

PROSPECTS OF BIOTECH CROPS IN BRAZIL

Edilson Paiva

Embrapa Milho e Sorgo, Sete Lagoas, MG, Brazil

The global area officially cultivated with biotech crops in 2005 was 90 million hectares, planted by 8.5 million farmers, marking the tenth anniversary of the commercialization of genetically modified (GM) crops. Biosafety legislation creation and implementation in Brazil has been successful regarding the scientific participation but it has been a real chaos when one considers the political and judicial participation and decisions. The delays caused by judicial and political decisions resulted in an increase in illegal planting of GM crops and from 2003 to 2005 Brazil moved from an officially free transgenic crop country to the third largest producer, just after USA and Argentina. This “magic jump” happened when the law made legal the production and marketing of 5 million hectares of illegal cultivated HT soybean. Scientific organizations published a consensus document which states that GM crops now on the market have passed all tests and have been properly authorized, so, based on the current knowledge, they should be considered safety for both human and animal consumption. Based on the already proved agronomic, economic and environmental benefits, there is no more doubt that Brazilian’s farmers will promptly adopt biothec crops as soon as: 1 - An end to the ambiguities in the present Brazilian biosafety legislation has been reached; 2 - Legal biotech crop seeds become available in the Brazilian market.

Keywords: genetically modified crops, herbicide tolerant, transgenic