



ISAAA
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
FOR THE ACQUISITION
OF AGRI-BIOTECH
APPLICATIONS

For more information, contact:
John Dutcher at (515) 334-3464
or at dutcherj@fleishman.com

Double-Digit Growth Continues for Biotech Crops Worldwide *U.S. biotech crop area up 10 percent*

MANILA, Philippines (Jan. 13, 2004) — For the seventh consecutive year, farmers around the world continued to plant biotech crops at a double-digit pace, with the 2003 total up 15 percent to 167.2 million acres or 67.7 million hectares, according to a report released today by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

The increase includes a provisional conservative estimate of 7.41 million acres or 3 million hectares of biotech soybeans in Brazil, which approved planting of biotech soybeans for the first time in 2003. The final planted area in Brazil could be significantly higher.

The report also stated that 7 million farmers in 18 countries — more than 85 percent resource-poor farmers in the developing world — now plant biotech crops, up from 6 million in 16 countries in 2002. Almost one-third of the global biotech crop area was grown in developing countries, up from one-quarter last year.

“Farmers have made up their minds,” said Clive James, chairman and founder of ISAAA. “They continue to rapidly adopt biotech crops because of significant agronomic, economic, environmental and social advantages.”

The number of countries responsible for 99 percent of the global biotech crop area expanded to six, up from four in 2002, according to the report. Brazil and South Africa joined the United States, Argentina, Canada and China as the leading growers of biotech crops. China and South Africa experienced the greatest annual increase, with both countries planting one-third more biotech hectares than in 2002. The remaining top 10 countries planting more than 50,000 hectares are Australia, India, Romania and Uruguay; another eight countries each plant up to 50,000 hectares of biotech crops.

In the United States, biotech crop acreage grew 10 percent as a result of significant gains in biotech corn area and continued growth in biotech soybeans. A total of 105.7 million acres of soybeans, corn and cotton were grown. Farmer Ray Bardole, who raises more than 600 acres of no-till biotech soybeans on his farm near Rippey, Iowa, says he plants biotech crops because of the economic and environmental advantages they afford.

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“Current biotech crops are to agriculture what the Model T Ford is to modern transportation — we’re only beginning to see the benefits,” Bardole said. “We’re spending one-half to one-third what we used to on weed control, and we’re able to use more techniques like no-till that help us be better stewards of our land.”

Biotech soybeans continue to lead all hectares globally with an increase of nearly 13 percent to 102.2 million acres — 55 percent of soybeans globally. New varieties and country approvals spurred the greatest growth in the area planted to biotech maize, with an increase of 25 percent to a total of 38.3 million acres worldwide — 11 percent of the global maize area. Canola followed with 20 percent growth for a total of 8.9 million acres — 16 percent of canola hectarage globally. Biotech cotton was up approximately 6 percent to a total of 9.7 million acres — 21 percent of the global cotton area.

“Despite the ongoing debate in the European Union, there is cause for cautious optimism that the global area of biotech crops and the number of farmers planting them will continue to grow in 2004 and beyond,” James said.

Within the next five years, ISAAA predicts 10 million farmers in 25 or more countries will plant 100 million hectares or 247,000,000 acres of biotech crops. According to the report, the global market value of biotech crops is expected to increase from approximately \$4.5 billion this year to \$5 billion or more by 2005.

The Executive Summary of the report (ISAAA Briefs 30, by Clive James) can be accessed at www.isaaa.org.

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The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) is a not-for-profit organization with an international network of centers designed to contribute to the alleviation of hunger and poverty by sharing crop biotechnology applications. Clive James, chairman and founder of ISAAA, has lived and worked for the past 25 years in the developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, devoting his efforts to agricultural research and development issues. Lately, his focus is crop biotechnology and global food security.

Note to editors: 1 hectare = 2.47 acres

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Biotech Crop Area by Country

- The United States planted 105.7 million acres of biotech crops, up 10 percent from 2002, and accounted for 63 percent of the global total of biotech crops. The continued growth was a result of significant acreage gains in biotech corn varieties and continued increases in herbicide-tolerant soybeans.
- Argentina contributed 34.3 million acres of biotech crops, 3 percent above 2002 and 21 percent of the global total of biotech crops. *Bt* maize acreage continued to grow, while biotech soybean acreage accounts for nearly 100 percent of the crop.
- Canada grew 10.9 million acres of biotech crops for 6 percent of the global total, up 26 percent from 2002. The high growth rate reflects higher plantings of canola and significant growth in both biotech maize and herbicide-tolerant soybeans.
- Brazil, planting biotech soybeans for the first time, contributed 4 percent of the global total at 7.4 million acres. This is a conservative provisional estimate as only half of the area was planted at the time of this report. The final area could be significantly higher.
- China grew 6.9 million acres of biotech cotton (58 percent of the national cotton crop), an increase of 33 percent above 2002 and 4 percent of the total global area of biotech crops.
- South Africa planted approximately 988,000 acres of biotech crops, up 33 percent from last year and 1 percent of the global total of biotech crops. The increase is from gains in biotech white and yellow maize, cotton and soybeans.
- While biotech crop acreage decreased slightly in Australia due to the continuing drought that resulted in significantly reduced planting overall, farmers still planted approximately 247,000 acres of biotech cotton.
- In its second year of biotech crop production, India doubled *Bt* cotton acreage to about 247,000 acres in 2003.
- Uruguay and Romania reported significant growth in biotech crop acreage. Romania increased biotech soybean hectareage by half to 172,900 acres. Uruguay tripled its biotech soybean acres to 148,200 hectares and commercially planted *Bt* maize for the first time.
- Spain remained the only country in the European Union to plant significant acreage of biotech crops with 79,000 acres of *Bt* maize, an increase of 33 percent from last year.
- Elsewhere in Europe, Germany continued to grow a small area of *Bt* maize, and Bulgaria continued to grow a few thousand acres of herbicide-tolerant maize.
- The Philippines grew biotech crops for the first time in 2003 with nearly 50,000 acres of *Bt* maize — the first biotech food/feed crop to be grown in Asia.
- Reports from Indonesia indicate farmers planted a small area of *Bt* cotton in Sulawesi.
- Colombia expanded its area of *Bt* cotton to about 12,000 acres during its second year of biotech production.
- Honduras expanded its *Bt* maize plantings in 2003 to nearly 5,000 acres from a pre-commercial introductory area of just more than 1,000 acres of *Bt* maize in 2002.
- Mexico grew about 62,000 hectares of *Bt* cotton and approximately 25,000 acres of herbicide-tolerant soybeans.