

Enhancing Coexistence

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BRS Stakeholder Meeting
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**Biotechnology Regulatory Services
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**

Coexistence

- Promote a diverse agricultural economy
 - Conventional
 - Biotech
 - Organic
- Support farmer choice



Coexistence Goals

- Increase cooperation between sectors
- Increase use of best stewardship practices



Reactivation of AC21

- Diverse group
- Provides guidance to USDA
- Identify areas of common ground
 - 5 meetings beginning Jan. 2011



AC 21 Recommendations, Nov. 2012

- Compensation
- Stewardship and outreach
- Research
- Seed quality



Compensation

- Gather data on economic losses due to unintended presence.
- If warranted, develop a compensation mechanism based on crop insurance model.
- A compensation mechanism should be tested through a pilot.
 - Incentives for development of joint coexistence plan
 - New crop insurance tool

Stewardship and Outreach



- Lead and fund an education and outreach initiative to strengthen coexistence.
- Design and make available to the agricultural community voluntary and outcome-based strategies for facilitating production of identity-preserved (IP) products.



Stewardship and Outreach



- USDA should work with agricultural stakeholders to build and provide access to resources that:
 - Foster good crop stewardship and minimize unwanted gene flow
 - Promote and incentivize farmer adoption of appropriate stewardship practices



Research

- Fund or conduct research to:
 - Quantify economic losses due to unintended presence
 - Assess efficacy of best practices for coexistence on farm, post-farm and during seed propagation
 - Develop genetic tools to limit unwanted gene flow
 - Compile data on unintended presence in commercial non-GE seed

Seed Quality

- Reconvene the National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC)
 - NGRAC is to advise USDA on how to work with seed industry on ongoing evaluation of seed availability for GE-sensitive markets.
 - Ensure a high quality seed supply for all
- Maintain genetic identity of accessions in seed banks



Implementation Plan

- The Secretary has indicated his intention to take AC 21 recommendations seriously and make a strong effort to implement them.



Compensation Mechanisms



- Review NASS data from the 2011 organic production survey
 - To evaluate organic prices for additional crops under Federal Crop Insurance Program
 - Adjust the actuarial structure for crops with adequate data



Compensation Mechanisms



- Begin recognizing some organic prices under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for 2015, with sufficient price and yield data
- Crop insurance surcharges for organic crops have been eliminated



Compensation Mechanisms

- Expanded crop policies to now allow growers to use their base contract price as the price election



Outreach Efforts



- Nov. 2013 Federal Register Notice on how to foster communication and collaboration to strengthen coexistence
- Gather case studies to understand producer challenges to inform best practices



Outreach Efforts

- Work with the seed industry on complementary educational or marketing material
- Planning workshop to exchange ideas on strengthening coexistence



Research Efforts-Compensation

- Develop research plans and recommendations to gather data:
 - To quantify economic losses incurred by farmers
 - On unintended GE presence in commercial non-GE seed supplies
 - To evaluate actuarial soundness of potential compensation mechanisms



Research Efforts- Stewardship and Outreach



- Develop research plans and recommendations to:
 - Assess techniques to minimize gene flow
 - Evaluate the efficacy of best practices needed to develop standards for joint coexistence plans
 - Determine what additional research is needed
 - Encourage Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program to move coexistence concepts to field

Research Efforts- Stewardship and Outreach



- Develop monitoring procedures for assessing transgenic presence in alfalfa
- Biotech Risk Assessment Grants related to coexistence
- Offer competitive funding to focus on research and information gaps around mitigation techniques to minimize gene flow



Seed Quality

- National Genetic Resources Advisory Council met three times
 - evaluate the availability of non-GE seed for producers serving GE-sensitive markets
- USDA is now supporting the Organic Seed Finders database
- Review and evaluate current practices for testing, monitoring and maintaining the purity of publicly held germplasm



Future

- USDA is committed to further outreach on coexistence and anticipates unveiling new activities to strengthen coexistence during 2015



Any Questions?

