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Report Highlights:

Agricultural biotechnology constitutes an opportunity, as non-governmental and governmental organizations have been working to encourage its integration in the Haitian economy in recent years. Although it is a controversial issue among the Haitian community, Haiti depends heavily on imports from countries where biotechnology is common. Currently, there is no policy against genetically engineered crops or animals.

Executive Summary:

Haiti depends heavily on the imports of U.S. agricultural products. Even though there is no policy against genetically engineered (GE) products, they are a controversial issue among the Haitian populace. The dominant public opinion is that biotechnology negatively affects human health. Moreover, Haiti is not a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol. However, Post is not aware of any intentions to restrict GE products. On the contrary, the position of the Haitian government has changed in recent years related to biotechnology, and biotechnology is now considered to be a positive opportunity for the Haitian economy.

Currently, Haiti does not produce any GE crops or animals, nor are there any GE products under development. However, a few non-governmental organizations are interested in conducting research in biotechnology to improve domestic agricultural production in Haiti.

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CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: Production and trade

a) Product development:

Currently, Haiti does not have any genetically engineered (GE) plants under development. However, a private company ran a biotech laboratory from 2000 to 2008, specializing in seed propagation, biotechnology pesticide, and biotechnology fertilizer. This company worked on roots and tubers, including potato, sweet potato, yam, and cassava. However, no information is publicly available related to its accomplishments prior to going bankrupt in 2008. Haiti does not have a ban on the development of GE products.

b) Commercial production:

Currently, Haiti does not cultivate any commercial GE crops. However, the Government of Haiti (GoH) has shifted its position on biotechnology in recent years. In June 2003, a national committee was created to develop regulations that would review the safety of biotechnology. However, no regulations or other publications were produced by the committee. Then, in December 2014, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI), the Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR), and the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) organized a workshop on the benefits and potential for biotechnology in Haiti. Seven topics were discussed, including biotechnology in agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture declared that he would encourage any company interested in agricultural biotechnology to improve domestic production.

c) Exports:

N/A

d) Imports:

Currently, Haiti does not have any ban on GE products. Haiti depends heavily on imports of agricultural products originating from countries where GE strains are commonly used, particularly the United States, Argentina and Brazil. For example, the poultry industry of Haiti depends heavily on U.S. soybeans for animal feed production. In 2018, Haiti imported 10,233 MT of non-segregated U.S. soybeans, valued at USD 4 million.

e) Food aid:

Haiti is the only country in the Caribbean that is a food aid recipient. Currently, there is no legislation that impedes the importation of GE food aid. However, civil organizations are opposed to the introduction of GE products, which they argue are dangerous for human consumption.

f) Trade barriers:

As mentioned above, there is no policy regarding GE crops or GE plant products, and Post is not aware of any intention to set rules and regulations on such products.

PART B: Policy

a) Regulatory framework:

Currently, there is no regulatory process related to the development, use, import or disposal of GE plants and GE plant products.

b) Approvals:

In Haiti, there is no process for getting approval for GE events, and there are no lists of approved/registered GE plants/crops for import, export, or domestic cultivation.

c) Stacked or pyramided event approvals:

N/A

d) Field Testing:

Haiti does not have any legislative policy for managing confined field trials.

e) Innovative Biotechnologies:

Haiti does not have any regulation for innovative technologies.

f) Coexistence:

In Haiti, there is no policy that addresses the issue of coexistence between GE and non-GE crops.

g) Labeling and traceability:

Currently, Haiti does not have any specific requirements for labeling of GE content.

h) Monitoring and Testing:

Haiti is not testing for GE content.

i) Low Level Presence Policy:

Haiti does not have a LLP policy.

j) Additional Regulatory Requirements:

None.

k) Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):

N/A.

l) Cartagena Protocol ratification:

Although Haiti ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in September 2006, it did not sign the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

m) International treaties/Forums:

Haiti is a member of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), ISO and Codex Alimentarius. Moreover, a Department of Plant Protection was created in MARNDR. Haiti has never participated in discussions related to GE plants within these international organizations. However, Haiti participated in a workshop session on Agricultural Health in April 2019, which was sponsored by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

n) Related Issues:

N/A.

PART C: Marketing

a) Public/Private Opinions:

Biotechnology is a controversial issue in Haiti. The dominant public opinion is that biotechnology negatively affects human health. In May 2010, MARNDR was pressured by public opinion to deny that GE seeds were introduced into Haiti after importing 476 MT of corn seeds (DK-003, DK-5005 and DK-1040 varieties) and two MT of vegetable seeds from a multinational seed producer. However, currently a few civil society groups are lobbying to introduce GE plants or products in Haiti, and the GoH appears to be favorable towards biotechnology. Other groups continue to oppose GE seeds or GE processed products.

b) Market Acceptance Studies:

N/A.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART D: Production and Trade

a) Product Development:

There is no research or development of GE animals or cloning in Haiti at this time.

b) Commercial Production:

Currently, there are no GE animals or cloned animals for food production in Haiti.

c) Exports:

N/A

d) Imports:

N/A

e) Trade Barriers:

Currently, Haiti has no legislation or regulations that impede or encourage the trade of animal biotechnology or animal cloning. However, Haiti participated in a workshop session on Agricultural Health in April 2019, which was sponsored by the FAO.

PART E: Policy

a) Regulatory Framework:

Currently, there is no regulatory process related to the development, use, import or disposal of GE or cloned animals and animal products.

b) Innovative Biotechnologies:

N/A

c) Labeling and Traceability:

N/A

d) Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):

N/A

e) International Treaties/Fora:

Haiti is a member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). However, Haiti has never participated in discussions on GE animals or animal cloning.

f) Related Issues:

N/A

PART F: Marketing

a) Public/Private Opinions:

The issue of GE animals is controversial in Haiti. (See Plant Biotechnology above.)

b) Market Acceptance/Studies:

None.

Attachments:

No Attachments