March 2005

Fact Sheet
Biotech Corn Release

What happened?
Syngenta recently discovered that event Bt10 was present in a very small number of its Bt11 corn breeding lines. The company immediately disclosed these findings to USDA, EPA and FDA. There is no change to the food, health and environmental profile of the corn because the proteins produced by Bt10 are identical to those produced by the commercialised and fully registered Bt11 event contained in Syngenta’s corn varieties.

This occurred in early Bt development, when Bt10 was mistakenly identified as Bt11 and used as a source material for five corn breeding lines. These five lines were primarily used for pre-commercial development and could have planted, at most, only one-one hundredth of one percent of US corn acres over a four-year period.

Is there a food safety concern?
Absolutely not. Any grain that entered the food and feed chain is safe for human and animal consumption. USDA, EPA and FDA have confirmed the proteins produced by Bt10 are identical to those produced in Bt11 corn, a fully approved product, and they do not present any safety concerns for human or animal health or the environment. Specifically, because the proteins are the same as Bt11, Bt10 is covered by the existing tolerance exemptions for Bt11.

How much corn is involved?
Very little. Only a small number of Syngenta’s corn breeding lines were affected and they were primarily used for pre-commercial development. The lines have been isolated to seed production activities between 2001 and 2004. Seed produced from these lines over that four-year period could have planted only a small fraction, one-one hundredth of one percent, of the US corn acres planted during that time. All current plantings and seed stock have been identified and either destroyed or isolated for future destruction.

How was this discovered and what quality controls are in place to ensure it does not occur again?
Syngenta recently converted its quality control program to DNA-based analytical methods (from protein-based tests and lab/field observations). The acquisition of two seed companies last year, both of which had traits licensed from other companies, and Syngenta’s expansion of its traits portfolio were key factors in the decision to convert to the newer DNA-based methods. An enhanced quality control program has been fully instituted to manage this more complex trait portfolio. It is this program that identified even the subtlest of differences between Bt10 and Bt11. Syngenta will continue using the most
Effective mechanisms for monitoring seed materials in its quality control system.

**Could this have entered any export grain channels?**
While extremely unlikely, small volumes of harvested grain (two-one thousandths of one percent) could have entered US export channels as Bt11 through the normal process of commingled grain exports. This grain would have been channelled to countries where Bt11 is approved for import.

Bt-11 corn is approved for food and feed use and for cultivation in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Japan, South Africa, and Uruguay. Additionally, it is approved for import for food and feed use in the European Union, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, the Philippines, China, Russia, and Korea.

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*National Corn Growers Association, World of Corn 2004*