

Welcome to the GM Observer – the newsletter of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council (abc). abc is the umbrella group of the agricultural biotechnology industry in the UK. Our goal is to provide factual information about the agricultural use of GM technology in the UK

## Demand for GM crops continues to rise as 12 million farmers plant worldwide

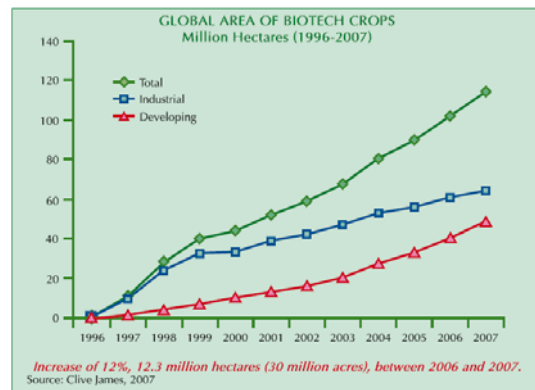
A new report from the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) has shown that after 12 years of commercialisation, GM crops are still gaining ground across a variety of new countries.

The ISAAA 2007 figures show that twenty three countries – which are home to more than half the world's population – and 12 million farmers planted over 280 million acres (114 million hectares) of GM crops in 2007.

Europe surpassed 100,000 hectares of biotech crops for the first time in 2007, with 77% growth. Specifically, Spain led the way with 70,000 hectares of *Bt* maize, up 40 percent over 2006 to reach 21% of the country's total maize area. Poland became the newest European country to enjoy the benefits of these crops in 2007.

"Twelve million farmers are using GM crops because there are clear economic and environmental benefits, conclusions which are drawn from actual scientific data gathered from over ten years of planting. abc Chairman, Dr Julian Little said. "These figures recognise that GM crops are now firmly established in Europe. GM crops are one of a range of tools that have the potential to help farmers reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimise the environmental footprint of agriculture and increase productivity."

The full report can be found at the following link: <http://www.isaaa.org/>



## PG Economics welcomes new ISAAA brief

Graham Brookes, Head of UK-based think-tank, PG Economics, has highlighted the significant benefits that GM technology can offer farmers.

His report states that in the first ten years of commercial use, the total income of the 10.25 million farmers using the technology increased by over \$27 billion and pesticide use was 6.9% lower than it would otherwise have been if the technology had not been used.

Important savings in carbon dioxide emissions were also made, equivalent to removing over four million cars from the roads in 2005. The full report can be found at the following link:

<http://www.pgeconomics.co.uk/pdf/isaaa2008commentsPGEconomics.pdf>

## European farmers deliver Valentine's message to Barroso

Members of the EU Farmers Biotech Network have urged Commission President Jose-Manuel Barroso to stop flirting with GM technology and to allow EU farmers access to compete on an equal footing with global competitors.

In Europe, only one GM crop is available for farmers. Meanwhile there are 18 biotech products awaiting EU approval for cultivation while 49 are waiting approval for import and use in food and feed. No new biotech crop has been allowed to reach the market for cultivation since 1998.

## Highest food prices inflation since records began

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics have shown that inflation is up with rising food prices as one of the main causes.

The livestock industry has known that the price of animal feed has risen sharply over the past year and with feed accounting for about half the total cost, consumers are now seeing the effects in their food prices. Critics have suggested that the EU's strict feed imports policy has contributed unnecessarily to this inflation.

With UK household facing further strains on their food budget, Bank of England, Governor Mervyn King admitted that consumers should expect a real terms decline in their standards of living.