

New generation herbicide-tolerant soybeans, cotton gain USDA approval

Monsanto Co. received final U.S. approval on Thursday for herbicide-tolerant crops to be used with a new herbicide the company says will fight problematic weed resistance on farm fields, but critics say will only worsen the problems.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS, said the genetically modified cotton and soybean plants are granted "non-regulated" status. Monsanto is still waiting for final approval from the Environmental Protection Agency for the herbicide it designed to be used with the crops.

Monsanto developed the new soybeans and cotton to resist a new herbicide that combines dicamba and glyphosate and which Monsanto is branding as components of the "Roundup Ready Xtend crop system." The new products are aimed at combating the millions of acres of weeds that have grown resistant to Monsanto's glyphosate-based Roundup, which has been used extensively on the company's biotech corn, soybeans and cotton.

Projections made both by the USDA and Monsanto, indicate that the new Xtend system will lead to an increase in dicamba use in cotton by 14 times current levels. Use in soybeans is expected to surge by up to 500 times current levels, a factor that will increase pesticide exposure risk to farm families, the Pesticide Action Network said in a statement Thursday.

As well, fruit, nut and vegetable growers who argued against approval say dicamba drifts easily and will damage their farm fields.

Read full, original article: [USDA approves Monsanto's new GMO soybeans, cotton](#)