

Media Release

Syngenta agrees to settlement with USDA on unintended Bt10 corn

Basel, Switzerland/ Washington, DC, USA, 8 April 2005

Syngenta announced today that it has agreed to a settlement with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the unintended release of a limited amount of Bt10 corn.

The coordinated investigation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and USDA concluded: "EPA and USDA have reviewed scientific information and have concluded that there are no human or animal health or environmental concerns with Bt 10 corn." (see: www.usda.gov) USDA issued a \$375,000 fine and a requirement that Syngenta sponsor a compliance training conference.

"We welcome the settlement with the USDA and the government's conclusion that Syngenta's misidentification of Bt10 corn, while a regrettable mistake, does not pose any risks to consumers, public health or the environment", said Mike Mack, Chief Operating Officer of Syngenta Seeds. "While the amount of Bt10 corn that was mistakenly supplied represents an extremely small quantity, we fully accept and will abide by the USDA's decision and requirements. We continue to cooperate with the EPA in the USA and with governments and authorities concerned around the world, including in Asia and the European Commission. Syngenta will make all efforts to provide the relevant authorities with any necessary additional information."

Bt10 corn is genetically modified corn that was mistakenly supplied in very small amounts as Bt11 corn between 2001 and 2004. The proteins expressed by Bt10 and Bt11 are identical, with the Bt gene in a different location in the corn's genome; this has no impact on the safety of the corn.

Bt11 field corn is approved for food and feed use and for cultivation in the USA, Canada, Argentina, Japan, South Africa, and Uruguay. Additionally, it is approved for import for food and feed use in the European Union, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, the Philippines, China, Russia, and Korea. Bt11 was approved for cultivation and human consumption in the USA in 1996, for food and feed use in Japan in 1996 and for human consumption in the EU in 1998.

Bt10 also has an antibiotic resistance marker gene, which has been approved and widely used around the world for many years, including in the European Union. This marker is not active in the plant and therefore has no impact on the safety profile of the corn.

Syngenta identified the Bt10 event using advanced DNA-based testing. The Bt10 event was found in five Bt corn breeding lines in the USA, three of which were used between 2001 and 2004 primarily for pre-commercial development. The seeds produced could have planted an estimated 37,000 acres (15,000 hectares) in the USA accumulative over the four-year time period. This equates to one-one hundredth of one percent (0.01 percent) of the annual total US corn acreage (annual US corn plantings is 80 million acres or 32 million hectares). Only around 18 percent of US corn is exported to other countries. Therefore, although it is possible that some Bt10 grain could have entered US export channels, any such amount would have been in very small volumes.

A summary of the settlement with the USDA can be found on USDA's website: www.usda.gov. Further information on antibiotic resistance marker genes is available at: <http://www.syngenta.com/en/news/arm-genes-quotes-050407.aspx>.

Syngenta is a world-leading agribusiness committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology. The company is a leader in crop protection, and ranks third in the high-value commercial seeds market. Sales in 2004 were approximately \$7.3 billion. Syngenta employs some 19,000 people in over 90 countries. Syngenta is listed on the Swiss stock exchange (SYNN) and in New York (SYT). Further information is available at www.syngenta.com.

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