

## Senate passes bill giving biotech and other companies more power to protect trade secrets

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The Senate has unanimously passed legislation that would give companies such as DuPont Pioneer more power to defend their trade secrets from theft.

In a rare moment of bipartisanship, the chamber voted 87-0 late Monday to pass the legislation, which is also backed by the Obama administration and corporations. Iowa Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst were among those voting for the bill.

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Theft of intellectual property has long been associated with aerospace, pharmaceuticals, financial institutions. . . But agriculture has increasingly been a target as China and other countries look to steal more advanced seeds and sprays produced by U.S. agribusiness companies.

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Agriculture theft was thrust into the forefront in 2011 when a DuPont Pioneer field manager caught a Chinese businessman digging around in one of the company's test fields near Tama, Ia.

The individual was among those later charged in a plot to steal patented seeds from companies including Pioneer and Monsanto and smuggle them to China, where they could be counterfeited by an agricultural conglomerate. He agreed to a deal with prosecutors and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to steal trade secrets in January.

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