GMO REGULATION AND USE IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has a robust, representative and experienced biosafety regulatory system that ensures safe and sustainable research, development and commercialisation of GM technology.

GMOs are regulated under the GMO Act, which places strict compliance measures on the research, production and marketing of GMOs.

Regulatory decisions are based on the inputs of independent technical experts, six different government departments and the general public.

Extensive food safety assessments are performed to provide science-based evidence that foods derived from GM crops are safe for consumption.

The potential environmental, economic and socio-political impacts of GMOs are proactively assessed and must be approved before they can be used.

RIGOROUS REGULATORY SYSTEM

- Additional GMO regulatory requirements are also stipulated under health, environmental and consumer protection regulations.
- South Africa also adheres to international guidelines, codes of practice and recommendations as stipulated by the Codex Alimentarius (the international food code of the FAO and WHO) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

COMPETENT DECISION MAKING

- South Africa was an early adopter of GM technology in 1997 and therefore has significant experience and expertise in the effective regulation of GMOs.
- All the relevant factors, including food safety, environmental, economic and socio-political considerations, are evaluated before a GMO is considered for commercialisation.

APPROVED GM FOODS ARE SAFE

- Maize, soybean and cotton are the only GM crops currently grown in South Africa.
- Strict risk assessments and quality assurances are done at every stage of GMO development to ensure close evaluation and monitoring long before these products are available on the market.
- GMO containing foods are labelled in the ingredient list as stipulated by consumer protection regulations.

APPROVED GMO's ARE SUSTAIN-ABLE

- All possible impacts are assessed, specifically within the South African context, to ensure the sustainability of a GMO, before it is used.
- Its use is then also monitored after release to continuously ensure the assessment conclusions remain accurate.
- Appropriate public engagement and communication is important to help ensure an accurate discourse that contributes to ensuring the sustainable use of GM technologies.

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