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Report Highlights:

Government to take up marine anti-dumping duty case, *Haryana villagers damage GM rice field in Karnal*, *Rice exporters want GM trails on hold*, *Reliance opens 'Fresh' chapter in Retail*.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
New Delhi [IN1]
[IN]

Welcome to Hot Bites from India, a weekly summary of issues of interest to the U. S. agricultural community. The report includes information that has been garnered during travel within India, reported in the local media, or offered by host country officials and agricultural analysts. Press articles are included and summarized in this report. Significant issues will be expanded upon in subsequent reports from this office. Minor grammatical changes have been made for clarification.

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GOVERNMENT TO TAKE UP MARINE ANTI-DUMPING DUTY CASE

India is seriously considering joining the European Union, Thailand, Brazil, and Japan to challenge the U.S. practice of distorting the concept of zeroing of anti-dumping duty on various marine products, including shrimp. The Commerce Ministry has sought a report from the Marine Products Export Development Authority (the government export promotion agency for marine products) on the issue to address the problem of marine exporters. The imposition of 10.17 percent anti-dumping duty on shrimp exported from India has seriously affected India's exports of shrimp to the U.S. (Business Standard, 10/29/06)

HARYANA VILLAGERS DAMAGE GM RICE FIELD IN KARNAL

In a significant setback for field tests of genetically modified (GM) rice, activists of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) and local farmers have torched a field in Karnal where tests for GM rice were being conducted. The BKU activists alleged that this was done to prevent the GM crop from contaminating the soil and affecting the existing rice varieties. They also alleged that the government guidelines on field trials were being flouted by the Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Ltd (Mahyco), which was conducting the field trials. GM rice field trials are being conducted at locations across seven different states. A senior member of Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) considered the action unwarranted as Mahyco had the approval for contained field trial. (Source: Business Line, 11/01/06)

Post Comments: Mahyco was conducting the field trial of the GM rice that has the Cry 1 Ac gene. Monsanto has licensed the Cry 1 Ac gene to Mahyco, who in turn has incorporated the gene in several crops including rice, egg plant, etc. Mahyco applied to the GEAC for approval of Bt rice and Bt eggplant and has been conducting the requisite experiments and field trials. Mahyco filed a complaint on the damage to its GM field and police have filed case against the BKU activists.

RICE EXPORTERS WANT GM TRIALS ON HOLD

All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA) have joined hands with the BKU against the field trials of GM rice as it may jeopardize India's rice exports. The AIREA has written to the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to stop the GM rice trials so as not to jeopardize India's rice exports worth Rs. 30.3 billion. AIREA stated that their concerns stemmed from the fact that the European Union has zero tolerance for contamination of rice with GM rice. They demanded that the GM field trials should be conducted only after meeting EU regulatory Authorities and arriving at a mutually agreeable tolerance and testing procedures. An official of DBT's Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation stated that the trials were done with sufficient biological and physical isolation measures to prevent any possible contamination to other fields. The EU may keep changing its standards and Indian rice research cannot be held hostage to EU requirements. (Source: Business Line, 11/03/06)

RELIANCE OPENS 'FRESH' CHAPTER IN RETAIL

Reliance Retail unveiled Reliance Fresh, the first of its multi-format retail foray in Hyderabad. Reliance Fresh is the format for neighborhood fresh food outlet that will also sell other edibles. The pilot store also launches its own brand packed staple foods called Reliance Select. These stores with a size ranging from 2000 to 5000 square feet will serve 1000 to 2000 families in a radius of three to four kilometres. Reliance Fresh will sell fresh fruits and vegetables sourced from farmers through the agri-hub being set up all over the country. Besides the fresh food format, Reliance has planned hypermarkets, supermarkets, discount stores, departmental stores, convenience stores and specialty stores to be unveiled shortly. The next stop for Reliance Retail will be in Ahmedabad in December, followed by West Bengal, and Punjab and simultaneous launches in Delhi and Mumbai. (Source: Financial Express 10/30/06)

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IN6098	India: Dairy & Products: Annual Report	10/30/06
IN6099	India: Grain & Feed: Monthly Lockup Report: November	11/01/06

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