



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Memorandum 835

To: Delegates to the Standing Committee, Coordinating Agencies, Members of the PSAP, Members of the IFCP and Members of SEEP

From: Executive Director

Subject: Expert Consultation on Biotechnology Applications in Cotton, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, October 29-31, 2007

Date: July 27, 2007

36% of world cotton area in 2006/07 was planted to biotech varieties, accounting for an estimated 45% of production. The Secretariat has published extensively on the topic of biotechnology in cotton, and the Committee has organized two Expert Panels on Biotechnology that have provided objective, comprehensive information to member governments and industry. The ICAC web page provides additional information on biotechnology in cotton. Nevertheless, there is a continuing need for information on the topic, particularly with respect to public awareness and socioeconomic concerns.

The Secretariat organized a regional consultation on biotechnology applications in cotton in March 2007 under a project sponsored by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC): "Regional Consultation on Biotech Cotton for Risk Assessment and Opportunities for Small Scale Cotton Growers -CFC/ICAC 34FT." The main objective of the consultation was to discuss all aspects of biotech cotton. The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) served as the Project Executing Agency. The National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE), Faisalabad, Pakistan hosted the consultation. Forty-three international participants from 27 countries, in addition to 73 participants from Pakistan, attended the meeting. A summary and proceedings of the meeting are available on the ICAC web page under CFC projects.

The Secretariat is now planning to organize a similar meeting for the West and Central African cotton producing countries to discuss the socioeconomic considerations of introduction of biotech cotton. The "Expert Consultation on Biotechnology Applications in Cotton" will be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from October 29-31, 2007. The U.S. Agency for International Development is sponsoring the meeting through the USAID-funded West Africa Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP) together with the CFC. The Secretariat will implement the meeting and the Institut de l'Environnement et des Recherches Agricoles - INERA (Institute of the Environment and Agricultural Research) of Burkina Faso will serve as the primary host. The Secretariat will invite participants from all countries in the region, in addition to international experts and representatives from countries with small scale farming systems similar to those in West and Central Africa.

Further information on the meeting will be posted on the ICAC website shortly.