

REGULATION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN THE UNITED STATES

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The vast majority of large commercial farms in the United States plant genetically modified crops, like corn or soy, with no general effort to distinguish those from nonbiotech crops and foods in farming or food processing. This is consistent with the view of most scientists and policy makers that the best hope for feeding humankind, while preserving and protecting wilderness and wildlife, comes from biotechnology. However, increasing concern regarding the difficulty of maintaining separate co-existence of genetically modified and non-modified crops and the possibility of inadvertent outbreeding of engineered traits have promoted increasing pressure for policy changes to increase regulation of genetically modified crops. This has led to a rise in the number of legislative proposals, generally at the local level, for increased restrictions on planting and marketing genetically modified crops. I will discuss the nature of these proposals, the likelihood for their implementation and the potential impact on biotech agriculture. Keywords: genetically modified organisms, legislative regulation, biotechnology.