New CAST Report Examines Timely Issues of Trade and Biotechnology

The Impact of Asynchronous Approvals for Biotech Crops on Agricultural Sustainability, Trade, and Innovation

Ames, Iowa (PRWEB) December 08, 2016 -- This CAST literature review and report looks at problems caused by the current system of asynchronous approvals for biotech crops. The authors focus on the economic effects in countries that are major global commodity exporters and importers, which show that asynchrony in the global approval of new biotech crops and the resultant risk of low level presence (LLP) puts large volumes of trade worth billions of dollars at risk. In particular, the increasing disparity in the biotech product approval timelines between exporting countries that utilize new technologies and large grain importing countries is a significant and growing impediment to trade, specifically in the European Union and China. As Task Force Chair Dr. Nicholas Kalaitzandonakes said, “How the world's regulatory systems operate in the area of biotech crops is critically important to producers and consumers.” The paper shares research regarding the impacts on the following:
- trade
- downstream industries
- the adoption of biotechnology innovations
- biotech investment/R&D
- crop breeding
- farm income

The report offers several potential solutions and provides research about approaches that might ease the negative impacts of asynchronous approvals and LLP. “More research is needed to evaluate the global cost of asynchronous approvals and LLP, the impacts of asynchrony on innovation and crop improvements, and the decision-making process of biotech developers, in both the public and private sectors,” say the authors. “Timely research could inform policymaking and improve the design of policy instruments.”

Many factors influence the approval process—including differences in institutional arrangements, regulatory procedures, administrative capacity, and attitudes toward biotech crops. Therefore, the time required to review new biotech events varies significantly from one country to another. But, as this paper concludes, “As long as the current situation persists, agricultural biotechnology will be prevented from delivering the full range of promised benefits of improved standard of living and food security.”

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