

GIPSA EXPANDS RAPID TEST PERFORMANCE VERIFICATION PROGRAM AND INTRODUCES PROFICIENCY PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7, 2002 - USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration today introduced a Proficiency Program and expanded its Rapid Test Performance Verification Program for biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds.

These two programs respond to the market's need for reliable and rapid tests as new biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds are developed and commercialized.

The Proficiency Program will enable organizations to assess their capabilities to analyze grains and oilseeds for the presence of commercially produced biotech events. The program is available to both private and government organizations and international entities. It will enable organizations to enhance testing reliability and help the grain industry determine the proficiency of commercial labs that provide testing services.

Under the Rapid Test Performance Evaluation Program, GIPSA will evaluate the performance of rapid tests developed to detect commercially produced biotechnology events in grains and oilseeds, and confirm that the tests operate in accordance with manufacturers' claims. This program was initially used to evaluate rapid tests developed to detect the presence of the Cry9C protein which appeared in StarLink™ corn.

"These programs are another way GIPSA is serving a market that needs greater product differentiation," said GIPSA acting administrator David R. Shipman. "Market participants need precise information about products in the marketing chain. GIPSA's programs will ensure that accurate and reliable testing services are available to provide that information."

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