

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 120

Requesting that the President raise the issue of agricultural biotechnology
at the June G–8 Summit meeting.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 14, 1999

Mr. ASHCROFT (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELMS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BOND, and Mr. FITZGERALD) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Requesting that the President raise the issue of agricultural
biotechnology at the June G–8 Summit meeting.

Whereas biotechnology is an increasingly important tool in
helping to meet multiple agricultural challenges of the
21st century;

Whereas genetically modified crops are helping to control
weeds, insects, and plant diseases to increase crop yields
and farm productivity, and to enhance the quality, value,
and suitability of crops for food, fiber, and other uses;

Whereas agricultural biotechnology promises environmental
benefits by reducing, or perhaps eliminating, the need for
chemical pesticides, by improving the efficient utilization
of fertilizer, thereby protecting water quality, and by con-
serving topsoil by reducing the need for tillage;

Whereas in recent years farmers have rapidly adopted agricultural biotechnology, with worldwide acreage of genetically modified crops growing from 4,300,000 acres in 1996, to 69,500,000 acres in 1998, which is more than a 16-fold increase;

Whereas American farmers planted biotech crops on about 38 percent of the soybean acreage, 25 percent of the corn acreage, and 45 percent of the cotton acreage, and within a few years over half of the agricultural crops grown in this country may be genetically modified;

Whereas increased agricultural productivity attained through greater use of biotechnology, in both developed and developing countries, holds a great deal of potential for meeting the nutritional needs of the world's population, of which at least 800,000,000 currently suffer from hunger or malnutrition;

Whereas despite the widespread adoption and extensive global benefits of biotechnology, marked differences among countries in their regulatory approaches are limiting substantially the use of, and trade in, agricultural biotechnology products;

Whereas an open international trading system for products derived from plant and animal agricultural biotechnology would make a broad array of improved products more affordable, including agricultural and food products, pharmaceuticals, and consumer products such as apparel, paper, cosmetics, soaps, and detergents;

Whereas because of the importance of international trade to the strength of the farm economy and the entire food and agriculture sector, any unwarranted restrictions on trade in biotechnology products could seriously disrupt the

farm economy and unjustifiably force farmers to choose between using agricultural biotechnology and exporting their production; and

Whereas the threat to agricultural production and trade from restrictions on products derived from modern biotechnology has become serious enough to warrant the attention of world leaders: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) as the world trading system moves toward
3 a reduction of tariff and nontariff barriers, all coun-
4 tries should work to ensure that scientifically un-
5 founded new barriers are not erected;

6 (2) the President should raise at the June
7 1999, G-8 Summit the important issues sur-
8 rounding the use of, and trade in, agricultural bio-
9 technology ; and

10 (3) as world leaders prepare for a new round of
11 negotiations on agriculture in the World Trade Or-
12 ganization, the G-8 Summit is an appropriate forum
13 to seek a consensus with the major trading partners
14 of the United States regarding—

15 (A) recognition of the global benefits of ag-
16 ricultural biotechnology, especially in meeting
17 the nutritional needs of millions of people in de-
18 veloping countries;

1 (B) increasing consumer knowledge and
2 understanding of agricultural biotechnology and
3 its benefits; and

4 (C) the adoption of rational, scientifically-
5 based systems for the regulation of bio-
6 technology products and for eliminating unjusti-
7 fied barriers to the use of biotechnology prod-
8 ucts in international trade.

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