

Canadian farmers concerned introduction of GMO alfalfa could hurt foreign sales

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A select group of Alberta farmers say more needs to be done to protect their business amid mounting threats from genetically modified crops.

The issue lies with forage crops — grasses like hay and alfalfa used mostly for cattle feed. . .

So far, only rare cases of GM strains of alfalfa crops have been found growing in Alberta.

Heather Kerschbaumer would like it to stay that way. “Keeping it out of all of Canada would be the preferred solution,” said Kerschbaumer, president of Forage Seed Canada. . .

But . . . companies, including Forage Genetics and Monsanto that sell GM alfalfa, have been trying to convince jurisdictions to allow products like Roundup Ready crops to be marketed and grown. . . .

Dave Cailliau of Cailliau Farms in Enchant. . . grows Roundup Ready sugar beets, which can be costly to keep weed free were it not for the patented GM technology.

But when it comes to alfalfa and other forage seeds, it’s different because they are pollinated by bees and, during years when crops are rotated, become a kind of weed themselves.

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Kent Warnica, a hay buyer for Prairie International . . . said he wouldn’t mind if GM crops were to spread across Canada, if only foreign markets would accept them. He believes the bans on GM products are being used as a non-tariff trade barrier.

. . . . Forage Genetics International has managed to get past the first stage of reviews in Ontario and have begun attempting to design what they call a coexistence strategy.

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A similar attempt was made in the U.S., but a recent study from the USDA says it isn’t working.

Read full, original post: [Alberta farmers concerned with influx of genetically modified alfalfa](#)