

GLOBAL STATUS OF COMMERCIALIZED BIOTECH/GM CROPS: 2006

Summary

Several milestones of biotech crops achieved in 2006 are presented with emphasises on the progress made in some European countries and especially in developing countries. In 2006, for the first year of the second decade of commercialization of biotech crops 2006–2015, the global area of biotech crops continues to climb for the tenth consecutive year at a sustained double – digit growth rate of 13% or 12 milion hectares, reaching 102 milion hectares. 10.3 milion farmers from 22 countries planted biotech crops in 2006, up from 8.5 milion farmers in 2005. The 22 countries growing GM crops comprises 11 developing and 11 industrial countries. For the first time, India grew more Bt cotton (3.8 milion ha) than China (3.5 mln ha) and moved up the world ranking by two places to number 5 in the world, overtaking

both China and Paraguay. The use of biotechnology to increase efficiency of first generation food/feed crops and second-generation energy crops for biofuels will have high impact and present both oportunities and challenges. Injudicious use of the food/feed crops, sugarcane, cassava and maize for biofuels in food insecure developing countries could jeopardize food security goals if the efficiency of these crops cannot be increased through biotechnology and other means, so that food, feed and fuel goals can all be met. Continues responsible stewardship must be practiced, particularly by the countries of the South, which will be the major new deployers of biotech crops in the second decade of commercialization of GM crops, 2006 to 2015.