



Urging the National Government to Prioritize Support for Biotech Crops

We, the undersigned organizations, wish to provide our perspectives and inputs in the current public discussions on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Such scientific developments are the backbone of human progress, allowing humanity to advance in health, collective knowledge, civilization, and economic prosperity. Biotechnology in food and agriculture has played a major role in facilitating the feeding of the growing world population in more recent decades while providing improved livelihoods for those engaged in the farming of these crops on account of higher productivity, reduced losses due to plant diseases, and improved health by mitigating the need for pesticides and herbicides.

Many of our products today rely on genetic engineering. As of February 2023, 576,000 hectares of agricultural lands in the country were planted with genetically engineered corn, or over 80% of corn-planted lands – corn is the second largest crop in the country. A number of everyday goods purchased at our local groceries and supermarkets utilize genetically engineered ingredients. Even the COVID-19 vaccinations and commonly administered insulin are products of genetic engineering technology.

GMOs are currently planted on thousands of hectares of farmland. The inability to tend to or sell these planted crops will mean thousands of tons of potentially wasted products. Particularly in the case of rice, our country cannot afford any wastage as a net importer of this household staple. This is compounded by the El Niño phenomenon and extremely hot weather of late, which has scorched thousands of hectares of rice farms and is expected to reduce yield and productivity.

It is also notable that the country relies on the importation of various biotech commodities, such as corn and soybean, which are critical macro-ingredients for the local livestock and poultry industry. Halting the importation of these commodities would materially affect these vital sectors, providing a major part of Filipinos' daily protein requirements. Furthermore, it has the potential of denting the credibility of the country in the international trading system should shipments be canceled for lack of permits, increased transaction costs, and possibly higher insurance premiums due to the growing risk of trading with the Philippines.

Ultimately, this will drive food inflation higher at a time when we have been trying to avoid a repeat of the elevated food prices we have experienced over the past two years.

Urgent times require urgent action. We need a whole-of-government approach - the Executive, the Legislative, and most crucial of all, the Judiciary - to work together in supporting biotechnology crops to solve food security that is causing malnutrition and child stunting across the country, thus endangering our future generation.

Approved:

Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEF)

The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Philippines (JCCIP)

American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc. (AmCham Philippines)

Makati Business Club (MBC)

Management Association of the Philippines (MAP)

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