

**The Seed Industry in U.S. Agriculture: An Exploration of Data and Information on Crop Seed Markets, Regulation, Industry Structure, and Research and Development.** By Jorge Fernandez-Cornejo, with contributions from Jonathan Keller, David Spielman, Mohinder Gill, John King, and Paul Heisey. Resource Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agriculture Information Bulletin Number 786.

## **Abstract**

The unprecedented growth in crop yields and agricultural total factor productivity over the past 70 years owes much to a series of biological innovations embodied in seeds, beginning with the development of hybrid crops in the United States in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, continuing with the adoption of high-yielding varieties during the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, and more recently, modern biotechnology. Throughout this period, the seed industry evolved, as small businesses gave way to larger enterprises that integrated plant breeding, production, conditioning, and marketing functions. The industry was further shaped by widespread mergers and acquisitions in the latter part of the century, rapid growth in private research and development (R&D), shifting roles of public and private R&D, and a “coming of age” of agricultural biotechnology.

**Keywords:** Seed markets, seed costs and prices, regulation, plant breeding, field crops, research and development, industry concentration, biotechnology.

**Note:** The use of brands or firm names in this publication does not imply endorsement or approval by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors wish to thank Kitty Smith, Keith Wiebe, Greg Traxler, and Carl Pray for their thoughtful reviews of the whole manuscript and their valuable comments. We also thank Thomas Salt, Jeffrey Strachan, and John Turner, who reviewed portions of the manuscript and provided valuable comments and suggestions. We are grateful to Jeffrey Strachan for providing updated data on plant variety protection certificates. We also thank John Weber for valuable editorial assistance, Wynnice Pointer-Napper for graphics and document layout, and Victor B. Phillips, Jr., for cover design.

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