

## **Egypt Approves the First Commercialization of a Biotech Corn Variety**

Egypt's Minister of Agriculture approved decisions made by the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) and Seed Registration Committee to allow for commercialization of a genetically modified Bt corn variety.

According to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) report, this marks the first genetically modified crop approved for domestic planting in Egypt. Egypt becomes the second country in Africa to allow for commercialization of genetically modified crops.

South Africa's biotech crop hectareage increased by 30 percentage 1n 2007. The country had a total biotech crop hectareage of 1.8 million hectares in 2007 compared to 1.4 million hectares in 2006.

The crop hectareage of 1.8 million hectares in 2007 is a colossal increase compared to 12000 hectares of insect resistant transgenic cotton that South Africa grew for the first time in 1998. Biotech maize, cotton and soybean are grown in South Africa and their area has increased every single year since the first plantings in 1998.

The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service in its report says that in Egypt a local seed company, acting as an agent of a multi-national life science company, had originally submitted the request and accompanying dossier to allow for commercialization several years ago. During last year's growing season, the field trials were conducted and assessed.

The local company plans to import seed both for propagation and production. The seed corn will be imported from South Africa. The local company plans to cultivate the BT corn in 10 governates throughout Egypt and has already started a campaign to market the seed to producers and extension agents.