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## **Adventitious Presence (AP) or Low Level Presence (LLP)**

The term “adventitious presence” or “low level presence” refers to the unintentional and incidental commingling of trace amounts of one type of seed, grain or food product with another. This includes foreign matter or grain from other traded crops, and it is normally managed by agreeing on quality standards and monitoring. When used in relation to plant biotechnology, the term refers to the incidental presence of biotech-derived material in food, feed or grain at levels that are consistent with generally accepted agricultural and manufacturing practices.

Adventitious presence is an unavoidable reality of plant biology, seed production and the distribution of commodity crops. There are a number of factors that contribute to commingling: pollen flow; volunteerism; mixing during harvesting, transport, storage and processing; human error; and accidents can all play a role in adventitious presence.

While adventitious presence can be minimized, as a practical matter it cannot be eliminated entirely and is not unique to crops enhanced through biotechnology. As a result, allowances for adventitious presence have been recognized in laws, regulations and standards that establish allowances for these materials.

Adventitious presence of biotech products does not compromise food safety. Nevertheless, the large-scale planting of biotech crops has raised the issue of adventitious presence and its impact on international trade. In November 2007, the Codex Alimentarius Commissions’ Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology reached consensus and progressed an annex to the Codex Plant Guideline that addresses safety assessments in situations of low-level presence of recombinant DNA plant material (Annex). The Task Force also agreed on the components of an online database to enable information sharing among Codex member countries to facilitate expedited safety assessments of biotech-derived plant material. The Annex was moved forward for adoption by the Codex Commission at its next session.

A growing number of countries have established risk assessment procedures for approving the import of biotech crops and their derivatives. However, many of these countries have not, as yet, adapted processes to address the potential low level presence in their imports of biotech material already authorised and being produced in other countries, but not yet approved (and therefore not intended to be present) in the importing country. This gap has the potential to cause significant trade disruptions, as well as placing significant burdens on the importing country’s authorities when such presence is

detected. The situation will only become more prevalent as more and more new biotech plants are developed and enter into commerce at different rates in different countries.

Minimizing the occurrence of adventitious presence is always preferred over other solutions. CropLife International and its members believe that the primary approach to managing adventitious presence in the supply chain must remain:

- The implementation of rigorous Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for the cultivation of biotech crops; and
- The implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) throughout the agri-food chain for products that are authorised in the country of production but not yet in an importing country.

In addition, it is the policy and accepted best practice of the developers of biotech plant varieties to seek authorisations in countries which import significant amounts of the crop in which a biotech plant product has been introduced. The fact that authorisations are granted over different timescales is due to differences in the operation of different countries' regulatory systems.