

Viewpoint: USMCA North American trade deal sets precedent for sensible worldwide biotech crop regulations

In the crop science industry, China has a reputation for taking a long, long time to approve new genetically modified traits for import The delays come with a cost for North American farmers, who often cannot adopt new and innovative varieties of soybeans, corn and canola until China gives a thumbs up to the technology.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, announced in late September, obviously doesn't include China, but it could help create a future where China and other countries have consistent policies for plant biotechnology.

"The major benefit of this language in the USMCA is it sets a new standard ... to prevent (trade) barriers related to plant breeding innovation," said Brian Innes, president of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance.

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Ag biotechnology isn't a sexy part of any trade agreement, but the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative highlighted it as an important achievement of the USMCA.

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The actual text includes a section on reducing disruptions to trade of products of agricultural biotechnology, including timely reviews of applications for approval.

It also mentions how to manage low level presence of biotech traits and establishes a working group for co-operation on agricultural biotechnology.

Read full, original article: Trade deal clears air on biotech