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Spain

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MON810 Corn Area Reaches Record Level on the Iberian Peninsula

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Report Highlights:

Spain and Portugal are respectively the first and second largest GE corn growing countries in the European Union, accounting for over 90 percent of total EU-27 GE corn area. Increased total area planted to corn in both countries along with severe corn borer attacks in the previous campaign, are seen as the main triggers for the record cultivation of Bt varieties. In the case of Portugal, the temporary suspension of new applications for agri-environmental payments that discriminate against GM crops also encouraged 2011 plantings.

Executive Summary:

Spain

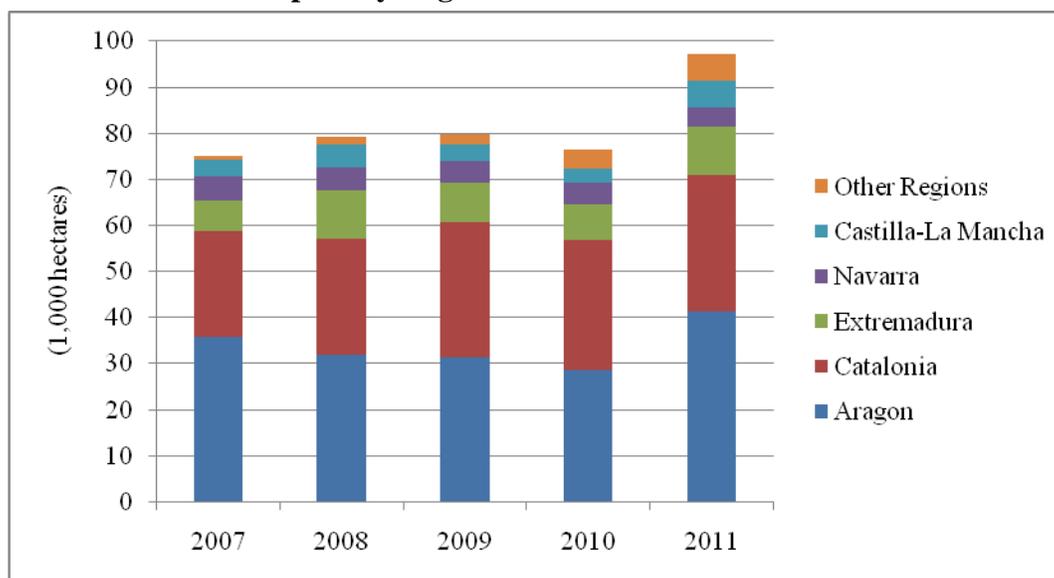
Spain is the largest producer of GE corn within the EU. According to recently released data by the Spanish Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs (MARM), MON 810 area is expected to grow by about 27 percent in 2011, setting a record in area planted to GE corn at 97,325 hectares.

Estimated area planted to MON 810 is calculated by MARM assuming a planting density of 85,000 seeds per hectare, and since 2009, MARM data include not only corn varieties in the national register in the EU common catalogue, but also those varieties granted with a provisional authorization.

The increased acreage planted to Bt corn in Spain has taken place due to larger total corn area, along with a significant increased use of GE corn varieties in regions such as Castile-La Mancha, Extremadura and Andalucía that planted Bt corn as a response to high pressure of the corn borer during the previous season. GE corn area in the traditional major growing regions such as Aragon and Catalonia was also higher compared to 2010.

The latest MARM area statistics estimate total corn area to reach 368,000 ha in 2011, up from 312,000 ha in 2010. Thus, based on current official estimates of total corn and Bt corn area, MON 810 would represent about 26.5 percent of total area planted to corn, the largest GE corn share since the beginning of its commercial cultivation in Spain.

Graph 1. GM corn area in Spain by Region



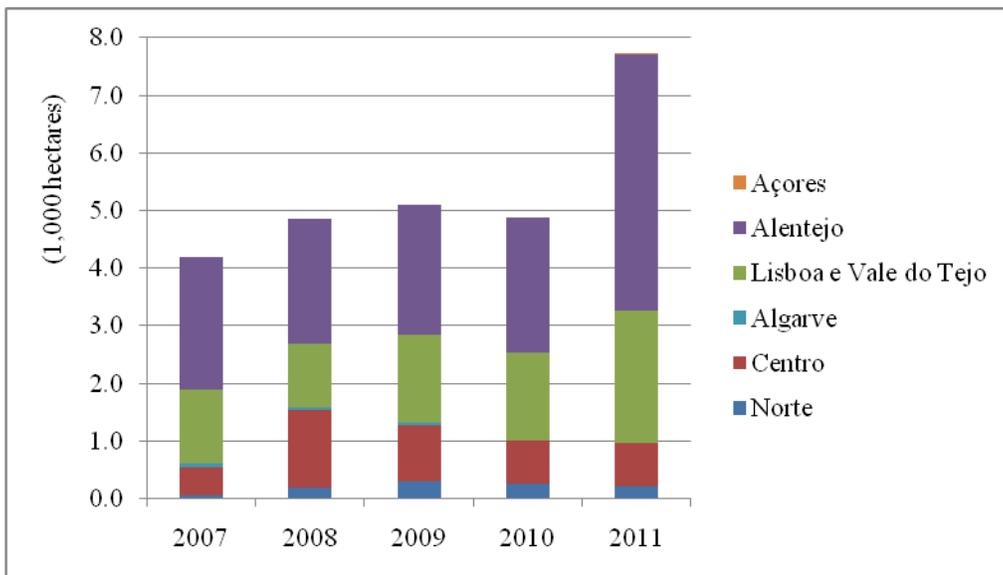
Source: FAS Madrid based on MARM data

Portugal

Portugal is the second largest producer of GE crops in the EU. The area under GE corn is expected to rise by about 59 percent in 2011, based on the mandatory notifications submitted by farmers. This is due to a higher overall corn area, severe corn borer attacks in the previous campaign, and to the temporary suspension of new applications for agri-environmental payments that discriminate against GM crops.

Data published in September by Portugal’s General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development (DGADR) shows that 248 notifications were submitted for the cultivation of GE corn in 2011, up from 191 in 2010. In area terms this corresponds to 7,723.5 ha of planting intentions of GM corn in 2011.

Graph 2 - GM corn area in Portugal by Region



Source: FAS Madrid based on DGADR data

This development marks a recovery from the previous campaign when a number of reasons contributed to the lower GE corn area. Among these were delays in sowing due to unfavorable weather conditions that caused farmers to choose varieties with shorter FAO cycles that are not GE, and the scarcity of seed of some of the GE varieties sought by the farmers.

The Portuguese National Statistical Institute (INE) estimates total grain corn area in Portugal to reach 97,000 ha in 2011, up from 93,000 ha in 2010.

Related reports from FAS EU offices:

Report number	Title	Date released
FR9074	EU-27 Biotechnology Annual	7/29/2011

SP1116	Spain - Biotechnology Annual	8/5/2011
PT1103	Portugal - Biotechnology Annual	8/5/2011

These reports can be accessed through the FAS website:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/attacherep/default.asp>