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Peru

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Adventitious GM Presence Detected in a Peruvian Corn Field

Report Categories:

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

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Report Highlights:

The Peruvian Agricultural Innovation Institute (i.e., the Ministry of Agriculture's INIA) has confirmed finding adventitious presence of genetically-modified (GM) corn in one corn field in northern Peru. The finding has ignited a debate in Peru on if and how to enforce the biotechnology moratorium.

General Information:

OEFA (i.e., the Peruvian Environmental Oversight Agency) has reportedly detected genetically modified (GM) corn seeds in northern Peru's Lambayeque Region. Reportedly, OEFA found these seeds in a distributor's warehouse but it has not reported the percentage of GM seeds found. OEFA has not reported if the seeds were for planting or feed. FAS Lima has learned that OEFA's samples were taken from seed traders but has no details on the sampling or analysis methods used for this determination.

On January 15, 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Innovation Institute (INIA) reported low-level GM presence in planted corn in the same region. This is the first confirmed detection of a planted, genetically modified crop. INIA inspected 80 corn fields and collected 20 samples in each field. INIA found a stacked TC1507 corn in one out of 1,600 samples (i.e., 0.06%) concluding involuntary presence of the GM seed. This event reportedly results in herbicide tolerance and insect resistance. Peruvian private sector and scientists are reportedly noting that this finding only reinforces the need to implement thresholds for adventitious presence if Peru is going to formally implement the moratorium.

It is unclear what steps, if any, the government will take against the owner of the field where INIA found the GM corn presence. The Peruvian biotechnology moratorium's zero tolerance in planted GM crops makes compliance virtually impossible given adventitious presence in global, conventional seed trade.

This finding has ignited a debate within Peru on if and how to enforce the biotech moratorium, including assessing penalties on producers, sampling techniques and testing methodologies. Overall, the technical parameters for adventitious presence have yet to be fully defined.