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Review

Trade and commerce in improved crops and food: an essay on food security

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Agricultural trade between nations is a significant proportion of total international trade. Agricultural trade in transgenic crops faces extra complications due to the existence of domestic and international regimes that focus specifically on agricultural biotechnology. These specialized regimes create legal and commercial challenges for trade in transgenic crops that have significant implications for the food security of the nations of the world. By food security, one should understand not just the available supply of food, but also the quality of the food and the environmental impact of agricultural production systems. These specialized regimes for transgenic crops can either encourage or hinder the adoption of agricultural biotechnology as a sustainable intensive agriculture. Sustainable intensive agriculture offers hope for agronomic improvements for agricultural production, socio-economic betterment for farmers and environmental benefits for societies. Sustainable intensive agriculture offers particular hope for the poorest farmers of the world because agricultural biotechnology is a technology in the seed.



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Professor Kershen presented this topic at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences Study Week on Transgenic Plants for Food Security in the Context of Development (15–19 May 2009). This essay originated in the PAS presentation, updated with sources through December 2009.

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