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Genomics in Agricultural Pest Management

Integrated GE³LS Research An Analysis of the Canadian Regulatory Landscape as it Pertains to Biotechnology Research

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Summary

This genomic research project aims to create the next generation of non-toxic pest-control methods. However, this project also raises important societal questions given that governments and industry have not yet addressed appropriate ways of regulating genomic technologies as applied to agriculture. Even though promising technologies are already upon us, the regulatory system and policy framework exhibit some degree of uncertainty when dealing with biotechnological innovation. Partly this is because the Canadian public is often given conflicting messages as to what these technologies involve and how the regulatory system operates. We aim to contribute to improving this situation by providing a thorough analysis of the Canadian regulatory landscape that pertains to biotechnology research.

First, we will study what types of intellectual-property models yield the most benefit for everyone concerned, including industry, government and the public at large. The objective is to identify effects of intellectual-property rights on research, compare intellectual-property rights and licensing policies among several designated countries and regions and recommend better ways of managing intellectual-property rights. We will study two closely related subjects: the ability of researchers to use the techniques of genomics for maximum societal benefit, and the development of policies to ensure sustainability and respect ethical values when exploiting the fruits of genomic research.

Second, we will examine Canadian government policy and legislation regarding the regulation of genetically modified products and their place in agriculture. We will examine current Canadian policy directions as well as several policy alternatives that may be better-suited for the aims of governments in harvesting the fruits of biotechnology.

Finally, we will carry out a study of material-transfer agreements among various research groups working in a multi-regional research project such as this one.