

Biotech industry, anti-GMO activists face off over new NAFTA trade deal

The U.S., Canada and Mexico collectively addressed agricultural biotechnology like genetically modified organisms for the first time in the new NAFTA deal, agreeing to language that experts see as a major step in America's effort to export its biotech model across the globe.

The inclusion of the chapter is designed to set a standard for future trade deals and send a message to other U.S. trading partners, like the European Union and China, which U.S. seed and pesticide manufacturers have criticized for having an unpredictable regulatory approach, said Andy LaVigne, president and CEO of the American Seed Trade Association.

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Groups representing biotech companies and agribusiness contend the provisions in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, are aimed at making trade in GE products more predictable and ensuring that disputes can be resolved more quickly, while also protecting billions of dollars in biotech industry investments in research and development.

Critics argue the language — if adopted in future trade agreements — would make it more difficult for countries to regulate GE crops and block shipments of varieties that haven't been approved. More broadly, they say it could further entrench corporate control of new seed varieties and pesticides and limit farmers' options in the marketplace.

Read full, original article: [New NAFTA furthers U.S. push to set global rules on ag biotech](#) **(Behind Paywall)**