



Biotechnology Facts

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Agricultural Biotechnology: Farmed Worldwide

2005 marked the tenth anniversary of the commercialization of biotechnology crops. During this period, farmers worldwide have recognized the economic, agricultural and environmental benefits of biotech crops by increasing the global area planted to biotechnology crops by 50 fold, with the billionth acre of biotech crops planted in 2005.

- According to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA), during the period 1996 – 2005, the accumulated global biotech crop area was over 1.17 billion acres, equivalent to almost half the total land area in the United States or China, or 20 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.
- About 222 million acres were planted with biotech crops in 2005, up from 200 million acres in 2004. Of this, over one-third was in developing countries. Biotech crops were grown by approximately 8.5 million farmers in the same year, with about 90% from developing countries.
- In the United States, in 2006, 89% of soy, 61% of corn, and 83% of cotton were biotech crops. In 2005, biotech soybeans were the principal biotech crop, with 60% of global biotech area, followed by corn at 24%, cotton at 11%, and canola at 5% of global biotech crop area.
- Leading producers of biotech crops in the world include the United States, with approximately 123 million acres currently under cultivation in 2005, followed by Argentina, with 42 million acres; Brazil, with 23 million acres; Canada, with 14 million acres; and China, with 8 million acres. Other countries growing biotech crops include: India, Iran, Philippines, Australia, South Africa, Paraguay, Uruguay, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Czech Republic, Romania, Portugal, Spain, France, and Germany.
- Five countries in the European Union are now producing biotech corn: Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and the Czech Republic.
- 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 is estimated at US\$44 billion.
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