

GIPSA To Establish Reference Laboratory For Genetically Modified Grains And Oilseeds

WASHINGTON, Nov. 12, 1999 -- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is establishing a reference laboratory to evaluate and verify the validity of analytical procedures used to detect and quantify genetically modified (GM) traits in grains and oilseeds. The lab, to be housed at the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA's) Technical Center in Kansas City, MO, is scheduled to open in time for the 2000 crop year.

The lab also will establish sampling procedures to be used in testing GM grains and oilseeds. These standardized sampling and testing methods will be implemented through GIPSA's inspection program.

GIPSA Administrator James R. Baker stated that USDA will provide these services "to meet a market need to ensure reliability of genetically enhanced crop detection methods and to increase overall market efficiency. This is," he added, "in keeping with GIPSA's mission to facilitate the marketing of grain and oilseeds for the benefit of U.S. agriculture."

The introduction of GM grains and oilseeds is affecting the movement of grains and oilseeds in both domestic and export markets. Some food manufacturers and retailers are requesting non-GM ingredients and products, particularly corn and soybeans, in response to consumer demand. This trend has accelerated a need to further segregate the marketing of grains and oilseeds, which has, in turn, created a demand for reliable and accurate analytical techniques to differentiate non-GM from GM product.

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