

## Argentina could be first country to plant GMO wheat, engineered for drought resistance—if regulators approve

“We mustn’t do what other countries have already done; we must do what no other country did,” the CEO of Bioceres, Mr. Federico Trucco, challenged the audience during the formal presentation of the HB4 Wheat, a transgenic drought-tolerant wheat variety.

The beginning of this development dates from mid 1990s when scientist Raquel Chan’s team identified a gene (HB4) that confers sunflower seed with drought tolerance. In 2003, Bioceres reached an agreement with Conicet (the governmental Science and Technology Commission) to develop this finding commercially. In 2007, HB4 was transferred to other crops like soybean, maize and wheat, and now only one formal step is missing to release this technology to Argentinean farmers.

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[T]he third step is pending. The Ag-Industry Secretariat must issue a finding about the impact of this wheat on the markets (domestic and foreign), before its release.

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Mr. Trucco explained that they could supply HB4 wheat seeds to farmers in the next season 2019/20, if Government finally approves the trait. “Initially we have seed to plant 20,000 hectares next year. I hope Government authorities realize that HB4 is a milestone for the scientific sector in the country and for the food and agricultural chain”, he said.

**[Editor’s note: This summary was lightly edited for clarity.]**

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