

Biotech Products Can Spur Agricultural Productivity

“We, the undersigned members of the scientific community, believe that recombinant DNA techniques can contribute substantially in enhancing quality of life by improving agriculture, health care, and the environment ... We hereby express our support for the use of recombinant DNA as a potent tool for the achievement of a productive and sustainable agricultural system.”

Declaration organized by Dr. C.S. Prakash, Tuskegee University, signed by 3,200 scientists worldwide, including 20 Nobel Laureates

- § Farmers worldwide have recognized the economic, agricultural and environmental benefits of biotech crops. These plants yield more from the land and can thrive in poorer soils. About 145 million acres were planted with biotech crops in 2002. Of this, about one-quarter was in developing countries.
- § Up to 80 percent of some crops in Africa are lost to drought. Biotech drought-resistant crops could help produce food in developing countries struggling to feed their populations.
- § Worldwide, about 45% of soy, 11% of corn, 20% of cotton and 11% of rapeseed are biotech crops. In the United States, 75% of soy, 34% of corn, and 71% of cotton are biotech crops.
- § The United States is the largest grower of biotech crops in the world, with 96.3 million acres currently under cultivation. Other leading biotech food producers are Argentina, with 33.3 million acres; Canada, with 8.6 million acres; and China, with 5.2 million acres.
- § 12 other countries grow more than 1 million hectares (about 2.5 million acres) of biotech crops each year. They are South Africa, India, Spain, Mexico, Indonesia, Honduras, Australia, Romania, Uruguay, Bulgaria, Colombia, and Germany.
- § *“If imports like these biotechnology crops are regulated unnecessarily, the real losers will be the developing nations. Their countries could suffer greatly for years to come. It is crucial to reject the propaganda of extremist groups before it is too late.”* – Former President Jimmy Carter