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Jordan

Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

Agricultural Biotechnology Regulations in Jordan Remain Unchanged

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Report Highlights:
Jordan's biotechnology draft biosafety law based on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which among other issues mandates the labeling of biotech products, has yet to be approved since its drafting two years ago. There is no clear timetable when or if the Biosafety Law will be ratified by Parliament. Jordan's poultry and dairy industry are completely dependent on grain and oilseeds imports. In 2014, Jordan imported over $550,000 of U.S. origin soybean meal, and $200,000 of distillers dried grains with solubles.

Section I. Executive Summary:

In 2013, the Government of Jordan's (GOJ) Ministry of Environment (MOE) tabled a "draft" biosafety law regulating agricultural biotechnology products. However, the biosafety law has yet to be ratified by Parliament. Due to the law's shortcomings, it is anticipated that it will not be ratified by Parliament.

FAS/Amman, along with Jordanian stakeholders, is actively lobbying the GOJ to adopt regulations that are science-based and would not hinder the trade of commodities produced from biotech seed varieties or foods derived from these commodities.

The U.S. used to be Jordan's main corn supplier; however, its market share has been displaced to the more competitive Ukrainian corn. In 2014, Jordan imported close to $550,000 of U.S. soybean meal and $120,000 of distillers dried grains with solubles.

CHAPTER1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:
There is no product development of genetically engineered (GE) crops in Jordan.

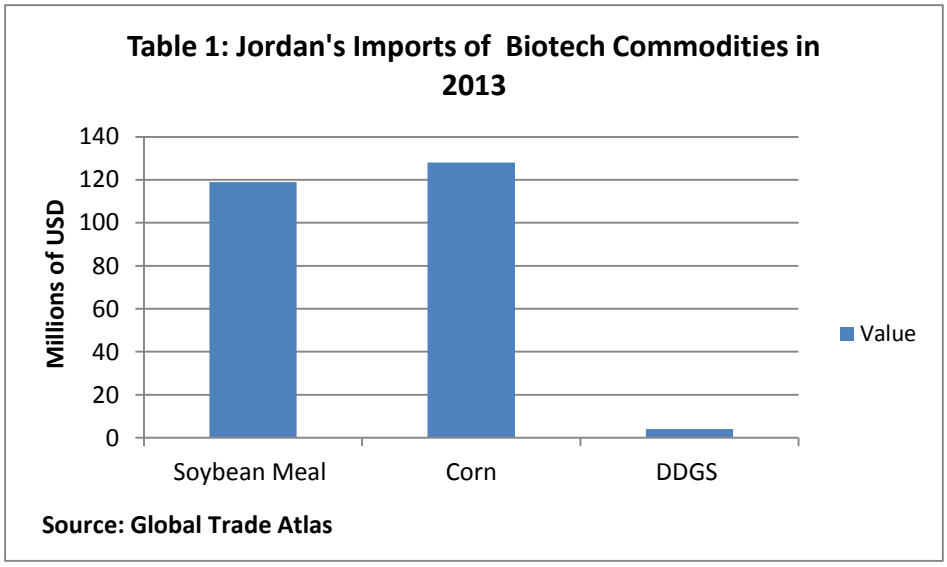
b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:
There is no commercial production of GE crops in Jordan.

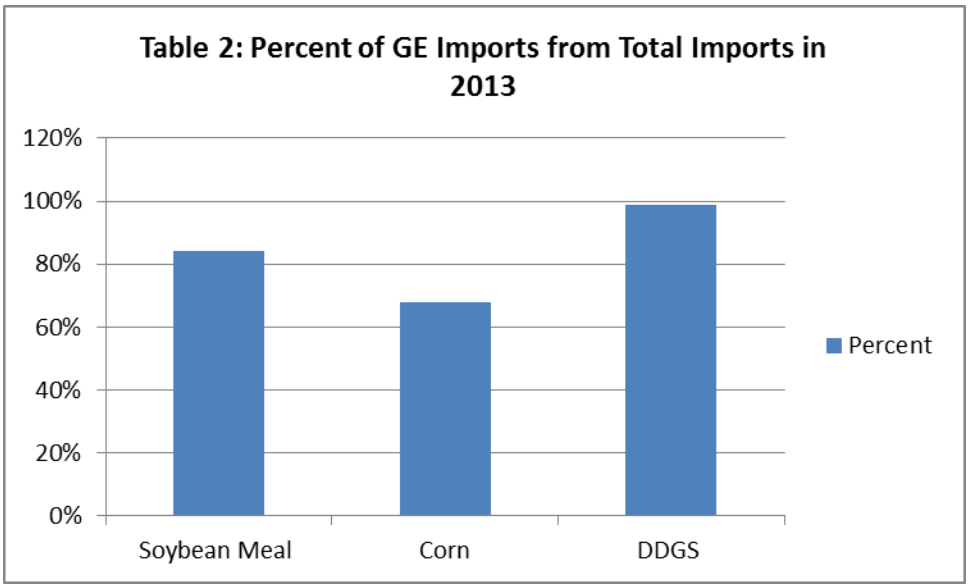
c) EXPORTS:
Jordan does not export commodities or products derived from agricultural biotechnology.

d) IMPORTS:

Jordan does not allow for the commercial growing of GE crops, but relies heavily on imports of GE products such as soybeans, soybean meal, and corn, also some processed food items derived from GE soy and corn ingredients such as oil, cereals, and chips. Jordan's growing dairy and poultry sectors are the main consumers as these industries are completely reliant on imports to meet their feed requirements. In 2013, Jordan imported approximately $330 million of soybean meal, corn and DDGS out of which $250 million were derived from biotech crops (Table 1). Almost all of its DDG imports, 84 percent of its soybean meal imports, and 68 percent of its corn imports were of GE origin in 2013(Table 2).

U.S. corn and soybean meal used to have a commanding share of the market, but it has lost significant market share due to more competitive origins from Ukraine and South America. It remains practically the sole supplier of DDGS with 99 percent market share.





e) FOOD AID RECIPIENT COUNTRIES:
Jordan is currently a food aid recipient, it receives a U.S. food donation in the form of wheat, there are no issues related to biotechnology that impede the importation of wheat as there is no biotech wheat produced in the US.

PART B: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:
There is no clear agricultural biotechnology framework. To address this situation, the Government of Jordan drafted a biosafety law based on the Cartagena Protocol Biosafety principals. The regulation would cover trade in living modified organisms (LMOs) and put in place a notification mechanism. The draft law also calls for the labeling of products derived from agricultural biotechnology.

The dairy and poultry industries have expressed reservations about the draft law, consequently it has been in a stagnant phase waiting for Parliament to ratify it. It is now unclear whether it will move forward for ratification or not.

b) APPROVALS:
Jordan lacks a biosafety law, currently there is no approval mechanism in place.

c) FIELD TESTING:
Jordan's lack of a biosafety law hinders the approval mechanism to allow for field testing. Additionally, many of the commercially viable biotech crops are not grown in Jordan such as soybeans and cotton. On the other hand corn production is not significant.

d) STACKED EVENT APPROVALS:
Not applicable.

e) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

Not applicable.

f) COEXISTENCE:
No policy on coexistence.

g) LABELING: Standards for the labeling of pre-packaged foods are determined by the Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology (JISM) (http://www.jism.gov.jo) under Regulation JS 9:2001, passed in March 2001. The regulation is equivalent to the Codex general standard for labeling pre-packaged foods. However, it must be noted that Regulation JS9:2001 has a provision stating that any product that is labeled as a GE or has GE ingredients will not be accepted to enter the country. To date, Post is unaware of any shipments that have been rejected due to this provision.

h) TRADE BARRIERS:
No actual trade barriers are in place. However, if the new biosafety law is applied, it could cause problems for biotech products. Nonetheless, it would be an untenable situation as its domestic poultry and dairy industries heavily rely on imported biotech feed ingredients

i) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR): Jordan adopted the New Plant Variety Protection Law in 2004. The Law meets WTO's TRIPS Section 5 Article 27 (3.b), providing for the protection of plant varieties by an effective *sui generis* system.

j) CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION:
Jordan is a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity (CBP). The draft biosafety law would implement the Protocol's provisions on trade of LMO's, as such it currently has not implemented any of the Protocol's key provisions.

k) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FORA: Jordan has ratified CBD and Kyoto and Montreal protocols. It is member of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and the Codex Alimentarius (Codex). Jordan tries to shy away from any position that is controversial between the US and the EU.

l) RELATED ISSUES:
None.

m) MONITORING AND TESTING:
Currently, Jordan does not monitor or test for GE products.

n) LOW LEVEL PRESENCE POLICY:
No policy.

PART C: MARKETING

a) MARKET ACCEPTANCE:
Market acceptance of GE products is currently non-controversial. Jordan's reliance on 90 percent of food imports to meet its needs has prompted the public and private sectors to widely accept food items from different origins. With a per capita income in PPP terms of $12,000/year, consumers also tend to be price driven.

b) PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS: The public sector is not consistent with their views on biotechnology. The Ministry of the Environment drafted the biosafety law that would require the labeling of biotech products, however, the Ministry of Agriculture realizes that it would be a costly and erroneous proposition as the two largest agribusiness industries, poultry and dairy, depend completely on imported feedstuff, which is over 75 percent of biotech origin. On the other hand, Jordan's FDA would like to increase its oversight of biotech foods on food safety concerns.

The private sector also has differing views. The domestic poultry and dairy industries are very supportive of the technology, as it's critical to meet their needs. While the export sector, mainly fruit and vegetables, likes to be perceived as GE free mainly to appease its European market, and would be against the introduction of any GE crops (regardless if it's only corn) into the country. Consumers once in a while hear from activists groups, but these have yet to garner significant momentum.

c) MARKETING STUDIES:
There are no marketing studies on GE plants.

PART D: CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH

a) ACTIVITIES: GoJ has repeatedly asked for capacity building assistance in strengthening their capacity, yet the attempt of FAS to meet their requests wasn't well perceived.

b) STRATEGIES AND NEEDS: Jordan needs to revise the current draft of the proposed biosafety law. The law, as it is currently drafted, has the potential to impose significant barriers to trade. It is critical that the law stipulates that the regulations must be based on international standards. It would behoove FAS to work closely with Jordan regulators and provide the necessary feedback and capacity building activities for a well drafted and functional biosafety law. In addition, it's is necessary that Jordanians understand that biotechnology is a key tool to face some of the country's most severe problems such as persistent water scarcity, and salinity.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART E: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

c) BIOTECHNOLOGY PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: No GE animals are under development in Jordan that may be on the market in the coming year, or in the near future.

d) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: The country does not commercially produce any livestock clones or GE animals or products derived from animal biotechnologies.

e) BIOTECHNOLOGY IMPORTS: The country does not import GE animals or livestock clones or products from these animals, including genetics.

PART F: POLICY

f) Not applicable

PART H: CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH

Not available