CROPBIOTECH UPDATE

A weekly summary of world developments in agri-biotech for developing countries, produced by the Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology, International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications SEAsiaCenter (ISAAA)

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GLOBAL

OPINION: DO WE STILL NEED THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL?

Arnoldo Ventura, in an article published recently in SciDev.Net, contends that the resources spend on negotiating and implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety would be better spend on initiatives directly benefiting developing countries, such as the promotion of science, and the use and preservation of national genetic resources for sustainable development.

The Cartagena Protocol was established by the United Nations in 2000 to regulate the safe transfer and use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), with the aim of protecting the planet's biodiversity. However, after 10 years the commercialization of GM crops, with 8.5 million farmers growing GM crops in 21 countries, there is no evidence that GM crops have any adverse effects on either the environment or human health. In addition, 90% of GM growers are resource-poor farmers in developing countries, a clear indication of the benefits of the technology.

“The Cartagena Protocol is rapidly losing its relevance. It was based on a false premise that GM products could be as dangerous as radioactive materials or toxic chemicals” says Ventura, and adds: “After ten years of close scrutiny, testing and experimentation, this notion has largely been proven wrong”.

And the way forward? Ventura argues that “Emphasis should be shifted towards considering the possible negative effects of GM organisms on a case-by-case basis. This must be done in laboratories and research institutions, and not in debating forums. Diplomatic discussion is no substitute for scientific evidence.”

To read the whole article visit: http://www.scidev.net/content/opinions/eng/do-we-still-need-the-cartagena-protocol.cfm

BIO 2006: FARMERS SHARE BIOTECH EXPERIENCES

Eighteen farmers from 12 countries around the world gathered in BIO 2006 to share their experiences about biotech crops in their countries. They represented countries such as the Philippines, India, and South Africa, and spoke for the 8.5 million farmers globally who have adopted biotech crops. A 1,000 square foot corn field was erected in the BIO 2006 exhibition hall, where farmers were available to share their opinions with BIO 2006 delegates.

BIO 2006, held in Chicago, USA, brought together 18,000 scientists and business leaders from 1,600 companies. The conference gave participants the chance to seek collaborative partners and showcase their business plans and products.

With reports from Mahaletchumy Arujanan of the Malaysia Biotechnology Information Center, at maha@bic.org.my. For more information, visit http://www.bio.org

FORMER US PRESIDENT ADDRESSES BIO CONFERENCE

Biotechnology has a critical role, as, “We have to promote a way for people to work themselves out of poverty; a way to put the 130,000,000 children who never go to school in school; a way to build decent health systems; and a way to build sustainable energy systems that are clean energy and don't contribute to climate change.” This was stated by former US President Bill Clinton as he addressed participants in the recently concluded BIO 2006 Conference in Chicago, U.S.A.

In his speech, Mr. Clinton lauded the world's current state of interdependence amongst societies, and said that all these societies must work together as an integrated set of communities. He likewise highlighted the use of biotechnology to improve agriculture and the environment and to alleviate disease. He said crops improved through biotechnology allow us to grow more food on less land.

Mr. Clinton also speculated that biotechnology would give the world “a different energy future” through the production of biofuels.

With reports from Mahaletchumy Arujanan of the Malaysia Biotechnology Information Center, at maha@bic.org.my. Read the complete speech at http://www.bio.org/events/2006/media/comments/clinton.asp.

CIAT IDENTIFIES A MORE NUTRITIOUS CASSAVA VARIETY

Scientists in the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) have identified Col 2436, an improved variety of yucca with about three more times protein content in roots compared to normal varieties, combined with twice the amount in provitamin-A carotenoids. Therefore, this variety can be of incalculable value to improve the nutrition of many rural communities, especially in Africa, where cassava is the main food crop. The variety can also be used for the production of feeds, as it will reduce the need for protein additives.

Contact Hernan Ceballos for more information at h.ceballos@cgiar.org. Read more at http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/yuca/inicio.htm.

AFRICA

KENYAN MPS PLEDGE TO SUPPORT BIOSAFETY BILL

Kenyan parliamentarians expressed their commitment to key biotechnology and biosafety legislation once it's brought to Parliament to help speed up the process of introducing improved seeds to local farmers. They gave their views during a familiarization tour of Bt cotton field trials at the Mwea Fibre Research Station of the Kenya Agriculture Research Institute (KARI), Kenya. The trials aim to verify the effectiveness of Bt cotton against the African bollworm, a highly destructive cotton pest.

The legislators, who came from two house committees of Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources, and that of Education, Research, Science and Technology, said the laws are necessary, as biotechnology could help to jump-start the sluggish agricultural sector in the country.

Dr. Julius Arunga, chairman of the Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources committee welcomed the efforts being made by KARI to introduce better yielding varieties, and expressed his committee's support to create an enabling environment for the introduction of Bt cotton in the country. He, however, challenged the scientists dealing with biotechnology “to constantly provide information to them to facilitate informed decision.”

For more information contact Daniel Otunge of KBIC at dotunge@absfafrica.org.

AFRICA MAIZE STRESS PROJECT REVIEWED

The Africa Maize Stress Project (AMS) is developing maize varieties tolerant to drought, low soil fertility, Striga weed, and endemic pests and diseases. In a recently completed review by a three-member panel from the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) the AMS was termed a “flagship project.” According to team leader Dr. Manfed van Eckert, the reviewers recognized qualities that could serve as a model for similar multi-faceted projects in Africa. Among these were the “excellent working relations with national partners, and the Eastern and Central African Maize and Wheat (ECAMAW) Research Network.”

AMS is supported by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Rockefeller Foundation, and works with national agricultural research systems (NARS), NGOs, and seed companies in 10 eastern and central African countries. Other partners in the project include the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Institute (CIMMYT), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and national research programs.

The GTZ team recommended that in its next phase, AMS advance current activities “investigate sustainable financing options for maize breeding programs in the region.” For more information contact Alpha Diallo at a.diallo@cgiar.org.

KENYA GOVERNMENT TO FUND AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

Kenya's Parliament is expected to start debates on a report proposing to increase rural development funds from 7 billion Shillings (about US$ 98,081,000) to 21 billion Shillings (about US$ 294,243,000) a year. A motion on proposals to amend the Constituency Development Fund Act of 2003 has also been given priority by the House Business Committee, the team that sets Parliament's agenda. The amendment calls for an increase in funding, from 2.5% to 7.5% of government revenue.

One such project expected to benefit from the increased funding is the Kenya Agricultural Productivity Project (KAPP), which seeks to advise farmers and fund them to achieve food security and earn more from their produce. The KAPP will be implemented by the Agriculture and Livestock and Fisheries Development ministries and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) over the next 12 years. Funded by the Kenyan government and World Bank, the project targets several farming sectors, mainly in the rural areas.

With reports from http://allafrica.com/stories/200604180936.html. For more information, contact Daniel Otunge at dotunge@absfafrica.org.

THE AMERICAS

NEW NANOBIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH CENTER LAUNCHED IN BRAZIL

The Brazilian Institute for Agricultural Research (EMBRAPA) has launched a new agricultural nanotechnology research facility for the improvement of tropical agriculture. The research facility, named the Laboratório Nacional de Nanotecnologia para o Agronegócio (LNNA), will be attached to the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, and will receive an investment of R$ 4 million (US$1.9 million).

The main lines of research to be carried out in the LNNA include the development of nanobiotechnology applications for the characterization of genetic diversity and genetic manipulation; the development of sensors and biosensors; the characterization and synthesis of new materials, such as polymers and materials nanostructured with specific properties; the development of nanoparticles and fibers for the production of strengthened material derived from natural products; and the production of organic and inorganic nanoparticules for a controlled release of nutrients and pesticides in agriculture. In addition, LNNA will facilitate scientific collaborations and provide services to public institutions and to the private sector.

More information can be found in: http://www.cnpdia.embrapa.br/

MEXICAN FORUM ON PERSPECTIVES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR CONCLUDES

The VI Forum on the Perspectives of the Agro-alimentary and Fishing Sector concluded recently in Mexico City, Mexico. The event was aimed at discussing agricultural policies for the next decade, in view of increasing globalization; the production and commercialization of biotech maize; the global agricultural market; and national agricultural insurance and loan systems. The Forum, organized by Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, and Rural Development, and by the Agri-food and Fishing Information and Statistics Service (SIAP), was attended by consultants, agriculture specialists, researchers, scientists, producers associations, and government officials.

Future increases in population and in national average income will generate a sharp rise in the demand for food, and biotechnology, through enhanced

agriculture productivity, represents an important alternative to guarantee food security, concluded Juan Manuel Galarza Mercado, general-director of SIAP. Equally important is the use of alternative, renewable energy sources, such as biofuels. Mexico will count on the support from the US Department of Agriculture for the establishment of ethanol-producing plants for fuel. In addition, the Mexican Federal government has committed to support information systems that will encourage the growth of the agricultural sector.

For more information, visit
http://www.sagarpa.gob.mx/cgcs/boletines/2006/abril/B098.htm.

SCIENTISTS CALL FOR A BIGGER ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN MEXICO

The Mexican Academy of Sciences (AMC) has announced it will present this week a National Agreement on Science and Technology to all candidates to the Mexican presidency, regardless of their political affiliation. The document conveys the concerns and requirements of the country's scientific community, and is backed by the AMC, the Commission for Science and Technology of the House of Representatives, and the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education.

Octavio Paredes López, the departing president of the AMC, said the current government failed to understand that science and technology, coupled to high quality education at all levels, are the only means for achieving national development. Despite promises on increased public expenditure to 1% of the GIP during the last presidential campaign, spending on science has actually decreased from 0.42% in 2000, to 0.34% in 2006.

For more information (in Spanish) visit: http://www.comunicacion.amc.edu.mx/

ASIA

DEALS CLOSED FOR MALAYSIA AT BIO 2006

The recently concluded BIO 2006 was a stepping stone for Malaysia as three international pharmaceutical companies are keen to set up operations in the country. These companies are expected to bring an investment of up to US$600 million, or an average of between US$100 and US$200 million each. Negotiations were made with about 20 companies in areas such as contract manufacturing, contract research, clinical trials, vaccines, nutraceuticals, and diagnostic and biomedical instruments.

The soon-to-be launched BioNexus, a hub for biotechnology companies, is expected to rake in revenues amounting to US$1 trillion by 2015. The hub will also further facilitate attracting more investors. Biotechnology companies can expect a host of tax incentives and financingunder BioNexus, which will be available via the targeted RM 1 billion Malaysian Life Sciences Capital Fund and other similar funds.

With reports from Mahaletchumy Arujanan of the Malaysia Biotechnology Information Center, at maha@bic.org.my.

BIOTECH INVESTMENT IN MALAYSIA

Malaysia's biotechnology sector is expected to have up to US$200 million funds available for investment. Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP), the Government has allocated US$27 million to biotechnology: this fund will be increased further by financial institutions, government-linked companies, and local and foreign investors, and will be invested in emerging and successful local and international biotechnology companies. A senior government official said the companies will be selected based on Malaysia's biotech goals in fields such as healthcare, agricultural biotechnology, and industry.

Proposals will be jointly evaluated by the Malaysian Technology Development Corp (MTDC) and Burill & Co., the world's pioneer venture capital company in the field of biotechnology. Of the US$200 million, US$140 million will be invested in about 20 companies, while the remaining will be invested in the Burill Life Science Capital Fund.

With reports from Mahaletchumy Arujanan of the Malaysia Biotechnology Information Center, at maha@bic.org.my.

WORLD BANK FUNDS INDIA AGRICULTURE

The World Bank has approved two credits for a total of US$200 million for the National Agricultural Innovation Project, designed to assist the Government of India in improving the country's agriculture sector. The project aims to transform India from being primarily focused on food self-sufficiency to a more market-oriented approach in support of poverty alleviation and income generation.

“Over 200 million poor people in rural India depend upon agriculture for their livelihoods,” said Michael Carter, World Bank Country Director for India. “In order to generate additional income and employment for these rural poor, market-

driven agricultural development is critical. It will help increase producer incomes, employment opportunities and wages, and ultimately reduce poverty."

The project will support the development and implementation of agricultural innovations through collaboration among farmers, private sector, civil society, and public sector organizations. For more information about World Bank activities in India, visit http://www.worldbank.org/in, or contact Sudip Mozumder, at smozumder@worldbank.org

NATIONAL POLICY DRAFTED FOR INDIAN FARMERS

India's National Commission on Farmers, headed by Prof MS Swaminathan, has submitted its last report titled "A Draft National Policy for Farmers" to the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The draft policy is open for comments and suggestions from all stakeholders until the final "National Policy for Farmers" is presented to the government sometime during the second week of October 2006.

The policy calls for strengthening institutional support at the grassroots level; taking farmers out of the vicious debt cycle; setting up a council to strengthen the biosecurity of crops, animals, fisheries, and forestry; and promoting cooperative farming. It also calls for a strategy for achieving a 4% growth rate in agriculture through a mix of technology, credit, insurance and marketing support, and knowledge connectivity.

In related news, the country's Minister of Science and Technology and Ocean Development, Mr. Kapil Sibal, ledthe Indian Governmentand biotech industry delegation to the BIO 2006 held in Chicago, USA. Biologically engineered crops and pharmaceuticals are critical to the long-term economic and agricultural security of India, the minister said. However, he also underscored the importance of knowledge sharing, as well as biosafety. "We must ensure that the regulatory procedures are such that we don't damage our biodiversity and that in fact we make our biodiversity a source of innovation rather than destroy it," he said.

Read more at http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=17119. With additional reports from http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2006/04/11/2003302122 and http://www.checkbiotech.org/root/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&doc_id=12548&start=1&control=128&page_start=1&page_nr=101&pg=1.

PAKISTAN PLANNERS URGED TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURE

Participants at a meeting of government planners were urged to focus on agronomic development of Pakistan. This could be achieved by training farmers and enhancing their capacity for improving national economy and reducing poverty. These were so stated by Prof. Dr Rajab Memon during his lecture, “Appropriate Policy Needed to meet WTO Challenges in Agriculture” in Hyderabad, India. The meeting was organized by the Pakistan Study Center, University of Sindh.

Dr. Memon presented Pakistan's agricultural profile, showing that only 20% of agricultural land is cultivated, while 9 million acres of arable land need improvement. He said that focus on small farms, increased savings, and capacity building of the farmers would help boost economy of the country.

With reports from Dr. Anwar Nasim of the Pakistan Biotechnology Information Center (anwar_nasim@yahoo.com) and http://www.southasianmedia.net/cnn.cfm?id=285081&category=Economy&Country=PAKISTAN.

EUROPE

COEXISTENCE POSSIBLE, SAY SPANISH SCIENTISTS

Scientists and farmers have declared that coexistence among genetically modified, conventional, and organic crops is feasible, and have urged the government to take into account the research initiatives carried out on the topic, and to formulate policies accordingly. This is the outcome of a meeting on coexistence that took place at the end of March at the Polytechnic University of Madrid, organized by the General Association of Maize Producers (AGPME), the news agency Efeagro, and the Antama Foundation. Antama is a not-for-profit organization committed to share information on the potential benefits of biotechnology to agriculture.

Coexistence is possible, participants to the meeting agreed, as long as farmers use seed supplies of conventional crops in which the adventitious presence of GM seeds does not exceed 0.5%. In addition, the use of a buffer zone of 20 m around biotech crops planted with the conventional variety is sufficient to assure coexistence. Dr. José Ignacio Cubero, professor in the Department of Genetics and Crop Improvement of the University of Córdoba, said that legislation measures on coexistence should be based on scientific knowledge, and that there is a tendency among European governments to ignore scientific evidence when deciding on the required separation distances.

More information (in Spanish) is available at http://www.fundacion-antama.org/

EC PROPOSES IMPROVEMENTS TO EU GM FRAMEWORK

The European Commission (EC) has given its support to an approach proposed by Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou and Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas on further steps to improve the scientific consistency and transparency for Decisions on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). The improvements will be made within the existing legal framework in compliance with EC and World Trade Organization (WTO) laws. They aim to reassure European Union (EU) member states, stakeholders, and the general public that EC decisions on GMOs are based on high quality scientific assessments.

Included in the list of improvements are the following proposed changes: 1) Invite the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to liaise more fully with national scientific bodies during the scientific evaluation phase; 2) Require EFSA and applicants to explicitly address potential long-term effects and bio-diversity issues in their GMO risk assessments; and 3) Suspend procedures and refer to observations raised by Member States if the Commission sees that important new scientific questions are not properly or completely addressed.

For more information, read the press release at http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/498&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

RESEARCH

THE ADOPTION OF AGRO-BIOTECHNOLOGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The adoption of the technology of genetic modification (GM) in developing countries is shaped by a number of players, which include multinational corporations, scientists, farmers, consumers, and anti-globalization and environmental NGOs; and is also influenced by global and national markets and by international and national rules on intellectual property rights and biosafety. Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, of Harvard University, explores some of the policy issues for developing countries related to the introduction of GM crops, and argues that developing economies should develop policy approaches that are specific to their own unique set of circumstances. Her essay, entitled “Introduction: Global actors, markets and rules driving the diffusion of genetically modified (GM) crops in developing countries”, is published in the second issue of the International Journal of Technology and Globalization.

While crop breeding and improvement have traditionally been public sector initiatives, several factors have contributed to provide powerful market incentives to the private sector of developed countries to invest in agriculture in the last two decades. These factors include: scientific advances in molecular biology; changes in the legislation, in particular with regards to property right protection; and the availability of large US seed markets for maize, soy, canola, and cotton. As a result, the first biotech crops that were commercialized are mainly crops suitable for temperate zones, and industrialized countries currently account for 65% of the total area planted with biotech crops. However, Argentina is the second country in terms of biotech crop production, and diffusion is rapid in Brazil, China, and India, countries which are investing heavily on crops and traits that fit their local priorities and requirements.

Efforts to develop crops tailored to suit local needs, and aimed at the local markets of developing nations for the benefit of resource-poor farmers, "cannot depend entirely on national public sector efforts alone" argues Fukuda-Parr. The author adds that "public-private partnership, building regulatory and IPR enforcement mechanisms, and having the right kind of IPR regimes globally are all critical."

Read the abstract of the paper at: http://www.inderscience.com/search/index.php?action=record&rec_id=9123&prevQuery=&ps=10&m=or. Email the author at: Sakiko_Fukuda-Parr@harvard.edu

PAPER ASSESSES BIOTECH PROGRESS, ADVISES INDUSTRIES

Biotech industries need to start "swimming upstream" by soliciting the assistance of the public sector if they need their products to reach poor and small-scale farmers. This was concluded by ecological economist Diane Osgood, in "Living the Promise? The Role of the Private Sector in Enabling Small-Scale Farmers to Benefit from Agro-Biotech." Her article appears in a special issue of the Journal of Technology and Globalization.

Osgood examines three trends that have pushed the private sector to find ways to transfer agricultural biotechnology to farmers in developing countries. These are: the continuing pressure on companies in Europe to produce products which are either free from biotech crops, or stringently assessed for safety; the focus of agricultural research on big market crops such as corn and rice, while generally ignoring smaller cash crops; and the policies and business habits of multinational companies.

The public sector, the author believes, can provide the link between the desire of the private sector to extend a helping hand, and the needs of small-scale farmers. "Farmers need integrated solutions, not silver bullets," Osgood writes,

"[Private companies] need small-scale farmers to overcome many of the major constraints they face…companies have a strong incentive to work in partnership with the public sector to deliver more holistic approaches that address daily problems."

Read the abstract of the paper at http://www.inderscience.com/search/index.php?action=record&rec_id=9125&prevQuery=&ps=10&m=or. Email the author at dosgood@mnet.fr.

BIOSAFETY REGULATORY SYSTEMS IN EAST AFRICA STUDIED

Certain areas in the regulatory systems of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda need to be developed or clarified to make the system more functional and protective. Gregory Jaffe of the International Food Policy Research Institute in a paper "Comparative analysis of the national biosafety regulatory systems in East Africa" says that these areas include the:

* Addition of procedures to ensure the food safety of genetically engineered organisms
* Inclusion of the standard and criteria for making an approval decision
* Differentiation of regulatory procedures based on the relative risk of the organism
* An explanation of how socio-economic considerations will be defined and assessed

Aside from analyzing the current and proposed biosafety systems in the three countries, Jaffe also discusses possible ways that the three countries can coordinate and harmonize their national biosafety regulatory systems so they are efficient, effective, and make the best use of limited scientific and legal capacity.

The full paper can be downloaded from http://www.ifpri.org/divs/eptd/dp/eptdp146.asp

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR PROJECTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The French Institute for Research and Development (IRD) will finance projects aimed at promoting science and technology in the countries members of the Priority Interdependent Zone (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Chad, and Yemen). The projects should aim at promoting science communication, establishing science and technology networks at national and regional levels, train and reinforce the competence of professionals, and inform policy makers of the stakes of science and technology. NGOs, science associations, schools and universities, public and private research institutions, and members of the media are welcome to apply. The awards will range between 5000 and 15000 euros. Deadline for submission of applications is May 29th, 2006. For more information (in French), and to obtain the application form, visit: http://www.latitudesciences.ird.fr/pcst/appel.htm

WORKSHOP ON BIOTECHNOLOGY SLATED FOR ECUADOR

The workshop “Biotechnology in Ecuador: Current Status and Future Prospects” will take place in Quito, on the 26th-28th of April. The event is organized by the Ecuador branch of the Network for Technical Cooperation in Agricultural Biotechnology for Latin America and the Caribbean(REDBIO), an initiative supported by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The workshop aims to promote the development of biotechnology in Ecuador by encouraging the exchange of knowledge and information among different national organizations and institutions for the safe use of biotechnology. The workshop also intends to promote biotechnology research projects, technical innovation, and further capacity-building initiatives of the country. For more information on the event (in Spanish) visit: http://www.redbio.org/newsredbio.asp?id=271%20

NCBP WEBSITE GOES ONLINE

The National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) recently launched its newly developed website with more improved accessible features to keep the public abreast on current biosafety regulations, approved applications, and Committee actions in the Philippines. The site features on-line submission of

proposals, searchable databases of approved applications and planned release, and information on national biosafety guidelines and policies.

The NCBP is mandated to formulate guidelines and regulations to regulate and monitor research in modern biotechnology in the Philippines. Its new website stems from collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center and Program on Biosafety Systems (Southeast Asia) on the project “Enhancing the Web-based Communication Program of the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines.”

With reports from the SEARCA BIC (http://www.bic.searca.org/). To learn more about the NCBP, visit http://www.ncbp.dost.gov.ph.

DOCUMENT REMINDERS

MABIC RELEASES NEWSLETTER

The Malaysian Biotechnology Information Center (MABIC) has released its BIC Alert, a monthly newsletter containing updates from Malaysia's biotechnology arena. Download the BIC Alert at http://www.bic.org.my/BICalert/index.html.

JOURNAL RELEASES SPECIAL GM ISSUE

The International Journal of Technology and Globalization has released a Special Issue on “Genetically Modified Crops in Developing Countries - Institutional and Policy Challenges.” Articles cover topics such as intellectual property protection, GMO experiences in the Americas, EU precautionary measures, and biosafety regulations in Asia. Access abstracts to the articles at http://www.inderscience.com/browse/index.php?journalID=104&year=2006&vol=2&issue=1/2

IFPRI PUBLISHES RESEARCH BRIEF

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has released the research brief “From 'Best Practice' to 'Best Fit': A Framework for Designing and Analyzing Pluralistic Agricultural Advisory Services” by Regina Birner and colleagues. The brief addresses issues on the roles of advisory services in

agriculture, and how they can be made more efficient and financially stable. Download the brief at http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/rb04.pdf.

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