

Decision for the Safety Assessment of
SYNGENTA's Corn GA21 (Herbicide tolerant Corn)
For Renewal for Direct use as Food and Feed, or for Processing

Syngenta Philippines, Inc. submitted an application of Corn GA21 renewal to the Bureau of Plant Industry on July 25, 2008. Syngenta Phils., Inc. has provided data on the identity of corn GA21, a detailed description of the transformation method, data and information on the gene insertion sites, copy number and levels of expression in the plant, the role of the inserted genes and regulatory sequences in donor organisms and full nucleotide sequences. The novel proteins were identified, characterized and compared to the original bacterial proteins, including an evaluation of their potential toxicity to livestock and non-target organisms. Relevant scientific publications were supplied. The complete technical dossiers on Syngenta's Corn GA21 were reviewed for safety and nutritional differences compared with the conventional corn. Extensive safety evaluation of Corn GA21 in terms of genetic stability, agronomic characteristics, food compositional analysis, and potential toxicity and allergenicity was undertaken by the concerned agencies [Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Bureau of Agriculture, Fisheries and Product Standards (BAFPS)] and a Scientific Technical Review Panel (STRP) following the Department of Agriculture's AO8 guidelines for the release of genetically modified organisms. The focus of the review was on any new or altered expression trait and changes in composition and nutritional content or value relative to the conventional corn.

The petitioner/applicant published the petition notice of the said application on two nationally circulated newspapers: Manila Standard and Manila Times on September 12, 2008 and September 15, 2008 respectively. The publication was made to solicit public comments. The Bureau of Plant Industry received no comment on the petition during the 15-day comment period.

Review of the results of evaluation by BPI Biotech Core Team, in consultation with DA-Biotechnology Advisory Team (DA-BAT), completed the approval process.

After reviewing the scientific data and information relevant to the application of Syngenta Phils., Inc., it is concluded that Event GA21 Corn and all progenies derived from crosses of the product with any conventionally-bred corn, and corn containing approved-biotech events for direct use as food and feed or for processing is as safe and substantially equivalent to its unmodified counterpart, and is therefore approved for direct use as food and feed or for processing.

A biosafety permit renewal for Corn GA21 and all progenies derived from crosses of the product with any conventionally-bred corn and corn containing approved-biotech events for direct use as food, feed or for processing was issued to Syngenta Phils., Inc. on November 20, 2008. The biosafety permit stated that "Herbicide tolerant Corn GA21 is as safe for human food, animal feed and for processing as its conventional counterparts". The said Corn GA21 will be included in the Approval Registry being prepared by the Department of Agriculture. This approval does not include cultivation of Herbicide tolerant Corn GA21 in the Philippines.

Syngenta Phils., Inc. informed the public of this approval by way of publishing in Manila Bulletin on November 26, 2008 that imports of this product is covered by conditions for approval as provided in Department of Agriculture Memorandum Circular No. 8, Series of 2003.