

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Italian Ministry of Agriculture Tests Seeds for GMOs

Report Categories:

Biotechnology

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Report Highlights:

The Italian Ministry of Agriculture recently released their annual report on seed testing as part of their control program against the presence of GMOs in their corn and soybean seeds. Analyses were performed on 1,249 samples of corn seed and 493 samples of soybean seeds. Of these samples tested, 1.7% of the seed corn and 1.4% of the soybean seed were found to have traces of GMOs.

General Information:

OVERVIEW

The Italian Ministry of Agriculture recently released its annual report on seed testing. One objective of the tests is to ensure that GMOs are not present in corn and soybean seeds. The Ministry analyzed 1,249 samples of corn seed and 493 samples of soybean seeds, of which 1.7% of the seed corn and 1.4% of the soybean seed were found to contain traces of GMOs.

The Ministry's collects and test samples of corn and soybean seeds to ensure that Italian farmers do not use seeds that contain GMOs. The testing is performed by the Ministry of Agriculture's Central Inspectorate for the Protection of Quality Food Products and Prevention of Fraud (ICQRF) and the National Research Institute for Food and Nutrition (INRAN) of the Italian Customs Agency.

CORN SEED

Italian corn area is more than 1.1 million hectares, and in 2011 industry estimates report production at 9,000,000 MT. Of the 1,249 corn seed samples tested, 21 samples (1.7% of the seed) tested positive for traces of GMOs ranging from 0.1 to 0.3%. These corn seeds were immediately seized by the authorities.

Below is a table outlining the type of corn seed found with irregularities and the country of origin:

CORN SEED VARIETY	IRREGULARITIES	ORIGIN
PR33T56	3	USA
PR31N27	3	USA
PR32B10	5	USA
P1543	1	USA
PR36V52	1	USA
DKC6089	2	FRANCE
NAUDI	1	FRANCE
VIVANI	1	FRANCE
DKC6286	1	FRANCE
PR35F36	1	FRANCE
ANADON	1	CHILE
FANTASTIC	1	CHILE

Below is a table outlining corn seed testing results performed from 2005-2011:

CORN SEED TESTING	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Samples Tested	1564	2564	2170	2197	1799	1638	1249
Quantities Sampled	31.776.11	22.466.34	24.900.46	22.898.39	22.498.86	20.571.20	11.096.45
Irregular Samples Found	55	34	32	28	22	10	21
% of the total irregular samples	3.5%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	1.3%	0.6%	1.7%

SOYBEAN SEED

Italian soybean area exceeds 250,000 hectares and in 2011 industry estimates report production at 800,000 MT. Of the 493 soybean seed samples tested, seven (1.7% of the seed) tested positive for traces of GMOs at 0.1%. These soybean seeds were immediately seized by the authorities.

Below is a table outlining the type of soybean seed found with irregularities and the country of origin:

SOYBEAN SEED VARIETY	IRREGULARITIES	ORIGIN
PR91M10	3	USA
DEMETRA	1	ITALY
PR91M10	1	ITALY
PR92M22	1	CANADA
PR92B63	1	CANADA

Below is a table outlining soybean seed testing results performed from 2005-2011:

SOYBEAN SEED TESTING	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Samples Tested	229	553	413	358	504	590	493
Quantities Sampled	4.641,34	11.086,40	8.097,51	7.067,28	10.154,15	11.690,91	11.099,59

Irregular Samples Found	10	14	24	14	16	15	7
% of the total irregular samples	4.6%	2.5%	5.8%	3.9%	3.2%	2.6%	1.4%

BIOTECH CROPS IN ITALY

Planting biotech crops is illegal in Italy due the absence of coexistence rules and to a strong opposition by some regions, farmers' unions and NGOs. Although public opinion is generally negative towards biotech food—which is thought to be less healthy and counter to Italian culinary and cultural traditions—the opposition may not be as strong as some believe. Pro-biotech policies currently are not politically expedient. However, eventually they may become an economic necessity. Despite opposing the EU's opt-out proposal to grant Member States the ability to opt-out of EU-approved biotech cultivation for non-scientific reasons, Italy may invoke the safeguard clause to prevent the cultivation of EU-authorized biotech crops (see FAS GAIN IT1127).

FOR MORE POST REPORTING on GMOs PLEASE SEE:

IT1131 – Italian Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

IT1127 – Italy Intends to Invoke Safeguard Clause

IT1125 – Biotechnology in Italy 2011

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