

US Goes with Brazil on Labelling Genetically Modified Food

Contributed by Ivan Richard
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The United States has decided to accept the Brazilian position on international labelling of genetically modified food. Brazil had joined 126 other Cartagena Protocol signatory countries in favor of a label stating: "May Contain Modified Live Organisms."

The majority is opposed to a label stating "Contains Modified Live Organisms," because that would require the adoption of expensive crop detection and tracking procedures and thus, from the Brazilian standpoint, increase the prices of Brazilian agricultural goods on international markets.

The Cartagena Protocol has been in effect since 2003 and deals with possible environmental damage caused by the transport and commerce of genetically modified food. Although the US has not ratified the protocol, it has expressed concern over its effects on global trade in agricultural commodities.

In the talks with the US about the Cartagena Protocol, Brazil expressed its desire to have the headquarters of the Committee on Additives and Contaminants, which is presently located in Holland, transferred to Brazil.

"There is no Codex Alimentarius committee in developing countries. Brazil is interested in coordinating the committee for its importance in determining pesticide use limits, which have a major impact on world food trade," commented Rogério Pereira da Silva, a federal agricultural inspector in the Ministry of Agriculture.

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