

Food Security and Ag-Biotech News



A Free E-News Service

Meridian Institute's Food Security and Ag-Biotech (FS-AgBiotech) News is a free daily e-news service that provides news and analysis of global developments in agricultural biotechnology, with a special focus on implications for food security in the developing world.

FS-AgBiotech News is available in both English and French via email, the web, and RSS news feed. The news service is designed as a one-stop news source for busy individuals, providing information that is concise, high-quality, and balanced. Government officials, scientists, NGOs and industry representatives from more than 50 countries subscribe. They report that FS-AgBiotech News saves them time and keeps them up-to-date on key developments and emerging global issues.



FS-AgBiotech News covers news related to food security and agricultural biotechnology, including topics such as: national and international biosafety regulation, trade, research and development, technology transfer, liability, economic development, agricultural policy, and genetic resources.



In preparing each day's FS-AgBiotech News publication, the editors draw from a wide range of material, including news articles, reports, and editorials from national and international newspapers, scientific journals, industry and NGO websites, and the UN and other international organizations. The editors select the most important news items and summarize them in a manner that emphasizes the important details and paints a clear picture of each item's larger relevance, including effects on food security.



FS-AgBiotech News, which has run continuously since 1999, is supported by The Rockefeller Foundation and the International Development Research Centre.



To access FS-AgBiotech News, please visit <http://www.merid.org/fs-agbiotech/>.

To subscribe to the email list, click the subscribe button under the main banner.



Sample Daily Message

Potential Impact and Cost-Effectiveness of Golden Rice

(Source: [Nature Biotechnology](#)) Researchers from Germany and India say a new analytical framework shows that adopting "Golden Rice 2" would be a cost-effective method for significantly reducing problems associated with Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) in India. The genetically modified (GM) Golden Rice 2 variety contains heightened levels of beta-carotene, a precursor to Vitamin A in the human body, even as compared to the earlier Golden Rice 1. The researchers find that the current annual VAD-attributable mortality and morbidity burden in India amounts to a loss of 2.3 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), of which 2.0 million are lost due to child mortality alone. (More than 70,000 young children die each year from VAD.) They calculate that under an "optimistic" scenario of widespread consumption of Golden Rice 2, the burden of VAD in India could be reduced by 59 percent. A more "pessimistic" scenario would result in a 9 percent reduction. Even under the pessimistic scenario, the researchers find that the cost of saving one DALY would be less than US\$20, compared with a cost of US\$134 -599 for saving one DALY through current methods of vitamin A supplementation. They argue that this finding justifies investments in efforts to bring Golden Rice 2 to the market, for instance through biosafety testing and introducing the Golden trait into popular rice varieties. They note, however, that Golden Rice is not a panacea, and multiple approaches will still be needed. The article can be viewed online at the link below, with a paid subscription to Nature Biotechnology. [Link](#)

Ethiopian Scientist Decries Genetic Engineering

(Source: [Capital Press](#)) Tewolde Egziabher, general manager of Ethiopia's Environmental Protection Agency, gave a recent interview in the U.S., in which he argued that technologies used in industrial agriculture are often ill-suited to the environmental, economic, and social conditions of developing nations. Tewolde said, in particular, that genetically modified (GM) crops threaten traditional agriculture and the locally-adapted crops that have been carefully selected by farmers over "thousands of years." Tewolde argued that poor farmers cannot afford to buy GM seeds, and herbicide-tolerant varieties would leave laborers without jobs. While not opposing all GM crops or agricultural chemicals, he said that Ethiopia has found success with composting methods that reduce erosion and improve water uptake, and with measures to prevent livestock from trampling crops. Tewolde said his belief is that even in industrialized countries, GM crops and industrialized agriculture are quite problematic. Tewolde is an international negotiator for "strict" rules on genetically modified (GM) crops under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. His visit to the U.S. was sponsored by Whitman College in Washington State, the U.S., where he delivered an address. The article can be viewed online at the link below. [Link](#)

Philippines Promotes Intellectual Property Rights in Agriculture

(Source: [Manila Bulletin](#)) The Philippine Rice Institute (PhilRice) and the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) of the Philippines have agreed to work together to educate public agricultural scientists about their right to patent agricultural inventions. The partnership aims to promote the creation of intellectual property rights (IPR) in the public agriculture sector and is expected to contribute to more vigorous IPR enforcement. The partnership will run a national IPR database and provide workshops at a new Biotech-IPR Training Center. Commenting on the need for IPR education, Leocadio Sebastian, executive director of PhilRice, said: "Scientists and researchers in developed countries are trained to handle the issue of regulatory and intellectual property rights related to biotech. In the Philippines, however, we are still struggling to put up an ideal environment for investment in research and development." The article can be viewed online at the link below. [Link](#)

To access FS-AgBiotech News, please visit <http://www.merid.org/fs-agbiotech/>.

To subscribe to the email list, click the subscribe button under the main banner.