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INTERNATIONAL SERVICE  
FOR THE ACQUISITION  
OF AGRI-BIOTECH  
APPLICATIONS

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For more information, contact:  
John Dutcher, (515) 334-3464,  
[dutcherj@fleishman.com](mailto:dutcherj@fleishman.com)

## **Worldwide Biotech Crops Experience Near Record Growth** *Biotech crop area increases 11 percent in United States*

MANILA, Philippines (Jan. 12, 2005) — Biotech crops experienced the second highest hectareage growth on record in 2004 to reach 81 million hectares (200 million acres). According to a report released today, authored by Clive James chairman and founder of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), global area for biotech crops grew 20 percent in 2004 — an increase of 13.3 million hectares (32.9 million acres).

The study reported that approximately 8.25 million farmers in 17 countries planted biotech crops in 2004 — 1.25 million more farmers than planted biotech crops in 18 countries in 2003. Notably, 90 percent of these farmers were in developing countries. In fact, for the first time, the absolute growth in biotech crop area was higher in developing countries (7.2 million hectares) than in industrial countries (6.1 million hectares).

“The continued rapid adoption, especially among small, resource-poor farmers, is a testament to the economic, environmental, health and social benefits realized by farmers and society in both industrial and developing countries,” said Clive James. “Further, in 2004, we continued to see a broadening base of support for biotech crops as many of the countries participating in biotech crop production significantly increased biotech crop hectareage.”

The number of “biotech mega-countries” (countries growing 50,000 hectares or more biotech crops) increased from 10 to 14 in 2004 with the addition of Paraguay, Mexico, Spain and the Philippines reflecting the participation of a broader group of countries adopting biotech crops. The number of countries accounting for the majority of the global total of biotech crop area grew from five to eight and included the United States (59 percent of the global total), Argentina (20 percent), Canada (6 percent), Brazil (6 percent), China (5 percent), Paraguay (2 percent), India (1 percent) and South Africa (1 percent). In addition to Mexico, Spain and the Philippines, Uruguay, Australia and Romania complete the mega-country list.

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## Worldwide Biotech Crops Experience Near Record Growth/Add One

In the United States, farmers planted 47.6 million hectares of biotech crops, up 11 percent from 2003 and comprising 59 percent of the global total of biotech crops. Continued growth was a result of significant acreage gains in biotech corn varieties and continued increases in herbicide-tolerant soybeans, with modest growth in biotech cotton as the adoption rate approached 80 percent in 2004.

This continued adoption signals a strong vote of confidence in the benefits of biotech crops from farmers around the world, particularly those in developing countries. Edwin Paraluman, a Filipino farmer, said the increased production from biotech corn, approved in late 2003, has already helped him better care for his family.

“I have a small house and my daughter is always telling me, ‘Papa, please expand our house,’” he said. “With biotech corn my yields doubled from 3.5 tons to 7 tons per hectare, helping me earn enough money to meet my daughter’s wishes.”

Results like Mr. Paraluman’s helped account for a 35 percentage increase in the biotech crop area in developing nations, as compared to the 13 percent growth in industrial countries. For the first time, developing countries accounted for more than one-third of the global biotech crop area. James says five key developing countries — China, India, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa — will significantly impact the global adoption and acceptance of biotech crops in the future.

“The early promise of biotechnology has been fulfilled,” James said. “Biotech crops are now poised to enter a new era of momentum that will stimulate growth well in to the future.”

Approval of two biotech maize varieties for import to the European Union and continued signs of progress in China contribute to this optimism. China is likely to approve *Bt* rice in the near-term probably in 2005, which would usher adoption of the most significant food crop in the world and have a major impact on the acceptance of biotech food, feed and fiber crops worldwide.

By the end of the decade, ISAAA predicts up to 15 million farmers will grow biotech crops on 150 million hectares in up to 30 countries.

The executive summary of the report, which was sponsored by Fondazione Bussolera Branca of Italy and The Rockefeller Foundation of the United States, can be accessed at [www.isaaa.org](http://www.isaaa.org).

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The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) is a not-for-profit organization cosponsored by the public and private sector with an international network of centers designed to contribute to the alleviation of hunger and poverty by facilitating transfer of crop biotechnology applications to developing countries and global knowledge-sharing about biotech crops. 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