



IDAHO WHEAT PRODUCTION

Idaho exports over fifty-percent of its wheat crop each year. If the United States allows the commercial introduction of genetically modified wheat, Idaho risks losing all of its foreign export markets.

Idaho Wheat Production

Idaho exported 147 million dollars of wheat in 2001, over half of it's total wheat production. Compared with other wheat producing states Idaho ranks:

- 5th in spring wheat, or 7% of the United States' total spring wheat production,
- 7th in total wheat production or 4% of the United States' total wheat production
- 8th in winter wheat or 4% of the United States total winter wheat production.

Genetically Modified Wheat

In 2005, Monsanto plans to introduce a strain of genetically modified hard red spring wheat in to commercial markets. This wheat, called Roundup Ready wheat because of its resistance to Roundup herbicide, could result in the loss of export markets for Idaho wheat farmers.

The top importers of US spring wheat--Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan--require mandatory labeling for even the smallest amounts of genetically modified organisms, and have said they will not buy genetically modified wheat.

The Japanese Millers Association, representing 90% of Japanese wheat processors, has stated that it will not buy wheat from the U.S. that contains any level of genetically modified organisms.

The flour miller Rank Hovis, which controls 30% of the milling and baking industries in the United Kingdom, says not only that it will reject genetically modified wheat, but it will no longer buy any wheat from the United States, because it will be impossible to guarantee that conventional or organic wheat will be completely GMO-free.

The current grain shipping system is not designed to segregate genetically modified grain from conventional grain. This makes it impossible to meet the GM-free requirements of export markets.

Other Disadvantages of GM Wheat

Genetically modified crops can cross pollinate with certain weeds, creating superweeds that are resistant to herbicides. Fields can also become contaminated with genetically modified organisms from neighboring fields and are difficult to reclaim.

Genetically Modified Soybeans

Idaho Wheat Production - 2001

Commodity	Acres Planted (acres)	Acres Harvested (acres)	Yield (bushels/acre)	Production (bushels)	Value of Production (dollars)
All Wheat	1,280,000	1,200,000	71	85,150,000	\$279,144,000
Spring Wheat	520,000	490,000	68	33,320,000	\$113,288,000
Winter Wheat	760,000	710,000	73	51,830,000	\$165,856,000



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Monsanto claims that planting crops resistant to Roundup herbicide will decrease production costs and increase yields. However, a study conducted in 1999 by Dr. Chuck Benbrook, found that genetically modified soybean seed and weed management systems cost 50% more than a conventional systems of the same variety.

Legal Liability

A farmer deciding to plant genetically modified seeds must enter into a technology agreement, giving him/her license to use the patented technology. Monsanto's technology agreement prohibits farmers from saving or selling seeds, and requires farmers to use specific herbicides in a company-directed weed management plan. If the terms of this agreement are violated, Monsanto reserves the right to impose fines as much as 120 times the technology fee paid by farmers who enter into the agreement.

Monsanto's technology agreement states that the company will not be held liable for damages caused by planting genetically modified crops. This means that farmers are held liable if their crops contaminate a neighboring field. Monsanto has sued farmers when genetically modified seeds were found in their crops, even when the farmers did not plant or buy the seeds.

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