

Press Release
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Plant Science Industry Says 2004 Figures Represent Start of New Era of Growth for Biotech Crops

Brussels, 12 January 2005 --- Today's announcement from ISAAA* that 2004 witnessed the second highest hectarage growth of biotech crops on record represents an international vote of confidence in the benefits of biotechnology for consumers and farmers, particularly in developing countries. CropLife International encourages other governments and regulatory authorities to consider this new evidence, and to adopt biotechnology as a safe and proven complement to other agricultural technologies.

"The new figures are testament to the global accessibility and success of biotechnology as one tool to produce sufficient, affordable, safe and high quality food, feed and fibre in a sustainable way," stated Christian Verschueren, Director General, CropLife International. "We would like to see more countries adopt this technology for their own use."

The research and development-driven plant science industry continues to innovate and improve their products in order to increase benefits and deliver more solutions for agriculture. Farmers and consumers are already experiencing significant benefits from the use of pest-resistant and herbicide tolerant crops, including improved incomes, reduced labour, increased yields, and in some cases, reduced environmental impacts. Future biotech crops promise to bring even more benefits, such as drought resistance and increased nutrition. Work is also being done to combine multiple traits into an individual crop and to expand biotechnology's use to other crops.

In addition, industry is working hand-in-hand with governments, regulatory authorities and other interested bodies to build capacities and implement science-based and case-by-case biosafety assessments of new and existing products in order to ensure that the proven benefits of biotechnology can be realized, while minimizing any risks.

"As more countries realize the significant benefits biotechnology holds and as regulatory systems become stronger, fairer and less political, we are optimistic that 2004 is just the beginning of record-breaking growth in the use of this technology globally," Verschueren said.

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Note to Editors:

CropLife International is the global federation representing the plant science industry. It supports a network of regional and national associations in 88 countries, and is led by companies such as BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, FMC, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta. CropLife International promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products, their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production, and their responsible use through stewardship activities.

* The report issued today by International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) states, amongst other things that:

- Biotech crops experienced the second highest hectarage growth on record (20%) in 2004, to reach 81million hectares (200 million acres).
- Approximately 8.25 million farmers in 17 countries planted biotech crops in 2004, with 90% of these farmers in developing countries.
- For the first time, absolute growth in biotech crop area was higher in developing countries (7.2 million hectares) than in industrial countries (6.1 million hectares).
- The number of "biotech mega-countries" (countries growing 50,000 hectares or more of biotech crops) increased from 10 to 14 in 2004.

An executive summary can be accessed at www.isaaa.org.

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