

# Biotech Crops Continue Rapid Global Growth

ITHACA, N.Y. — Biotechnology continues to be a growing choice among farmers worldwide as global acreage of crops enhanced through biotech increased by 12 percent, or 15 million acres in 2002, according to a new report released from the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

For the sixth consecutive year, farmers worldwide adopted biotech crops at a double-digit pace, with 2002 global biotech acreage reaching 145 million acres. More than one-fifth of the global crop area of soybeans, corn, cotton, and canola acres are biotech.

About 6 million farmers in 16 countries chose to plant biotech crops in 2002, up from 5 million farmers in 13 countries in 2001. More than three-quarters of these farmers were resource-poor farmers in developing countries.

"This high adoption rate is a strong vote of confidence in biotech crops, reflecting farmers' need for and satisfaction with the technology," says Clive James, chairman and founder of ISAAA. "In many cases, growers are finding biotechnology offers the only viable solution to protect crops from economically devastating pests."

While biotech cotton maintained its global acreage of 16.8 million acres, biotech corn acreage grew 27 percent to 30.6 million acres, biotech canola acreage increased 11 percent to 7.4 million acres, and biotech soybean production grew 10 percent to 90.2 million acres, exceeding more than 50 percent of the global soybean crop area for the first time. In the U.S., biotech acreage grew by approximately 8.2 million acres, mainly because of significant increases in biotech corn and soybean acres.

The U.S., Argentina, Canada, and China continued to be the leading growers of biotech crops, with more than half of China's cotton crop being biotech for the first time. But other countries are starting to follow suit.

The report indicates more than one-quarter of the global biotech acreage was grown in developing countries in 2002. India, Colombia, and Honduras grew biotech crops for the first time. And, just last month, the Philippines approved a variety of biotech corn, making this one of the first biotech feed crops approved for planting in Asia. For the first time, more than half the world's population lives in countries where biotech crops are approved and grown.

"Biotechnology continues to be the most rapidly adopted technology in agricultural history due to the social and economic benefits the crops offer farmers and society, particularly the 5 million resource-poor farmers in developing countries," James said. "Biotech crops can significantly alter the lives of these farmers, limiting the time they must spend in the field and helping alleviate poverty."

The report suggests Bt cotton farmers are seeing these benefits. In China, farmers growing Bt cotton increased their income an additional \$200 per acre or \$750 million nationally. The study reports similar results in South Africa, where half of farmers are women. The reduced insecticide sprays required with Bt cotton allow the farmers more time to care for their families or generate additional income from other activities.

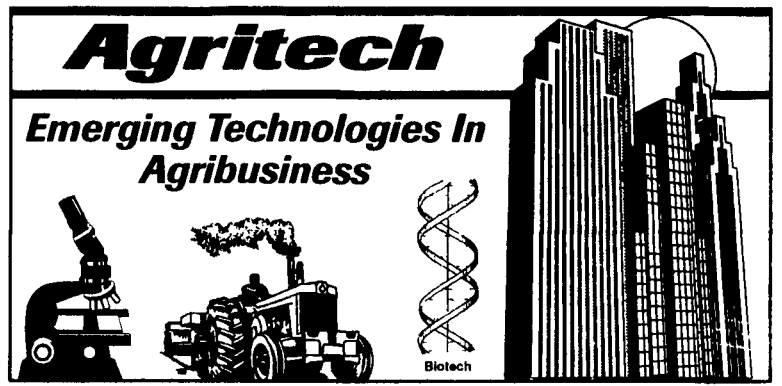
"We can attend to other things besides staying in the field," says T.J. Buthelezi, a cotton farmer from the Makhatini Flats of South Africa. "Our standard of living is very much

improved when we have money to send our children to school."

The ISAAA study also reports biotech crops are contributing to a reduction in pesticide usage. According to the study, Bt cotton alone is estimated to eliminate the need for 33,000 tons of insecticide globally, or 40 percent of the current global use. In 2001, six biotech crops planted in the U.S. reduced pesticide use 23,000 tons.

The report projects continued near-term growth in global acreage of biotech crops and in the number of farmers who will use the technology. New biotech cotton and corn products are expected to be commercialized within the next few years as well, further increasing biotechnology's presence around the world. By 2005, the report predicts the global market value of biotech crops will reach \$5 billion, up from approximately \$4.25 billion in 2002 and \$3.8 billion just a year before.

The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) is a not-for-profit organization with an international network of centers designed to contribute to the alleviation of hunger and poverty by sharing crop biotechnology applications. Clive James, chair-



man 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.

To obtain a color graphic, "Global Status of Biotech Crops in 2002," contact John Dutcher at (816) 512-2256 or dutcherj@fleishman.com.

ISAAA publishes several reports on various aspects of crop biotechnology every year, including an annual Global Review for 2001 (ISAAA Brief No. 26) was published in December 2002. The report published today is a preview of 2002 global GM crop areas and will be supplemented by the customary comprehensive final report for 2002 toward the end of 2003.

Statistics published in ISAAA

reports are based on a consolidated database from a broad range of sources, including government agencies and other organizations in the public and private sector. The figures published cover only plantings of GM crops in countries where the products have been officially approved.

"Preview Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 2002," by Clive James, ISAAA Brief No. 27, can be obtained from ISAAA's Southeast Asia Center: e-mail publications@isaaa.org. Cost of the publication, ISAAA Brief No. 27, is U.S. \$35, including postage. The publication is available free of charge to nationals of developing countries.

Contact Clive James of ISAAA, (345) 947-1839, cjames@candw.ky, or John Butcher, (515) 334-3464, dutcherj@fleishman.com.

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## USDA Announces Crop Insurance Deadline For New Jersey

RALEIGH, N.C. — New Jersey farmers are reminded that the final date to apply for crop insurance on most spring-planted crops for the 2003 crop year is March 15 according to the Raleigh Regional Office, USDA Risk Management Agency.

Current policyholders likewise have until March 15 to make any changes to their existing contracts. Crop insurance provides protection against losses in crop production due to natural perils such as drought, hail, and excessive moisture.

Coverage is available for corn, soybeans, oats, processing beans, fresh market sweet corn, processing tomatoes, nursery products, and winter squash.

Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) is also available for corn and soybeans providing additional protection against price declines at harvest time.

Insurance premium subsidies have been significantly increased in recent years, particu-

larly at the higher levels of coverage.

Producers are strongly urged to contact a local crop insurance agent as soon as possible for a premium quote and additional details.

For a list of crop insurance agents in your area, contact the local USDA Farm Service Agency office or log on to the following Risk Management Agency Website: <http://www3.nna.usda.gov/tools/agents/>.

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