

## Argentina, Brazil, Canada, US call for 'science-based' biotech crop import rules to prevent global trade disruptions

The Ministers of Agriculture from Argentina, Brazil, Canada and the United States highlighted that food demand is rising while agricultural production faces significant constraints, such as limited access to arable land and fresh water. In this regard, they agreed that agricultural innovation, such as biotechnology, including precision biotechnology, will continue to play a substantial role in addressing such challenges and can improve farmers' productivity in a safe and sustainable manner.

These Ministers recognized that the number of biotechnology crops being developed and cultivated worldwide is increasing annually. Yet, despite two decades of experience in the safe use of these products, regulatory processes in many jurisdictions create time gaps in their authorization. This leads to an increasing risk of trade disruptions resulting from occurrences of low-level presence (LLP) of biotechnology crops that are approved in growing countries, but not yet approved in importing countries.

LLP occurs when a small amount of a biotechnology crop that has been assessed as safe in one or more countries according to international standards, is unintentionally present in a shipment to a country where the product has not yet been approved. This may lead to unnecessary trade disruptions, which can affect food security, prices and attitudes toward innovation in both the exporting and importing countries.

The extent of unnecessary asynchronous product approvals worldwide is increasing and requires further actions to address the risk of trade disruption, avoid its negative effects to importing and exporting countries alike, and promote global food security.

For this purpose we, Ministers of Agriculture from Argentina, Brazil, Canada and the United States, commit to heighten collaborative work with third-party countries in 2019, and continue advocating for global approaches for the management of LLP that are practical, science-based, predictable and transparent. These efforts will include the universal use of international science-based guidelines.

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