



Biotechnology Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative

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Agricultural Biotechnology: Farmed Worldwide

Biotech crops were first commercialized in 1996. During the eleven years since then, farmers worldwide have recognized the economic, agricultural and environmental benefits of biotech crops by increasing the global area planted with biotechnology crops by 60-fold, making biotech crops the fastest-adopted crop technology in recent history.

- According to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA), during the 1996-2006 period, the accumulated global biotech crop area reached 1.4 billion acres, equivalent to more than half of the total land area of the United States or China, or 25 times the total land area of the United Kingdom.
- Farmers have consistently increased their plantings of biotech crops by double-digit growth rates every single year since biotech crops were first commercialized in 1996.
- The proportion of the global area of biotech crops grown by developing countries increased every year between 1996 and 2005. Biotech crops were grown in 22 countries in 2006, with about 90 percent in developing countries.
- 40 percent of the global biotech crop area in 2006, equivalent to 40.9 million hectares, was cultivated in developing countries. Growth between 2005 and 2006 in developing countries was substantially higher (20 percent growth) than in industrial countries (9 percent growth).
- Over 250 million acres were planted with biotech crops in 2006, up from 220 million acres in 2005. The increase of 30 million acres between 2005 and 2006 (a 13 percent growth rate) was the second highest in the last five years.
- In the United States, 91 percent of soy, 73 percent of corn, and 87 percent of cotton were biotech crop varieties in 2007. In 2006, biotech soybeans were the principal biotech crop, with 57 percent of global biotech area, followed by corn at 25 percent, cotton at 13 percent, and canola at 5 percent of global biotech crop area.
- Leading producers of biotech crops in the world include the United States, with approximately 135 million acres under cultivation in 2006, followed by Argentina, with 44.5 million acres; Brazil, with 28 million acres; Canada, with 15 million acres; India, with 9.4 million acres and China, with 8.6 million acres. Sixteen other countries grow more than 2 million hectares (about 12 million acres) of biotech crops each year: Paraguay, South Africa, Uruguay, Philippines, Australia, Romania, Mexico, Spain, Colombia, France, Iran, Honduras, Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany, and Slovakia.

- In 2007, six countries in the European Union produced biotech corn...Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Czech Republic, and Slovakia.
- According to the study, "The Global Diffusion of Plant Biotechnology: International Adoption and Research in 2004," by Dr. Ford Runge of the University of Minnesota, the global commercial value of biotech crops grown in the 2003-2004 crop year was an estimated \$44 billion. <http://www.whybiotech.com/index.asp?id=4787>