

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Jordan

Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

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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 three 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 oilseed meal imports, the majority of which are genetically engineered (GE).

Section I. Executive Summary:

In 2013, the Government of Jordan's (GoJ) Ministry of Environment (MOE) put forward a "draft" biosafety law regulating agricultural biotechnology products. It has yet to be ratified by parliament and, due to the law's shortcomings, creating statutory overlap, it is anticipated that the law will not be ratified.

In May of 2016, FAS-Amman, along with Jordanian stakeholders, hosted an event bringing world-class experts to provide appropriate guidance to the GoJ to draft biosafety regulations that are science-based and would not hinder the trade of commodities produced from biotech seed varieties or foods derived from these commodities.

CHAPTER I: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:

Despite some incipient efforts by university researchers, there is still no product development of GE crops in Jordan. These university researchers would like to take the lead in introducing GE applications in Jordan to reduce the excessive use of pesticides and abiotic stresses such as extreme heat, drought, and salinity.

University researchers are the leading voice for the adoption of a biosafety regulatory framework. He is of the view that in order to combat climate change and Jordan's extreme water scarcity, GE crop technology must be taken in consideration as a tool to help address these extreme events.

The work of university researchers is being hindered due to the Ministry of Environment and National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension's (NCARE) inaction in prioritizing the adoption of a biosafety law.

b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:

There is no commercial production of GE crops in Jordan.

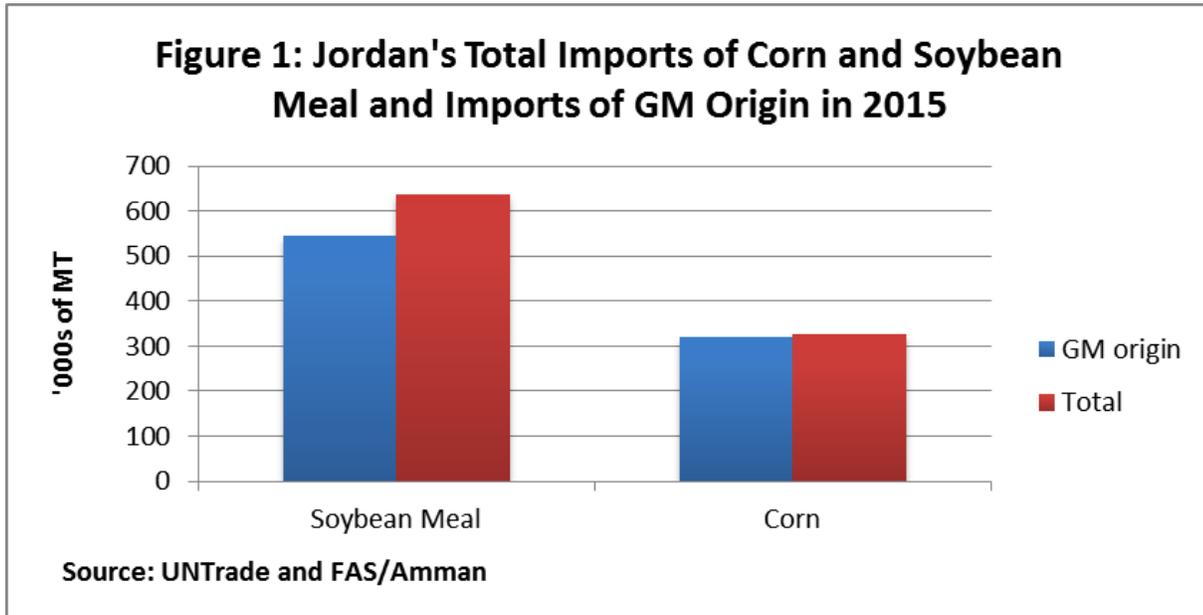
c) EXPORTS:

Jordan does not export commodities or products derived from agricultural biotechnology.

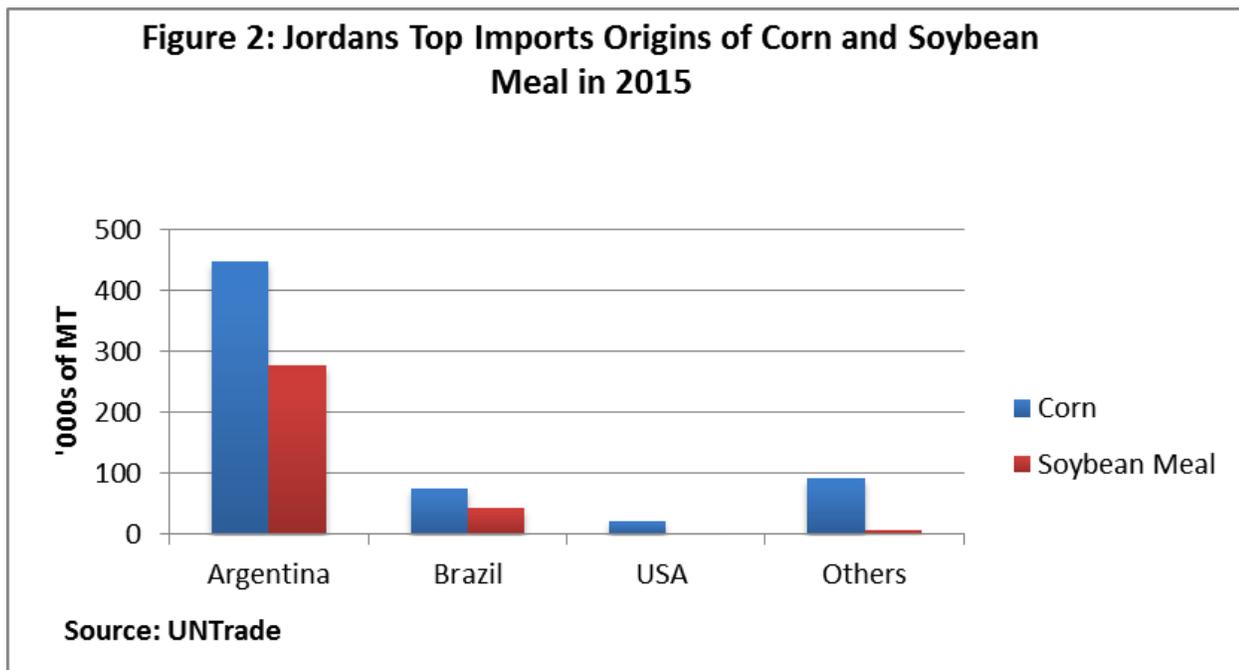
d) IMPORTS:

Jordan does not allow for the commercial growing of GE crops, but relies heavily on imports of GE products such as soybean meal, corn, and some processed food items derived from GE soy and corn ingredients; these include 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 2015, Jordan imported approximately 960 thousand metric tons (TMT) of soybean meal, DDGS and corn. Around 90 percent of these commodities were of GE origin.



U.S. corn and soybean meal used to have a commanding share of the market, but have lost significant market share due to more price competitive origins from South America. The US 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 U.S. food donations in the form of wheat. In 2015, it received 95,000 MT of wheat under FAS' Food for Progress program. The monetized funds will be used to strengthen Jordan's SPS and irrigation infrastructure. There are no issues related to biotechnology that impede the importation of wheat as there is no GE wheat commercially available in the U.S.

PART B: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:

There is no clear agricultural biotechnology framework. To address this situation, the Government of Jordan GoJ drafted a biosafety law based on the Cartagena Protocol on 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's ratification. 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. 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) 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 labeled as a GE or having GE ingredients will not be allowed 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 rely heavily 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 (CBD). The draft biosafety law would implement the protocol's provisions on trade of LMO's. The country currently has not implemented any of the protocol's key provisions.

k) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FORA:

Jordan has ratified CBD, as well as the Kyoto and Montreal protocols. It is a 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 U.S. 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 of \$12,000/year (PPP), 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 Environment drafted the biosafety law that would require the labeling of biotech products, however, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) realizes that it would be a costly and erroneous proposition as the two largest agribusiness industries, poultry and dairy, depend completely on imported feedstuff. Over 90 percent of these feedstuffs are 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 is 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 markets. This sector

would be against the introduction of any GE crops into the country. Consumers sporadically hear from activists groups, but these have yet to garner significant momentum.

c) **MARKETING STUDIES:**

There are no marketing studies on GE plants.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART E: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) **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.

b) **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:**

The country does not commercially produce any livestock clones, GE animals, or products derived from animal biotechnologies.

c) **BIOTECHNOLOGY EXPORTS:**

Not applicable.

d) **BIOTECHNOLOGY IMPORTS:**

The country does not import GE animals, livestock clones, or products from these animals, including genetics.

PART F: POLICY

No current policy governs animal biotechnology.

PART G: MARKETING

No information exists on market acceptance or opinions and no studies are known to have been conducted.