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Green Fields: Agriculture and Alternative Energy



Vilsack pledges better push on biotech crops

BY PHILIP BRASHER • PBRASHER@DMREG.COM • APRIL 21, 2009

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If there was any question about how the Obama administration would get behind agricultural biotechnology, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is removing any doubt. In fact, he says he's going to do a better job than the Bush administration.

Just back from the G8 summit in Italy, Vilsack pledged today to bring a "more comprehensive and integrated" approach to promoting ag biotech overseas.

That will be good news to biotech companies such as Pioneer Hi-Bred and Monsanto but it shouldn't be much of a surprise. Vilsack was a vocal backer of the biotech industry as governor, and President Barack Obama has been a supporter as well.

Speaking to a group of ag journalists today, Vilsack cited a recent inspector general's report that said USDA had not done enough to "facilitate trade opportunities" for biotech products. However, the report noted that some USDA officials have been opposed to getting involved in promoting the products of private companies.

Much of the international opposition to genetically engineered seeds is centered in the European Union but that has led to resistance among countries in Africa and elsewhere that export food to Europe.

The declaration issued at the end of the G8 farm ministers' summit called for increased "investments in agricultural science, research, technology, education, extension services and innovation."

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[Stargod](#) wrote:

Listen to a couple of free MP3 files about GMO foods. One is called, You're eating what. The other is an interview with GMI expert Jeff Smith. They are posted at <http://drop.io/Summerbird>
In Europe people are educated about GMO foods and reject them as they should. Americans are woefully ignorant and therefore have not yet rejected GMO crops. GMO is NOT crossing two varieties of tomatoes and producing a new variety. GMO is altering the DNA of plants and animals which can and does alter the DNA of the people who eat the GMO food or use the GMO cotton. GMO has caused cancer, birth defects, and death in the test subjects and in the general public as well, yet the insane and evil idiots are pushing like mad to expand the horror.
4/30/2009 9:37:31 PM

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About Dan Piller

I am the agriculture and energy writer for The Register. I worked for The Register from 1970 until 1981 when I moved to Texas. There I covered banking, aerospace and the oil and gas industries for newspapers in Dallas and Fort Worth. I returned to The Register in 2007 and I believe I'm the only reporter who has covered both the Paris Air Show and the Farm Progress Show.

About Philip Brasher

I cover agriculture, energy and climate issues in Washington. I came to the Register in 2002 from the Washington bureau of The Associated Press, where I was the national farm writer. I'm a native of cotton country, Lubbock, Texas, to be specific, and still have a good deal of top soil in my lungs to prove it.