance of a Common Register for “GMOs”
- The Bylaw on the Establishment of a System for the Development and Assignment of Unique Codes for “GMOs”
- The Bylaw on the Content and Scope of the Risk Assessment for Placing “GMOs” or Products that Contain or are Derive from “GMOs” on the Market and the Methodology for a Risk Assessment
- The Bylaw on Conditions of Monitoring the Environmental Impact of “GMOs” or Products Containing and/or Consisting of or Originating from “GMOs.”

The above-mentioned bylaws were harmonized with EU regulations and directives at the time of adoption (2012-2014).

In September 2022, the Federation’s Ministry of Education and Science prescribed the “Bylaw on Safety Measures and Standards in Facilities for Contained use of GMOs in a Controlled Closed System” (FBiH Official Gazette #72/2022), which is based on the EU Directive 2009/41/EC on the Contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms (“GMMOs”). This regulation sets conditions for restricted use of “GMOs” and standards in facilities, equipment, mode of operation, and method of storing and destroying solid and liquid waste for its contained

use. Standards in facilities are determined in Tables 1A for laboratories, 1B for greenhouses and chambers for growing, 1C for animals breeding, and Table 2 for protective measures for other activities in handling “GMOs.”

This bylaw was accompanied by three additional rulebooks:

- The Rulebook on the content of the request for contained use of “GMOs” for groups 2,3, and 4
- The Rulebook on the content of application for controlled closed system for contained use of “GMOs”
- The Rulebook on the content, scope, and methodology of the risk assessment for contained use of “GMOs” in controlled closed systems.

FSA will process all permits in cooperation with the “GMO” Council and other responsible institutions. A risk assessment is required along with the request to import or place a GE food or feed product on the BiH market. Only legal entities authorized by the Council of Ministers, on the proposal of the FSA, can undertake a risk assessment. The responsible authority prescribes the content and scope of the risk assessment, the assessment methodology, as well as the conditions to be met by a legal entity for the development of risk assessment. According to the “Law on GMOs,” issuance of permits can take from 90-105 days.

The “Law on GMOs” established a GMO Council to assist the responsible BiH institutions with enforcement. The “GMO” Council is a public independent body with a four-year mandate consisting of seven members from the fields of microbiology, genetics, medicine, biochemistry, molecular biology, pharmacology, biotechnology, agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, environmental protection, and occupational protection. The main tasks of the “GMO” Council are: to advise on GE usage in terms of legal procedures as outlined by the “Law on GMOs;” to give opinions and proposals on draft legislation on “GMO” use; to provide opinions and proposals to responsible ministries on GE use issues and other expert work as outlined by the law on “GMOs” and related regulations; to follow gene technology developments and use; to follow scientific progress in this area; to advise on social, ethical, technical, scientific and other conditions for “GMO” use; and to inform the public using media and professional forums on the status of gene technology developments and use. The “GMO” Council publicly reports annually to the FSA and to the Council of Ministers.

BiH consists of two entities, the Federation and the Republika Srpska, and the Brcko District. While BiH “Law on GMOs” permits the licensed use of GE products, the Republika Srpska’s “Law on GMOs” (RS Official Gazette #103/2008) strictly prohibits the import, use, and introduction into the environment of “GMOs.”

Legal term (in official language)	Legal Term (in English)	Laws and Regulations where term is used	Legal Definition (in English)
Genetski modificirani organizmi (“GMOs”)	Genetically Modified Organisms (“GMOs”)	BiH Food Law (BiH OG # 50/2004) BiH “Law on GMOs” (BiH OG # 23/2009)	“GMO” is an organism, apart from the human species, whose hereditary material has been deliberately altered in such a way that it could not have been achieved naturally by reproduction and/or by natural recombination.
Proizvod od “GMO-a”	Product of “GMO”	BiH “Law on GMOs” (BiH OG # 23/2009)	Product that is produced or contains one or more “GMOs”, regardless of the degree of its processing, which is intended for the market.
Modificirani zivi organizam	Living Modified Organism (LMO)	BiH “Law on GMOs” (BiH OG # 23/2009)	Any “GMO” capable of reproduction or transfer of genetic material, including sterile organisms capable of growth.

b) **APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS:** The FSA of BiH has approved MON-Ø4Ø32-6 GE, MON-89788-1, MON-87751-7, MON- 877Ø1-2, DAS-444Ø 6-6, ACS GMØØ6-4, DAS-81419-2, and MON- 877Ø8-9 soybeans for import for animal feed. No GE seeds or planting material have been approved for cultivation or for confined field trials.

c) **STACKED OR PYRAMIDED EVENT APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS:** BiH’s existing regulations do not have any special provisions to deal with stacked events. The GMO Council has yet to discuss this issue.

d) **FIELD TESTING:** There are no field tests of GE plants being conducted. The 2009 “Law on GMOs” established the general guidelines to allow for the intentional release of GE products into the environment and field trials, under license, but the detailed regulations on licensing are omitted.

In 2016, the University of Sarajevo/Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science (FAFS) began the process of seeking permission to conduct field trials of a GE plum (the ‘HoneySweet’ plum which is resistant to the plum pox virus asking for clarification on the application procedure. The GMO Council concluded that the plum field trial represented a deliberate GMO introduction into

the environment, and therefore the competent authorities should draft and adopted a clear procedure for submitting a request for the deliberate introduction of GMOs into the environment. The Council also concluded that the GMO control system at all levels in BiH was not functional and recommend the competent authorities should amend and harmonize BiH's legislation with the latest EU legislation.

e) **INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES:** The country has not determined the regulatory status of innovative biotechnologies at this time.

f) **COEXISTANCE:** The "Law on GMOs" forbids planting of crops derived from modern biotechnology in nature-protected areas, ecological areas, areas for organic agricultural production or eco-tourism, and in protected areas (i.e., defined as registered protected impact zones). In addition, GE crop planting for reproduction is allowed only in areas that are approved by the Council of Ministers based on FSA's recommendations. In cases where the Law on "GMOs" cannot be applied, the Food Law and associated bylaws will apply.

g) **LABELING AND TRACEABILITY:** The "Law on GMOs" states food products that contain or are composed of "GMOs" must be labeled as follows:

- For individually packaged products the label on the packaging should read: "This product contains 'GMO' components" or "This product contains genetically modified (name of organism)."

- For bulk packaged products the label should read "This product contains 'GMO' components" or "This product contains genetically modified (name of organism)" and should be placed directly on the product or near the product (as it is being sold).

The labeling threshold is set at 0.9 percent, meaning that products containing approved GE events at levels above 0.9 percent, per ingredient, of the product must be labeled.

The Law on Seeds and Seedlings (BiH Official Gazette # 3/05) only mentions that GE seeds and seedlings must be labeled.

In 2017, FSA adopted a voluntary standard for "GMO-Free" foodstuff and issued guidelines for production and labeling of foodstuff produced without GMOs. Plant or animal origin products that will be labeled as "GMO-free" must be produced using raw materials and additives that are not GE, nor derived from GE products. Compliance checks with the "GMO-free" label will be carried out according to the guidelines for the control of production of "GMO-free" products, which uses a risk-based model. So far, table eggs and vegetable oils are the only products certified as "GMO-free." BiH created its standard within the framework of the "Danube Soya Initiative" and with the support of the Austrian Federal Environment Agency and German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ).

h) **MONITORING AND TESTING:** The following two laboratories have been authorized to perform GE testing:

- The “GMO” Laboratory of the Federation Agro-Mediterranean Institute in Mostar
- The “GMO” Laboratory of the Federation Agricultural Institute in Sarajevo.

The laboratories can use Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) technology to detect the presence of GE events and percentage of GE material found in the food and feed samples. The Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Regioni Lazio e Toscana in Italy is currently the designated reference laboratory for GE testing.

i) **LOW LEVEL PRESENCE (LLP) POLICY:** BiH has no LLP policy. The “GMO” Council has stated that BiH’s regulation is currently harmonized with the EU regulation and that BiH will keep following the EU guidelines on this subject in the future. The EU does not have an LLP policy. It has a “technical solution” that defines zero as outlined in EU Regulation 619/2011. This regulation lays down the methods of sampling and analysis of official control of feed regarding the presence of GE products for which an authorization procedure is pending or the authorization has expired. Feed coming from countries that cultivate “GMOs” for which the EU authorization procedure is pending may have traces of unauthorized “GMOs” in imported commodities and therefore may face economic risks. The regulation harmonizes rules for controls and sets out a technical zero at the level of 0.1 percent as the “Minimum Required Performance Limit (MRPL).” This is the lowest level of GE material, which is considered by the EU-Reference Laboratory (EU RL) for the validation of quantitative methods.

j) **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** Seeds can be imported only if the varieties are recognized in the country. The National List of Recognized Varieties is available at the Plant Health Administration or online: [BiH Variety List](#) (in local language only). If a variety is not on the list, importers must request recognition from the Seeds Commission.

k) **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR):** Domestic and foreign applications must be submitted to the BiH Institute for Intellectual Property.

In 2010, BiH adopted and put into force a new IPR framework that consists of seven laws. This legislation is compliant with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of IPR (TRIPS) and EU regulations and includes laws on copyrights, patents, trademarks, geographical indications, and the topography of integrated circuits. Although existing legislation provides a basic level of protection, stronger enforcement is sought. Jurisdiction over IPR investigations is split between customs officials, entity inspectorates, and state and entity law enforcement agencies, and no institution has specialized IPR investigation teams. IPR crimes are prosecuted primarily at the state level. According to research done by the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service, intellectual property rights (IPR) are often inadequately enforced and intellectual property, patents, copyrights, and trademarks inadequately protected. For additional information, please see WIPO’s country profiles at www.wipo.int/directory/en/.

l) **CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION:** BiH is party to the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol. It was ratified on October 1, 2009, and it entered into force on December 31, 2009. The country’s necessary legal, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the Protocol are partially in place, and a mechanism for budgetary allocations for operating its national biosafety framework is missing. Detection and identification of living modified

organisms are done to some extent, but there is a lack of proper risk assessment and risk management, as well as information exchange and data management. There is no mechanism to address emergency measures in case of unintentional trans-boundary movements, and public awareness and education on biosafety are missing.

m) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND FORUMS: The country does not actively participate in discussions related to GE plants within the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) or the Codex Alimentarius (Codex). BiH has been also a member of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).

n) RELATED ISSUES: No additional information.

PART C: MARKETING

a) PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS: Knowledge about agricultural biotechnology is inadequate, even among scientists and agricultural officials. Additionally, the level of biotechnology acceptance by BiH consumers has decreased over the last decade due to reporting on EU attitudes and the anti-GE views held by neighboring countries, such as Croatia and Serbia. Occasionally, media and consumer associations criticize BiH authorities for not having better controls of imported foods with GE content and for approving the import of GE commodities.

BiH organic food producers and non-governmental organizations are vocal opponents of biotechnology and have influenced consumers and regulators to reject GE products. BiH currently has over 50 certified organic producers that it can export to the EU market (BiH standard equivalent to reg. (EC) No 834/2007). The single BiH certification body, "Organic Control" (OK), mainly certifies wild berries, medicinal herbs, raspberries and greenhouse-produced peppers and tomatoes. Essential oils, jams and juices are also certified organic, as well as the Bosnian traditional flat bread "somun." The value of organic products export is estimated at \$5 million and local experts believe organic products have great export potential.

b) MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES: There are no in-depth studies on the market acceptance of GE products for producers, importers, retailers, and consumers.

The most recent survey from 2017 "Public opinion toward GMOs and biotechnology in Bosnia and Herzegovina" undertaken by a group of authors (L. Bevanda et al., 2017) showed that although respondents (734) were mainly familiar with the term "GMO" most of them were not satisfied with their knowledge and availability of information on biotechnology. Most respondents (74 percent) would refrain from consuming GE food. However, respondents who were students of life, medical, and other related sciences pointed out that their opinion towards these products would change after learning about potential benefits of GE during their study. Respondents indicated a need for GE food and other "GM" products to be labeled in detail, to help inform their buying decisions. Participants showed slightly more positive opinion about the

use of biotechnology in medicine and pharmacy. The authors concluded that there was a significant need to increase the level of knowledge on biotech issues among citizens of BiH.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

Animal genetic engineering and genome editing result in the modification of an animal's DNA to introduce new traits and change one or more characteristics of the animal.

Animal cloning is an assisted reproductive technology and does not modify the animal's DNA. Cloning is often used with high-value animals to further spread high-merit genetics within an animal population. For this reason, genetically engineered or genome edited animals may be cloned—but it is a separate, distinct procedure that does not change the animal's genome. Cloning is included in this report both because it can be regulated in and of itself, or in conjunction with biotechnology regulations. Cloning regulations often cover both cloned animals themselves and their descendants.

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

- a) **RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** Genetic engineering and cloning are not being researched and developed in BiH to produce agricultural animals.
- b) **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** The livestock sector in BiH is not actively employing the use of GE animals or products derived from GE animals or clones. The country does not use animal biotechnologies to produce animals for biomedical purposes.
- c) **EXPORTS:** BiH does not export GE animals, livestock clones, or products from these animals.
- d) **IMPORTS:** BiH does not import GE animals, livestock clones or products from these animals, although it is unknown whether any imported genetic material was produced with modern biotechnology techniques or originated from clones or from the offspring of clones.
- e) **TRADE BARRIERS:** No additional information.

PART E: POLICY

- a) **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:** BiH has no laws or regulations relating to the development, commercial use, import, and/or disposal of GE animals and clones, or products derived from these animals, and currently there are no plans to draft such regulations. The “Law on GMOs” does not apply to animals.

The relevant government entities that likely would have a role in the regulation of GE animals are the State Veterinary Office, the Food Safety Agency, and the entity agricultural ministries. There have been no active discussions about these products or by-products.

- b) **APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS:** No approvals have been granted for these products.

c) **INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES:** The country has not determined the regulatory status of innovative biotechnologies in this area.

d) **LABELING AND TRACEABILITY:** There is no policy on labeling and traceability of GE animals and their products, and clones.

e) **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** As BiH is harmonizing its regulation with the EU regulation, the country will continue to follow EU guidelines in this area.

f) **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR):** The country is not considering legislation to address IPR for animal biotechnologies.

g) **INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND FORUMS:** The country does not actively participate in discussions related to GE animals and clones within Codex and the World Organization for Animal Health.

h) **RELATED ISSUES:** No additional information.

PART F: MARKETING

a) **PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS:** There have been no public campaigns and limited media reports on this topic in BiH.

b) **MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES:** There is little awareness of GE animals or cloning in BiH. The market acceptance of GE animals and clones for producers, importers, retailers, and consumers is unknown. There are no specific marketing studies regarding GE animals and/or cloning use or acceptance.

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** The country does not commercially produce food ingredients derived from microbial biotechnology.

b) **EXPORTS:** There are no official statistics or estimates on exports of microbial biotechnology products. However, BiH exports alcoholic beverages, dairy products, and processed products that may contain microbial biotech-derived food ingredients.

c) **IMPORTS:** There are no official statistics or estimates on imports of microbial biotechnology products. BiH imports microbial biotech-derived food ingredients, such as enzymes that are traditionally used in alcoholic beverages, dairy products, and processed products. Likewise, BiH imports alcoholic beverages, dairy products, and processed products that may contain microbial biotech-derived food ingredients.

d) **TRADE BARRIERS:** There are no known trade barriers that may negatively affect U.S. exports of microbial biotech-derived food ingredients or processed food products containing microbial biotech-derived food ingredients.

PART H: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:

There is no regulation that covers commercial production and/or import of biotech-derived microbes or microbial biotech-derived food ingredients. It is expected that the country will continue to follow EU policies in this area.

b) **APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS:** There are no biotech microbes and/or derived food ingredients approved or registered for use in the country or for import, and export.

c) **LABELING AND TRACEABILITY:** There are no policies on the traceability and labeling of microbial biotech-derived food ingredients.

d) **MONITORING AND TESTING:** The country does not actively test for evidence of microbial biotechnology in imports and exports of processed products.

e) **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** There are no additional microbial biotech-related regulatory barriers that negatively affect U.S. exports.

f) **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR):** To date there are no IPR issues related to microbial biotech.

g) **RELATED ISSUES:** No related issues.

PART I: MARKETING

a) **PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS:** There is limited public awareness about use of microbial biotech. Public sentiment towards industries or research institutions using microbial biotech for food ingredients or nutritional purposes is unknown.

b) **MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES:** There is no information available on the market acceptance issues/studies relating to the sale and use of microbial biotech and/or derived food ingredients thereof for producers, importers, retailers, and consumers.

Attachments:

No Attachments