

Press Conference

Status and Impact of Agri-Biotechnology in the Philippines

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PRESS RELEASE

ISAAA REPORT HIGHLIGHTS DECADES OF BIOTECH CORN SAFE USE AND WIDE ADOPTION IN PH

Manila, Philippines — Filipino farmers have been cultivating biotech corn since 2003, with more than 673,000 farmers benefiting from the technology over the last two decades.

The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Inc. officially launched its flagship report, *Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops in 2024* (Brief 57), during a press conference today at the B Hotel in Quezon City. The event brought together media practitioners, farmers, and key biotech players.

“In 2024 alone, 709,000 hectares of Philippine agricultural land were planted with biotech corn. This has significantly benefited not only our local farmers but also the poultry and livestock industries, which rely heavily on high-quality corn feeds,” said Ms. Kristine Grace Tome, Manager of the ISAAA Global Knowledge Center on Biotechnology and one of the report’s authors.

On a global scale, ISAAA reported that 73 countries have adopted biotech/GM crops through importation and/or cultivation. In the Asia and Oceania region, the Philippines stands as one of the nine countries planting biotech crops, with current regional trends and dynamics pointing toward immense potential for further growth.

The benefits of biotechnology extend far beyond statistics; they are deeply rooted in the success stories of local farmers. Ryan Lising, a biotech corn farmer from Pampanga, spoke at the press conference and shared his transformative journey.

Lising began his farming journey from humble beginnings as an errand boy on a large corn farm. Like many working Filipinos, he initially struggled to secure his family’s future despite his hard work. In 2002, when insect-resistant Bt corn was approved for cultivation in the Philippines, Lising eventually became one of the first to adopt the technology. The transition resulted in breakthrough harvests that drastically uplifted his family’s livelihood. By 2013, Lising had transitioned into a successful corn buyer, creating economic opportunities for his entire community to the present day.

The event also featured insights into the regulatory landscape for GM crops. Dr. Antonio Alfonso, APAC Regional Regulatory Manager at Corteva Agriscience, delivered a presentation on upholding science and robust regulation for GM crop adoption, outlining critical implications for the future of biotech in the country.

Dr. William Dar, ISAAA Chair and former Secretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, also spoke during the event and emphasized the pivotal role of the ISAAA report. He highlighted how science-backed data is essential for addressing contemporary challenges in global agriculture, sustainability, and food security.

ISAAA Executive Director and the principal author of the report, Dr. Rhodora Romero-Aldemita, together with other biotech experts, also shared essential information on Philippine regulations to ensure food and environmental safety, specific scientific data, updates, and the benefits of new agricultural innovations, as well as their acceptance in the country.

The press conference was co-organized by Bayer Crop Science Philippines.

Access to Brief 57

The *Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops in 2024* (ISAAA Brief 57) and the supplementary regional report, *Biotech Facts and Trends: Asia and Oceania*, are available for purchase directly from the [ISAAA website](https://www.isaaa.org).

About ISAAA

The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Inc. is a non-profit international organization that advances biotechnology knowledge by supporting transformative technologies, fostering impactful partnerships, and facilitating the development of science-based policies for food-secure communities.

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