In 2018, the USA planted 1.14 million hectares RR® alfalfa and 120,000 hectares HarvXtra™, while Canada planted 4,000 HarvXtra™, for a total of 1.26 million hectares, 3.3% higher than the 2017 area.

Herbicide tolerant (HT) RR® alfalfa was first approved for commercial planting in the USA in 2005. The first pre-commercial area in 2005 was 20,000 hectares, followed by larger area of 60,000 in 2006.

HarvXtra™ alfalfa has less lignin, higher digestibility, and claims to also offer a 15 to 20% increase in yield, and hence is likely to be in high demand by farmers. HarvXtra™ alfalfa was planted on a commercial scale for the first time in 2016.

The adoption rate of biotech alfalfa in the USA and Canada is likely to increase as more and more farmers realize the benefits of the technology in livestock production and farm management.

OTHER BIOTECH CROPS

The total area of HT biotech sugar beets planted in the USA and Canada at 100% adoption increased to 506,000 hectares in 2018 from 472,000 hectares in 2017, close to 7% increase.

The Bt eggplant area in Bangladesh increased in 2018 for a total of 2,975 hectares from 2,400 hectares in 2017.

The following biotech crops were also planted in the USA in 2018: virus resistant squash (1,000 hectares); PRSV resistant papaya (1,000 hectares); Innate™ Generation 1 biotech potatoes (800 hectares); Generation 2 potatoes (900 hectares); and non-browning Arctic® apples (240 hectares).

In China 9,600 hectares of biotech papaya (34% increase from 2017) were grown in 2018. The anthocyanin-rich biotech pink pineapple was grown in Costa Rica at 23.7 hectares in 2018.

In 2018, two new biotech crops with new traits were planted. In Indonesia, a new biotech drought tolerant sugarcane was planted inside a government-owned facility, the Perkebunan Nusantara XI, and some farmer fields at a total of 1,241.6 hectares in 2018. Australia planted biotech safflower with high oleic acid on 68 hectares for research and development, market development, and seed production.

SOURCE


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