

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Philippines Approved Bt Eggplant for Commercial Cultivation

Country: Philippines

Post: Manila

Report Category: Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies, Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies Addendum, Biotechnology - Plants and Animals, Cloning

Prepared By: Florence Mojica-Sevilla

Approved By: Mark Hanzel

Report Highlights:

On October 18, 2022, The Government of the Philippines marked Bt eggplant as its third genetically engineered crop approved for commercial propagation, following Bt corn and Golden Rice. Bt eggplant's approval followed regulatory procedures as detailed in the revised Joint Department Circular, which showed proof of the Philippines commitment to science and improvements in biotechnology as a tool to advance Sustainable Development Goal number 2.

After almost two decades, Bt Eggplant was finally issued a biosafety permit for commercial propagation. The timeline of events follows:

- October 18, 2022 – biosafety [permit for commercial propagation](#) issued
- July 21, 2021 – biosafety [permit for direct use for food, feed, or processing](#) issued
- 2010-2012 – multi-locational trials conducted
- 2008-2008 – limited confined field trial conducted
- 2004-2007 – contained laboratory and greenhouse trial conducted

See previous [Biotechnology Annual](#) for more information.

Approval Follows Science-based Regulatory Process

Pursuant to the revised [Joint Department Circular \(JDC\) No. 1](#), Series of 2021, the Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI) approved the commercial cultivation of borer-resistant Bt eggplant (Event EE-1). Following the JDC regulatory process, the Joint Assessment Group comprised of representatives from Competent National Authorities-Biosafety Committees, conducted strict and comprehensive biosafety evaluations, and the certification of the Event EE-1 as a Plant Incorporated Protectant (Group 11A Insecticide) by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority.

Bt eggplant contains a natural protein from the soil bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which makes it resistant to eggplant fruit and shoot borer (EFSB). This Bt protein is targeted to EFSB and is safe for humans, animals, and other non-target insects. Various scientific studies also showed that Bt eggplant is safe for the environment when planted in open fields, and can be an integral component of an Integrated Pest Management program. Reduction on the use of insecticides lowers production costs and provides more income to farmers.

Approval Supports Philippine Sustainable Development Goals

With the approval for commercial cultivation, the Philippines will be better positioned to meet [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 2](#): end hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture. Specifically, Bt eggplant will contribute to the Philippines meeting Targets 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4:

Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by people in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round.

Target 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers . . .

Target 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help main ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change . . .

The University of the Philippines Los Baños-Institute of Plant Breeding, College of Agriculture and Food Science, started the Bt eggplant research in 2003 as a public-private partnership engagement. In support to this project, the United States Agency for international Development (USAID) provided financial assistance to Cornell University through the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II and Feed the Future Eggplant Improvement Project.

Bt Eggplant is the third genetically engineered product approved for cultivation in the Philippines following Bt Corn (2013) and Golden Rice (2021).

Attachments:

No Attachments.