

Monsanto's response to CBAN on SmartStax: Western Producer

Author: Lucy Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p>(Clickhereto<ahref="/Ressources/Topics/GE-Crops-and-Foods-On-the-Market/le-mais/CBAN-on-SmartStax-Western-Producer"target="_self">readtheCBANopinionpiecethatMonsantoisrespondingto)</p><p>StackedTraitsgoodforgrowers</p><p>WesternProducer, Opinion, November5, 2009
byTrishJordanandBrendaHarris</p><p>JordanispublicaffairsdirectorforMonsantoCanada.HarrisisregulatoryandgovernmentaffairsmanagerforDowAgroSciencesCanada.</p><p>AccordingtoUnitedNationsexperts,worldwideagriculturalproductionneedstodoubleby2050tofeedtheexpected9.3billionpeopleontheplanet.</p><p>Canadianagriculturecanplayanimportantroleinmeetingthisrapidlyescalatingdemand.Continuedinnovationiscriticalforproducingmorefoodwithreduceduseofnon-renewableresources,inaneconomicallyprofitableandenvironmentallysustainablemanner,andwithoutdrasticincreasesintheamountoflandsubjectedtotheplow.</p><p>Forplantingin2010,U.S.andCanadianfarmersarelookingforwardtoSmartStaxcorn,aneweight-waystackedcornproduct.</p><p>Thenewcornseedtraitcombination,developedjointlybyDowAgroSciencesandMonsanto,willprovidefarmerswiththemostcomprehensiveinsectandweedcontrolavailableinthemarketplace,whileallowingfarmers to significantly reduce their non-Bt corn refuge.</p><p>SmartStaxhaspassedregulatoryreviewsinCanadaandtheU.S.,allowingittobegrownbyfarmersforuseasfoodandfeed.IthasalsopassedregulatorymusterinTaiwanandJapanallowingittobeimportedforfoodandfeeduses.</p><p>Regulatoryapprovalsarealsopendinginotherkeynationsaroundtheworld.?Theseprovalsarenecessary,sinceproductslikeSmartStaxcannotbegrownorsoldcommerciallyuntilregulatorsconcludetheymeettheirnational?standardsforprotectionofpublicandenvironmentalhealth.</p><p>Despitethesedetailednationalevaluations,certainnon-governmentalorganizationsareopposingtheintroductionofSmartStaxandhavecriticizedtheCanadianregulatoryprocess.</p><p>Inparticular,theCanadianBiotechnologyActionNetworkopposetheveryconceptofcropbiotechnology.Itishardlysurprisingthatitvigorouslyobjectstoanynewintroductionsofthese products.</p><p>Basedontheirunfoundedsafetyconcerns,CBANwouldhaveusbelieveourCanadianregulatorysystemisinadequate.Nothingcouldbefurtherfromthetruth.</p><p>DespiteCBAN?sclaims,thefactremainsthatallbiotechnologyenhancedplantsavailabletoCanadianfarmershavebeenapprovedbasedonextensivescientifictestingandregulatoryreviewbyscientistsfromthreegovernmentsections(HealthCanada,NovelFoodsSection;andtwodepartmentswithinCanadianFoodInspectionAgency,theAnimalFeedDivision,andtheBiotechnologyEnvironmentalReleaseAssessmentUnit)operatingunderCanada?srigorousandinternationallyrespectedlegislativeandregulatoryframework.</p><p>SmartStaxisproducedusingconventionalbreedingmethodstoincorporateindividualbiotechnology-enhancedtraitstogetherintooneplant.EachofSmartStax?scomponenttraits has undergone this science-based regulatory review for food, feed and environmental safety, and each has been authorized for food, feed and cultivation uses in Canada.</p><p>These individual trait authorizations by Canadian regulators recognize that new varieties of corn are continually developed and that ongoing breeding is necessary to produce these seeds that farmers grow.</p><p>Stacked products resulting from breeding two (or more) genetically modified parents do require notification to the CFIA. In the opinion of Canadian regulators, this notification is sufficient to allow them to determine if regulatory oversight requires additional information prior to assessing the product for commercialization.</p><p>Contrary to CBAN?s soft-made statements, the Codex Alimentarius has never stated that stacking biotechnology-enhanced traits poses increased risks compared to conventional products.</p><p>In the case of SmartStax, CFIA reviewed scientific insect resistance modeling data and a proposed insect resistance monitoring plan. CFIA has also scrutinized the evidence that commercial release of SmartStax will offer increased potential for insect pests to adapt to the Bt corn traits.</p><p>Consistent with independent expert opinions, CFIA concluded the combination of multiple Bt proteins will provide effective control even of insects with some ability to overcome one or more of the proteins. The reduced refuge size permitted for SmartStax recognizes this regulatory conclusion and increases the acreage over which these advantages can be realized.</p><p>Farmers have clearly seen that seed enhanced through agricultural biotechnology is safe. Genetically modified crops and their fooding ingredients have been present in a wide variety of Canadian food products for more than a decade with zero reliably documented evidence of safety concerns for people or animals.</p><p>More than one trillion meals containing biotech ingredients have been consumed throughout the world over the past decade with zero cases of documented harm to human or animal health.</p><p>International bodies

ncluding the World Health Organization and the European Food Safety Agency have extensively studied genetically modified foods and have declared them safe. A European Commission report based on studies valued at 70 million euros and conducted over 15 years concluded that GM crops did not pose any new risks to human health or the environment beyond the usual uncertainties of conventional plant breeding. Indeed, the use of more precise technology and the greater regulatory scrutiny probably make them even safer than conventional plants and foods.

Farmers want the latest technologies to allow them to produce more, conserve more and address the world's growing demand for food. Only through continued investment and innovation by many players will Canadian agriculture continue to prosper and compete in a growing world.

We should, and do have, rigorous oversight of products of biotechnology in this country. Canadian regulations are set up to protect the safety of the Canadian environment, food and feed supply, and to enable innovation that can enhance this goal.

Given the high regard the Canadian regulatory system has throughout the world, we are confident our regulators continue to meet this objective.