

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: March 21, 2025

Report Number: MX2025-0014

Report Name: Mexico Enacts Constitutional Amendment on the Protection of Native Corn

Country: Mexico

Post: Mexico City

Report Category: Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies, Agricultural Trade Office Activities, Grain and Feed, FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

On March 17, 2025, Mexico adopted a constitutional amendment banning domestic cultivation of “genetically modified” corn – defined as corn “produced with techniques that overcome the natural barriers of reproduction or recombination, such as transgenics” – and requiring “any other use” of such corn to be evaluated “to be free of threats to the biosafety, health and biocultural heritage of Mexico and its population.” While the amendment codifies a longstanding de facto ban on cultivation, it leaves ambiguous the scope of restrictions on “other use[s],” such as corn grain imported for food or feed use.

Title of Amendment: Decree Amending and Adding Various Provisions of Articles 4 And 27 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, Regarding the Conservation and Protection of Native Corn.

Summary

On March 17, 2025, the Government of Mexico [published](#) a constitutional amendment that enshrines existing restrictions on genetically engineered (GE) corn in Mexico's constitution. The constitutional amendment bans domestic cultivation of “genetically modified” corn and requires other uses of such corn to be evaluated “in terms of legal provisions to be free of threats to the biosafety, health, and biocultural heritage of Mexico and its population.” The amendment defines “genetically modified” corn as that derived through “techniques that overcome the natural barriers of reproduction or recombination, such as transgenics.” The amendment also recognizes Mexico as the center of origin and diversity for corn and prioritizes biodiversity protection.

While a de facto ban on GE corn planting has been in place since 2013 due to a court ruling, and effective prohibitions have existed since 1998, this amendment codifies these restrictions in the constitution by amending Articles 4 and 27. The broad application of the term "use" within the amendment does not specify whether or how restrictions apply the prohibition extends beyond cultivation, to encompass genetically modified corn grain imported for food, feed, or processing uses.

The decree's Third Transitory Article mandates that conforming legal changes be made within 180 days of enactment.

Historic Timeline of the Constitutional Amendment

February 5, 2024: Former president Andrés López submitted an initiative on Water, Food, and Environmental Protection to Congress as part of a package of 18 proposed constitutional amendments. The proposed amendment included a ban on GE corn for human consumption and did not distinguish between different forms of human consumption, such that the proposed ban would have potentially applied to processed foods such as breakfast cereal. In addition, the proposed amendment would ban the planting of GE corn in Mexico.

January 13, 2025: Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development, Julio Berdegué, reiterated in an interview the government's intention to ban the planting of all GE corn in Mexico, regardless of its intended use.

January 23, 2025: President Sheinbaum submitted a proposed constitutional amendment to Congress that included a ban on the planting of GE corn, but did not include a ban on the importation or consumption of GE corn.

February 10, 2025: The Chamber of Deputies began hearings on President Sheinbaum’s proposed amendment, during which Agriculture Secretary Berdegué announced agreements between the GOM and several civil society groups, including proposals to recognize Mexico as corn's center of origin and

diversity; prohibit genetic modifications in corn, including transgenics and other processes bypassing natural reproduction; and prioritize biodiversity protection.

February 18, 2025: President Sheinbaum sent a revised draft of the constitutional amendment to Congress. The revised amendment included a ban on the cultivation of “genetically modified” corn, which the amendment defined as “corn produced using techniques that overcome the natural barriers of reproduction or recombination, such as transgenics.” The revised draft also added a requirement that “any other use” of such corn be evaluated “to be free of threats to the biosafety, health and biocultural heritage of Mexico and its population.”

February 25, 2025: The Chamber of Deputies approved the revised corn constitutional amendment.

March 5, 2025: The Chamber of Senators approved the [amendment](#) with no revisions.

March 11, 2025: The Government of Mexico announced ratification of the amendment by the required 17 state legislatures.

March 17, 2005: The amendment was published in the Official Gazette.

Additional information

Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution broadly addresses fundamental rights related to equality, family, health, environment, culture, and children, emphasizing the state's responsibility to protect these rights.

Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution establishes national ownership of land and water resources, granting the nation the right to regulate their use and distribution, with a focus on public interest and social benefit.

The [Mexican Biosafety Law](#) defines genetically modified organism (i.e. genetically engineered) and modern biotechnology as:

- *Genetically modified organism*: Any living organism, human beings exempted, having acquired a new genetic combination, originated through the specific use of modern biotechnological techniques defined in this Law, as long as the techniques used are the ones established in this Law or in the Mexican official norms derived from it.
- *Modern biotechnology*: It is considered the application of *in vitro* techniques of nucleic acids, including recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA and RNA) and the direct injection of nucleic acids into cells and organelles, or the fusion of cells beyond the taxonomic family, exceeding the natural physiological barriers of reproduction or recombination; these are not techniques commonly used in traditional reproduction and selection, and are used to originate genetically modified organisms, and will be determined in the Mexican official norms derived from this Law.

BEGIN UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Title: DECREE TO AMEND AND ADD VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF ARTICLES 4 AND 27 OF THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, IN THE MATTER OF CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF NATIVE CORN.

In the margin, a seal with the National Coat of Arms reads: Mexican United States - Presidency of the Republic. CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM PARDO, President of the Mexican United States, to its inhabitants: That the Honorable Congress of the Union has been pleased to address me with the following:

DECREE

THE GENERAL CONGRESS OF THE MEXICAN UNITED STATES, IN USE OF THE POWER CONFERRED UPON IT BY ARTICLE 135 OF THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES AND PRIOR TO THE APPROVAL OF THE MAJORITY OF THE HONORABLE LEGISLATURES OF THE STATES AND OF MEXICO CITY, DECLARES REFORMED AND ADDED VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF ARTICLES 4 AND 27 OF THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, IN MATTERS OF CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF NATIVE CORN

SINGLE ARTICLE: The third paragraph of article 4 and the first paragraph of section XX of article 27 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States are amended to read as follows:

Article 4.-...

Every person has the right to nutritious, sufficient, and quality food. The State shall guarantee this. Mexico is the center of origin and diversity of corn, which is an element of national identity, a basic food of the people of Mexico, and the basis of the existence of indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples. Its cultivation in the national territory must be free of genetic modifications produced with techniques that overcome the natural barriers of reproduction or recombination, such as transgenics. Any other use of genetically modified corn must be evaluated in terms of the legal provisions to be free of threats to biosafety, health, and the biocultural heritage of Mexico and its population. Priority must be given to protecting biodiversity, food sovereignty, its agroecological management, promoting scientific-humanistic research, the innovation and traditional knowledge.

Article 27. ...

XX. The State will promote the conditions for rural, cultural, economic and health development, with the purpose of generating employment and guaranteeing the peasant population its well-being and its

participation and incorporation in national development, and will promote agricultural and forestry activity, traditional crops with native seeds, especially the milpa system, for the optimal use of land free of genetically modified corn crops, in the terms defined in article 4, with infrastructure works, inputs, credits, training services, research, innovation, conservation of agrobiodiversity and technical assistance strengthening national public institutions. Likewise, it will issue regulatory legislation to plan, organize and monitor agricultural production, its industrialization and commercialization, considering them to be of public interest.

Transitory

FIRST. - This Decree will enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Gazette of the Federation.

SECOND. - From the entry into force of this Decree, all provisions that oppose its content, established in secondary laws, regulations, agreements and any other regulatory order of an administrative nature, are repealed.

THIRD. - The Congress of the Union, within a period of 180 days, counted from the entry into force of this Decree, must harmonize the legal framework of the laws in the matters to adapt it to the content of this Decree.

Mexico City, March 12, 2025.- Sen. Gerardo Fernández Noroña, President.- Rep. Sergio Carlos Gutiérrez Luna, President.- Sen. Verónica Noemí Camino Farjat, Secretary.- Rep. Julieta Villalpando Riquelme, Secretary.- Signatures."

In compliance with the provisions of Section I of Article 89 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, and for its due publication and observance, I issue this Decree at the Residence of the Federal Executive Branch, in Mexico City, on March 17, 2025.- Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, President of the United Mexican States.- Signature.- Rosa Icela Rodríguez Velázquez, Secretary of the Interior.- Signature.

END UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Attachments:

No Attachments.