BIOTECH CROP ANNUAL UPDATES

Alfalfa

Biotech RR® alfalfa was planted in the USA at 1 million hectares, or 13% of the national hectarage of alfalfa of 7.4 million hectares in 2015.

Herbicide tolerant RR® alfalfa was first approved for commercial planting in the USA in 2005. The first pre-commercial plantings (20,000 hectares) were sown in 2005, followed by larger commercial plantings of 60,000 in 2006, approximately 5% of the 1.3 million hectares of alfalfa in 2006.

A court injunction in 2007 suspended further plantings of RR® alfalfa until a new dossier of information was submitted to the regulators for consideration.

Before the injunction came into force, 22,000 hectares of RR® alfalfa were planted, bringing the total area to 102,000 hectares in 2007. After several court hearings, RR® alfalfa was cleared for planting in early 2011, and hectarage of RR® alfalfa in the USA in 2011 was up to ~200,000 hectares.

The US Department of Agriculture does not publish adoption rates for biotech alfalfa, but observers opine that it could reach up to 50% in the near term as the stacked HT/low lignin alfalfa is more attractive to growers.

In 2014, biotech low-lignin alfalfa was approved for cultivation in the USA. The new product has less lignin, higher digestibility, and is claimed to also offer a 15% to 20% yield increase.

In China 6,985 hectares of biotech papaya and 543 hectares of biotech Bt poplar were grown in 2015.

OTHER BIOTECH CROPS

The following biotech crops were also planted in the USA in 2015: biotech sweet corn (1,000 hectares); biotech virus resistant squash (1,000 hectares) PRSV resistant papaya (1,000 hectares), Innate™ Generation 1 biotech potato (160 hectares, first planted in 2015), and SU Canola™ (4,000 hectares, first planted in 2015.)

SOURCES


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