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Biotech Corn Planting Intentions for 2007

2007

Approved by:
Bobby Richey
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:
Dietmar Achilles

Report Highlights:
German farmers registered 3,774 hectares of cornfields for biotech variety plantings in 2007, an increase of 2,824 hectares over 2006. Biotech corn production will again be concentrated in the eastern third of the country.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Biotech Corn Planting in 2007

While there seems to be a political standstill in Germany on agricultural biotechnology policy, a growing number of farmers decided to plant Bt-corn varieties in 2007. By mid-February 2007, more than 70 German farmers registered **3,774 hectares** of cropland for biotech corn. This is an increase of 2,824 hectares over 2006. Trade contacts report that a number of farmers who tested Bt varieties on smaller fields in 2006 intend to expand their biotech crop planting significantly in 2007.

Commercial Plantings and Pre-Approval Field Releases of Biotech Crops in 2007			
Region	Commercial Plantings in hectares	Field Releases in hectares*	Corn borer affected fields
Baden-Wurttemberg	7.3454 (6)		41%
Bayern	13.3154 (17)		43%
Brandenburg	2,162.2890 (95)		26%
Hessen	0.4200 (3)		50%
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	745.7433 (28)		24%
Niedersachsen	22.9050 (13)		n.a.
Nordrhein-Westfalen	0.1025 (2)		0.5%
Rheinland-Pfalz	0.4500 (2)		40%
Sachsen	590.6256 (35)		16%
Sachsen-Anhalt	230.5344 (17)	0.1200 (1)	19%
Schleswig-Holstein	0.0850 (3)		0%
Thueringen	0.3500 (3)		68%
Germany	**3,774.1656** (224)		**22%**
Numbers in () represent number of registered plots in the region			
*Research plot for biotech wheat in Gatersleben			
Source: German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety - Biotech Site Register			

According to the German genetech law farmers are required to register their biotech crop planting intentions during a clearly defined time window, the earliest registration can take place nine months and the latest three months before the actual planting. Corn is usually planted in April with latest planting by mid-May. No additional biotech cornfield registrations are expected after mid-February. Additional field trial registrations are also possible at a later time but information is not yet available.

The vast majority of biotech corn will again be planted in the eastern third of the country. The irony is that the eastern part of Germany is affected by the European corn borer to a lesser extend compared to most parts of southern Germany where there are hardly any fields planted to biotech corn. The main reason for the stronger interests in biotech corn in eastern third of the country is due to farm size. Average farm size of eastern German farms is 202 hectares compared to 34 hectares in Western Germany. In addition, minimum distances to neighboring conventional cornfields can be maintained easier than in the predominantly small-scale farm regions of southern Germany. However, such protective distance requirements have not yet been established.

Minister Seehofer increasingly becomes a supporter of organic farming

At a seminar of the organic farmers association Bioland in early February Minister Seehofer expressed his sympathy for the organic farmers community. He told the group that he has learned a lot during the past year and that he now thinks differently about agricultural

biotechnology. Seehofer is of the opinion that there are only very limited chances for biotech seed plantings in Germany mainly because of the yet unsolved issue of liability. A report about the Seehofer meeting with the organic organization and his pessimistic view about agricultural biotechnology is placed on the homepage of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture BMELV.