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## **Jamaica**

### **Agricultural Biotechnology Annual**

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**Report Highlights:**

Jamaica is an important market for U.S. bulk agricultural products, intermediate products, and high value products, with a total value of approximately USD 378 million in 2017. In Jamaica, there is currently no commercial production of genetically engineered (GE) crops. In addition, Jamaica does not have a biotechnology or biosafety legal framework for the deregulation or commercialization of biotechnology crops and does not have specific requirements for GE imports. There are current regulations that governs the importation of GE products for experimental purposes. In addition, Jamaica's draft biotechnology policy, which has been in draft form for several years, explicitly states the need for mandatory labeling of GE products.

## **Executive Summary:**

Jamaica is an important market for U.S. bulk agricultural products (especially corn), intermediate products (soybean meal and soybean oil), and high value products (snack foods), with a total value of approximately USD 378 million in 2017. Since many of these products are produced using agricultural biotechnology, their future importation may be adversely affected by Jamaica's evolving biotechnology and bio-safety policies. The present regulatory framework governing the importation, development, and use of the products of modern biotechnology is in the draft stage and has been for several years. This draft policy has potential trade implications, including a mandatory labeling requirement for GE products. Jamaica ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety (CPB) on September 25, 2012, and it came into force on December 24, 2012.

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### **CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY**

#### **PART A: Production and Trade**

##### **a) Product development:**

The Biotechnology Center at the University of the West Indies (UWI) continues to work on developing a transgenic variety of papaya (*Carica papaya L*) that is resistant to the Papaya Ringspot Virus. Jamaica's National Biotechnology Strategy extensively highlights the potential to apply the tools of modern biotechnology to specific crops that are of economic importance to Jamaica, including hot pepper (*Capsicum chinense*), pumpkin (*Cucubita pepo L.*) and citrus fruit (*Citrus sinensis*).

b) Commercial production:

There is no commercial production of GE crops in Jamaica.

c) Exports:

N/A

d) Imports:

There are no current restrictions on GE product imports into Jamaica. The supply of most bulk commodities, including corn and soybean products, are imported and come mainly from the United States and Brazil, where GE crops are grown.

e) Food aid:

N/A

f) Trade barriers:

None

## **PART B: Policy**

a) Regulatory framework:

There are regulations governing the importation of GE products for experimental purposes. Additionally, importation for intentional commercial release into the natural environment is prohibited.

However, there is no regulation governing the importation of GE products for food or feed, and so these products can be imported into Jamaica without restriction.

In 2007, the Jamaican Parliament passed the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST) Act. The Act states that “the Commission shall promote the sustainable development and utilization of local science and technology capacities, for competitive and profitable production through education of the populace, partnership with government, private sector, academic institutions and such other bodies or institutions as the Commission considers appropriate.” The NCST is a multi-sectoral commission and the National Focal Point coordinates domestic activities and liaises with the Biosafety Clearing House and other external organizations.

The following legislation and regulations are currently in draft form:

1. **Biosafety Policy Act:** Jamaica's draft Biosafety Policy Act has not been approved by the Parliament. The regulations sent to the political directorate in 2009 are still in the draft submission stage. Sources indicate that this is not a priority issue. The Biosafety Policy Act is designed to meet Jamaica's international obligations, especially those set out in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Jamaica ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) on September 25, 2012, and it came into force on December 24, 2012.

Jamaica received assistance in the preparation of its Biosafety Policy Act from the United Nations Environmental Programme/Global Environmental Facility (UNEP/GEF) – Global Project “Development of National Biosafety Frameworks.” The project started in November 2002 and finished in December 2007. The Act, which is currently in its third draft, will direct national biotechnology and biosafety regulations. It should be noted that the draft National Bio-Safety Policy explicitly states the need for mandatory labeling of products of modern biotechnology. The full-text document is available at:

<http://www.nepa.gov.jm/documents/Draft-Biosafety-policy.pdf>.

2. **The Biotechnology Policy:** The biotechnology policy is also still in draft, pending action by the Jamaican Cabinet. It is not clear when or if further action will be forthcoming. The vision statement of Jamaica's biotechnology policy as stated in the draft policy is “...to utilize the best technological methods to improve the way of life of its people...”.

b) Approvals:

Since there is currently no approval process for GE organisms, there are no lists of approved or registered plants/crops for import or export or for domestic cultivation.

c) Stacked or Pyramided Event Approvals:

Since there is currently no approval process, the government of Jamaica does not require additional approval for stacked or pyramided events.

d) Field Testing:

Jamaica allows field-testing of GE crops under controlled conditions. Currently, GE papayas are in the field trial phase in controlled greenhouses.

e) Innovative Biotechnologies:

N/A

f) Coexistence:

N/A

g) Labeling:

Jamaica does not have a labeling requirement for GE products or ingredients at this time.

h) Monitoring and Testing:

Jamaica does not monitor or test imports for GE traits.

i) Low Level Presence (LLP) Policy:

Jamaica does not have a LLP policy.

j) Additional Regulatory Requirements:

None

k) Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):

N/A

l) Cartagena Protocol Ratification:

On September 25, 2012, Jamaica ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety (CPB) to the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity. This Protocol came into force on December 24, 2012.

m) International Treaties/Fora:

Jamaican officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce and Health participate in international standard setting bodies such as the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Codex Alimentarius (Codex).

n) Related Issues:

N/A

## **PART C: Marketing**

### a) Public/Private Opinions:

No active organizations or campaigns are lobbying either for or against the use of GE plants.

### b) Market Acceptance/Studies:

Post is not aware of any studies or other efforts related to market acceptance of GE plants in Jamaica.

## **CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY**

### **PART D: Production and Trade**

- a) Product Development: Jamaica is not conducting research on GE or cloned animals.
- b) Commercial Production: There are no GE or cloned animals for food production in Jamaica.
- c) Exports: N/A
- d) Imports: N/A
- e) Trade Barriers: N/A

### **PART E: Policy**

- a) Regulatory Framework: N/A
- b) Innovative Biotechnologies: N/A
- c) Labeling and Traceability: N/A
- d) Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): N/A
- e) International Treaties/Flora: N/A
- f) Related Issues: N/A

### **PART F: Marketing**

- a) Public/Private Opinions: None. Not an issue of public debate or concern.
- b) Market Acceptance/Studies: None