



Spain is the leading country in the European Union, planting 129,081 hectares biotech maize in 2016.

In 2016, four countries in the EU planted insect resistant maize event MON810, the only biotech event approved in the EU.

The total biotech crop area in the four countries in 2016 was estimated at 136,363 hectares, a significant increase of 19,493 hectares or 17% from 116,870 in 2015.

The 17% increased planting of biotech maize in the EU was contributed largely by Spain, which leads the four countries, planting 129,081 hectares, followed by Portugal (7,069 hectares), Slovakia (138 hectares), and Czechia at 75 hectares.

Spain increased its area planted to biotech maize ~20% or more than 21,000 hectares. Despite the counterproductive efforts of the EU, Spain has steadfastly successfully grown IR (Bt) maize for nineteen years, and grew ~95% of all the IR maize in the EU in 2016, 2% higher than 92% in 2015. In the 2015 EU vote, Spain elected not to ban the growing of biotech crops in the country.

Total area planted to maize varies every year based on water availability, crop margins, competition from alternative crops, and public incentives in place. The total area of maize in Spain declined from 392,000 hectares in 2015 to 361,100 hectares in 2016 due to poor crop margins, competition by other crops and unfavorable conditions (excessive rains) during the planting season.

Maize yield in Spain rose from 8.5 tonnes per hectare to 116.5 tonnes per hectare, allowing Spain to retain its status as the highest yielding producer in the EU. Adoption of GM maize in Spain is also enhanced by a relatively relaxed distribution chain without segregating GM and non-GM maize.

Spain continues to defend a science-based and pragmatic approach to agricultural biotechnology with regards to both cultivation and imports. Field trials are also allowed in Spain subject to prior notice and authorization.

SOURCE

ISAAA. 2016. Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops: 2016. *ISAAA Brief* No. 52. ISAAA: Ithaca, New York.

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