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2015 Francophone West Africa Biotechnology Report

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Report Highlights:

The Government of Cote d'Ivoire having finally adopted the Cartagena Protocol in June 2015, is drafting the biosafety law for Parliament approval. Burkinabe farmers and cotton industries are complaining about the short length of Bt cotton fiber, and cotton industries are asking Monsanto for compensation on losses from cotton fiber sale in MY2014/2015. Stakeholders said that they will reduce area planted to Bt cotton from 70 percent to 50 percent maximum in MY 2015/16. The Burkinabe Parliament adopted a law that changes the status of the National Biosafety Agency into an administrative entity with legal authority under independent management. In February 2015, ministries in charge of biosafety issues from respective WAEMU countries met in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) to adopt the regional biosafety law with the recommended changes on article 25 related to notification and authorization of GMOs and derived products. Senegal is keen on revising its biosafety law. Although, the process has not started yet, it intends to be completed by the end of 2015.

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Section I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).

In Francophone West Africa, Burkina Faso is the leader in biotechnology crops. The country has cultivated Bt cotton since 2008 and is undergoing confined field testing CFTs for Bt cowpea and Bt corn. Government legislation and public attitude are generally favorable though stakeholders are currently dissatisfied with fiber length of Monsanto's local variety of Bt cotton. Consequently, they could reduce planting area in MY2015/2016.

Cote d'Ivoire finally adopted the Cartagena protocol in June 2015. The draft of the biosafety law, with requested amendments, was resubmitted to the Government of Cote d'Ivoire (GOCI). If GOCI is satisfied with it, the law will be sent to Parliament for approval.

The National Biosafety Authority in Senegal is revising the biosafety law, aiming for completion by the end of 2015.

WEAMU Ministers have adopted a regional biosafety law. Ministries recommended that the three organizations WAEMU¹, ECOWAS², and CILSS³ continue their collaboration to finalize the regional biosafety law, which they believe benefit to all members states.

¹ WAEMU (UEMOA) - West African Economic and Monetary Union members includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.

² ECOWAS members include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

Section II. PLANT AND ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

Chapter 1: Plant Biotechnology

Part A: Production and Trade

a. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Only Burkina Faso is developing new product. Bt cotton Bolgard II Roundup ready flex is on confined field trials.

Otherwise, there is no known new product development in Francophone West Africa.

a. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

Bt cotton remains the only crop commercialized in Burkina Faso and Francophone West Africa.

In MY 2014/15, Bt cotton was planted on about 467, 000 hectares and accounted for 70 percent (497,000 MT) of the national production 710,000 MT. Farmers continue to be unhappy with Monsanto's cotton variety commercialized in 2008 which has not met expectations or promise for fiber length. For MY 2015/16, cotton stakeholders decided to reduce area planted to Bt cotton from 70 percent to 50 percent.

The next genetically engineered (GE) crop in Burkina Faso will probably be Bt cowpea.

a. EXPORTS

No Francophone West African countries export genetically engineered crops.

a. IMPORTS

There is no official record of GE product imports as it is difficult to monitor. Laboratories selected by West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) as referral laboratories to detect presence of GE products received equipment but are not yet functional.

³ CILSS members include Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad Cape Verde

a. FOOD AID RECIPIENT COUNTRIES

Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal are food aid recipient countries in Francophone West Africa.

PART B: POLICY

a. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the National Biosafety Agency (NBA) was a structure attached the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation but its status has recently changed to an administrative entity with a legal authority and independent management. The Director believes it will allow the Agency to be more efficiency.

The NBA is a public organization whose members are state officials. Its role is to:

- issue notification and assessment forms
- receive request for authorization to use, import, or export GMOs and deliver permit

The NBA has two advisory bodies to assist in its daily tasks: the National Biosafety Scientific Committee (NBHC) and the National Biosafety Observatory (NVO). The NBHC is responsible for assessing the socio-economic risks of GMOs biotechnological productions. It is composed of twelve members chosen on the basis of their profile and their recognized expertise. The National Biosafety Observatory consists of 33 members (20 from 13 Public Administration and Civil Society). Its role is to ensure that GMOs products are used accordingly as stipulated in the law. It has also the responsibility to inform and raise awareness on biosafety.

For more information on national frameworks, please visit 2010 GAIN report http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Biotechnology%20-%20GE%20Plants%20and%20Animals_Dakar_Senegal_7-15-2010.pdf

Regional Initiatives

Ministries from WEAMU countries in charge of environment, agriculture, animal resources and fisheries, and scientific research met in Ouagadougou in February 2015 and adopted the regional biosafety law with an amendment on Article 25 to read “Any who wishes to do confined testing, develop, import, disseminate or introduce to the market LMOs and / derived product should submit a written request to the competent national authority of the concerned WAEMU country member” instead of written request to the WAEMU Commission.

Mali

The Malian biosafety law was signed in December 2008 by the former president. The law gives authority to the *National Competent Authority* (NCA) under the Ministry of the Environment to monitor and control the implementation of this law. The Ministry of Environment approves authorization for any activity involving GMOs and their products. The NCA, institutional framework is composed of three committees:

- Risk and assessment committee
- Public participation committee
- Regulations and legal committee

A Decree has allowed GE testing procedures since December 2010, but none has been done so far.

Even though farmers are willing to use GM crops especially Bt cotton, the Malian civil society are still reluctant. Post thinks that an awareness campaign could help advance better understanding the benefit of biotechnology.

Senegal

The Senegal biosafety law was adopted in 2009 for biotechnology and biosafety of GMOs and derived products, and environmental release. The law gives authority to the Ministry of Environment for authorizing any importation or use of GMOs. It is supported by the National Biosafety Authority (NBA) in charge of administrative issues and the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) for technical issues. The NBA is composed of 17 members from different ministries and the presidency. The Executive Director and members of the NBA are appointed by ministerial order.

The NBC is responsible for risk assessments related to the import, export, handling, transit, confined use, release or launching of GMOs or derived products. Its 30 members consist of scientists, the public and private sectors, and members of the general public.

Togo

Togo has been revising its biosafety law since 2013. The draft law is ready while implementing regulations that go with the law are being drafted..

Cote d'Ivoire

Cote d'Ivoire finally adopted the Cartagena Protocol in June 2015. A draft of the biosafety law has been submitted to the Government of Cote d'Ivoire (GOCI) and it is being reviewed. . If GOCI is satisfied with it, the next step should be to submit to the Parliament for approval.

b) APPROVALS

The only country in francophone West Africa that has approved a GE crop for cultivation is Burkina

Faso. Bt cotton, developed by Monsanto in collaboration with the National Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research (INERA), is the only GE crop approved and registered in Burkina Faso for cultivation.

c) FIELD TESTING

Only Burkina Faso allows field testing for GE crops.

Field trials for Bt cowpea resistant to the *Maruca Vitrata* pod borer may start in MY2015/16. Tests with two good local varieties containing Bt gene will be conducted by the National Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research (INERA).

Burkina Faso will conduct hybrid corn field tests for the second year in MY 2015/16.

d) STACKED EVENT APPROVALS

No stacked events are approved in francophone West Africa.

e) ADDITIONNAL REQUIREMENT

All WAEMU countries need to comply with the harmonized regulatory framework at the national level, particularly for seed, quality control, certification and variety release.

For additional information, please visit

<http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/PGR/PubSeeds/HarmonizedSeedsEng.pdf>

f) COEXISTENCE

There are no known rules on coexistence.

g) LABELING

Burkina Faso

The biosafety law requires that any GE product intended for distribution or marketing on the national territory must be packaged and labelled in an indelible and non-modified manner in order to ensure the protection of ethical and cultural values and to avoid any risks for the environment as well as human and animal health.

Also, all GE product developed on the national territory shall be packaged and labelled by the producer or the dispatcher with the indication “Produced on the basis of genetically modified organisms” or “Containing genetically modified organisms” in conformity with complementary standards defined by the competent national authority in cooperation with other departments concerned.

The terms of labelling are established on the basis of a decree adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Senegal

The law states that all GE products used for direct animal or human food or for transformation or introduction into the environment should be labeled “contains GMOs”.

Mali

The law has provisions covering the import, export, transit, contained use, and release or introduction into the market of any GE products, be it for pharmaceutical, food feed or other agricultural proposes. There is also provision in the law for mandatory labeling for all products made from GE.

Togo

N/A

Cote d’Ivoire

N/A

h) TRADE BARRIERS

There are no current or pending trade barriers. Importers should follow the regulation based on the country biosafety law.

a. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

The *African Intellectual Property Organization* (OAPI) regroups 15 African French-speaking countries. Among them, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. These countries are treated as one state in trademark law. Apart from OAPI, there is no national trademark law in the member states. Therefore it is not possible to obtain national registrations in these countries. Trademark protection is obtained via registration. It is valid for 10 years from the date of application and renewable for the same period. Foreign applicants need a local agent. A non-legalized power of attorney is sufficient.

j) CARTAGENA PROTOCOL

Mali ratified the Cartagena protocol in September 2003.

Senegal ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in January 2004.

Togo ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in September 2004.

Cote d’Ivoire ratified the Cartagena Protocol in June 2015.

Burkina Faso ratified the Cartagena protocol in November 2003.

For more information on each countries related to implementing stage, regulations, and capacity

building needs, please refer to <https://bch.cbd.int/protocol/parties/#tab=0>

k) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FORA

Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal are members of international organizations including FAO and Codex Alimentarius.

l) RELATED ISSUES

All biotechnology research in Burkina Faso is related to Bt cotton, Bt cowpea for pest resistance and nutrition, bio fortified sorghum for food security, and hybrid corn.

m) MONITORING AND TESTING

WAEMU countries have not yet started testing GE products even though each country has adequate equipment.

n) LOW LEVEL OF PRESENCE POLICY

Countries do not have a policy on low level presence.

Part C: Marketing

a. MARKET ACCEPTANCE

Bt cotton is the only GM crop commercialized in francophone West Africa countries. It is widely used by farmers who are satisfied despite the short length fiber. The use of Bt cotton reduces labor and improves health due to the decrease of the quantity of pesticides used. Bt cotton seed's price is more expensive than conventional's but it is compensated with the reduced amount of insecticides purchased by the farmers. Cotton companies in Burkina Faso and the research institute (INERA) continue to support Bt cotton in collaboration with Monsanto and expect the issue with the short length fiber to be solved soon. Several other countries as Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and Mali are also willing to adopt Bt cotton. However, their current biosafety laws are not workable and countries are working on revising it.

a. PUBLIC/ PRIVATE OPINIONS

While stakeholders generally support GE crops in Burkina Faso, they are dissatisfied with the fiber length of Bt cotton.

a. MARKETING STUDIES

Post is not aware of any marketing studies in countries covered.

Part D: Capacity Building and Outreach

a. ACTIVITIES

Dakar Post was awarded \$16,000 to organize a two-day Biotech outreach program for stakeholders, members of Parliament, the private sector, the civil society, and journalists in Senegal in partnership with the National Biosafety Authority (NBA). The workshop will take place in the first week of September 2015.

From August 19-21, 2014, USDA partnered with International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation and the National Biosafety Authority of Senegal to organize a two day regional Agricultural Biotechnology Communication Workshop in Dakar. Seventy participants from WAEMU countries, four speakers from the States, and five from West Africa participated to the event.

These two workshops are in prelude of the revision of the national biosafety law. The NBA is targeting end-of-year 2015 to complete the revision of the biosafety law. Post thinks it may be challenging since the NBA has not secured funding yet.

a. STRATEGIES AND NEEDS

Most countries are working on revising their biosafety law. Needs are mainly on raising awareness among stakeholders and the general population to change the perception of GMOs. Regulators need training in in risk assessment and detection of GMOs and the laboratories level.

Chapter 2: Animal Biotechnology

PART E: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a. BIOTECHNOLOGY PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

There is no development on animal biotechnology during the past years.

a. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

N/A

a. BIOTECHNOLOGY EXPORTS

N/A

- a. BIOTECHNOLOGY IMPORTS

N/A

PART F: POLICY

- a. REGULATION

N/A

- a. LABELING AND TRACEABILITY

N/A

- a. TRADE BARRIERS

N/A

- a. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

N/A

- a. INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/ FORA

N/A

PART G: MARKETING

- a. MARKET ACCEPTANCE

No information

- a. PUBLIC/ PRIVATE OPINIONS

No information

- a. MARKET STUDIES

No information

PART H: CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH

a. ACTIVITIES

No activities have been undertaken related to animal biotechnology

a. STRATEGIES AND NEEDS

References

- African Centre for Biosafety – <http://www.biosafetyafrica.net>
- African Union - New partnership for Africa's development (AU-NEPAD)

<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AUC/SpecialPrograms/nepad/nepad.htm> <http://www.nepad.org>

- Convention on Biological Diversity – <http://www.cbd.int/biosafety>
- Interstate Committee for Reducing Desertification in the Sahel (Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel) - <http://www.cilss.bf>
- Cochran program <http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/cochran/cochranarchive.asp>
- African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) <http://www.oapi.wipo.net>
- West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development

CORAF/WECARD - <http://www.coraf.org>

- West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) - <http://www.uemoa.int>

Acronyms

ABNE	African Biosafety network of Expertise
CFTs	Confined Field Trials
CILSS	Interstate Committee for Reducing Desertification in the Sahel
CP	Cartagena protocol
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GE	Genetically Engineered
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
GOBF	Government of Burkina Faso
IER	Institut d'Economie Rurale
IFIC	International Food Information Council
INERA	Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles
LMOs	Living Modified Organisms
NBA	National Biosafety Authority
NBC	National Biosafety Committee
UEMOA/WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture