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Report Highlights:

Tunisia's biosafety framework was drafted in 2014 and is being reviewed by its government with the expectation that it will be enacted by mid-2020. Tunisia currently places no restrictions on the importation of genetically engineered (GE) crops. However, Tunisian activities relating to agricultural biotechnology activities have been limited to building scientific capacity and developing a basic understanding of the technology. No GE products have been developed or commercialized for local production. Tunisia continues to import agricultural products derived from GE technologies, particularly feed grains used to support its development as a competitive livestock and poultry producer.

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Executive Summary:

Tunisia’s biosafety framework was drafted in 2014 with the support of the United Nations Environment Program. In 2018, the Ministry of Environment took the lead to coordinate internal discussions with other ministries for finalization. The framework should be final by the end of 2019, and will be returned to parliament for debate and approval in mid-2020 (expected). The development of Tunisia’s biosafety framework has been delayed due to more pressing political and economic needs.

Tunisia currently places no restrictions on the importation of genetically engineered (GE) crops. However, Tunisian activities relating to agricultural biotechnology activities have been limited to building scientific capacity and developing a basic understanding of the technology. No GE products have been developed or commercialized for local production. Tunisia continues import agricultural products derived from GE technologies, particularly feed grains used to support its development as a competitive livestock and poultry producer.

CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: Production and Trade

- a) Product Development: While Tunisia has no GE products, seed, or propagation material under development, it does conduct limited research activities in government institutes.
- b) Commercial Production: None.
- c) Exports: Not applicable.
- d) Imports: Tunisia is a major importer of corn products (Americas: 34% market share), and soy products (Americas: 82%), while a lesser importer of alfalfa products (EU: 99%), rapeseed products (EU: 100%), and cotton products (EU: 60%). Imported feed ingredients are a necessity for Tunisia's livestock and poultry production. Imported sugar and vegetable oils are subsidized by the State resulting in high consumption levels.

Official USDA Production, Supply, and Distribution Estimates, 2018/19

Commodity	Production	Imports	Exports	Domestic Consumption	Unit Description
Corn	0	1,100	0	1,100	(1,000 MT)
Oilseed, Soybean	0	710	0	696	(1,000 MT)
Meal, Soybean	485	31	8	515	(1,000 MT)
Oil, Soybean	118	108	10	215	(1,000 MT)
Oil, Rapeseed	0	2	0	2	(1,000 MT)
Cotton	10	20	0	30	(1,000 480 lb. Bales)

Source: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline>

- e) Food Aid: Not applicable. Tunisia is neither recipient nor provider of food aid.
- f) Trade Barriers: None.

PART B: Policy

- a) Regulatory Framework: With the support of the United Nations Environment Program, Tunisia drafted a biosafety framework in 2014, which is currently with the executive branch awaiting debate. The proposed framework includes the creation of a National Biosafety Committee, which would assist in the implementation of the regulations relating to biotechnology. The Committee, however, will not be formed until after Parliament approves the biosafety framework. The development of Tunisia's biosafety framework has been delayed due to more pressing political and economic needs.
- b) Approvals: Not applicable.
- c) Stacked or Pyramided Event Approvals: Not applicable.
- d) Field Testing: Not applicable.
- e) Innovative Biotechnologies: Not applicable.
- f) Coexistence: Not applicable.
- g) Labeling and Traceability: While Tunisia's Ministries of Trade and Public Health published a [Joint Order \(in French\)](#) on September 3, 2008, which states, "Art. 7 - In the case of a foodstuff containing genetically modified organisms, mention must be made clearly on the labeling according to the regulations in force," no such regulations are currently in force.

- h) Monitoring and Testing: Several Tunisian laboratories, namely the National Gene Bank, the Technical Agro-Food Center, the Central Laboratory of Analysis and Trials, and the Seed Control Laboratory have the capacity to monitor and test if needed.
- i) Low Level Presence (LLP) Policy: Not applicable.
- j) Additional Regulatory Requirements: Not applicable.
- k) Intellectual Property Right (IPR): Tunisia is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and as a member of the WTO is also party to the TRIPS agreement. Applicable Tunisian laws with respect to IPR include [Law # 2001-36](#) (in French) enacted on March 17, 2001 and completed by the [Law # 2007-50](#) (in French) dated July 23, 2007. Registration with the National Institute for Standardization and Industrial Property (INNORPI) is required to obtain IPR protection and is normally issued upon filling an application for registration.
- l) Cartagena Protocol Ratification: Tunisia ratified the Cartagena Protocol in June 2002.
- m) International Treaties and Forums: Tunisia is a signatory of the Convention on Biological Diversity (May 1993) and is a member of the International Plant Protection Convention and Codex Alimentarius.
- n) Related Issues: Not applicable.

PART C: Marketing

- a) Public/Private Opinion: Tunisian policymakers and researchers are largely aware of biotechnology's potential to help Tunisia alleviate national food security challenges. Meanwhile, most Tunisian consumers remain unaware of biotechnology, and virtually all of those that are aware feel they are not well-informed.
- b) Market Acceptance/Studies: Not applicable.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART D: Production and Trade

- a) Product Development: Neither GE animals nor cloning are under development in Tunisia.
- b) Commercial Production: Tunisia produces no GE livestock or clones.
- c) Exports: Not Applicable.
- d) Imports: Not Applicable.
- e) Trade Barriers: Not Applicable.

PART E: Policy

- a) Regulatory Framework: Same as *Plant Biotechnology*.
- b) Approvals: Not Applicable.
- c) Innovative Biotechnologies: Not Applicable.
- d) Labeling and Traceability: Same as *Plant Biotechnology*.
- e) Intellectual Property Rights: Same as *Plant Biotechnology*.
- f) International Treaties and Forums: Tunisia is a member of Codex Alimentarius and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).
- g) Related Issues: Not Applicable.

PART F: Marketing

- a) Public/Private Opinions: Same as *Plant Biotechnology*.

b) Market Acceptance/Studies: Not Applicable.

Attachments:

No Attachments