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Prepared By: Rasheeda Hall-Hanson

Approved By: Tiffany Landry

Report Highlights:

With over US\$ 400 million in agricultural imports from the United States in 2019, the U.S. continues to be an important trading partner for Jamaica. The main imported biotech products include grains and oilseeds used to formulate feed rations and intermediate foods. At present, Jamaica's biotechnology and biosafety regulations, which guide the use of biotechnology in production and trading, are under development and are guided by Jamaica's National Biosafety Framework.

Executive Summary

Jamaica's National Biosafety Framework was established to develop regulations that guide how biotechnology and biosafety is applied and traded between Jamaica and other countries. These regulations are still under development but are influenced by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). The Protocol was designed to address the "*safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.*" Jamaica is a signatory to the convention and the Protocol was enforced on December 24, 2012.

Many of the products that are imported by Jamaica from the United States and other suppliers are produced using biotechnology. In light of this, the biosafety legislation that is being developed by Jamaica may eventually affect trade with the United States in the future.

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CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

- a) **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** Experimental efforts in crop production using GE was conducted by the Biotechnology Centre at the University of the West Indies (UWI). One of the major research efforts resulted in the development of a transgenic variety of papaya (*Carica papaya*) that is resistant to the Papaya Ringspot virus. Although the variety has been developed, it has not been approved for distribution or commercial production. No evidence or information is available on other crop development being conducted at this time.
- b) **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** Currently GE crops are not produced commercially in Jamaica.
- c) **EXPORTS:** Jamaica does not export GE crops.
- d) **IMPORTS:** Jamaica imports bulk grain and oilseed products such as corn, soybean and wheat, which is used in ration formulations. The products are predominantly purchased from Brazil and the United States, which both produce GE crops. Apart from Jamaica's biotechnology and biosafety regulations, which are under review, post is not aware of any specific requirements for GE product imports into Jamaica.
- e) **FOOD AID:** N/A
- f) **TRADE BARRIERS:** None

PART B: POLICY

- a) **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:** The issue of biosafety spans several ministries and government agencies. Current laws include but are not limited to; Animals Disease and Importation Act, Food and Drug Act, Pesticides Act, Pharmacy Act, Plant Quarantine Act, Public Health Act, Standards Act, and the Natural Resources and Conservation Act. In December 2007, Jamaica completed its National Biosafety Framework. The Framework was developed under a five-year project funded by the United Nations Environmental Programme/Global Environmental Facility (UNEP/GEF) – Global Project “Development of National Biosafety Frameworks.” The National Biosafety Policy, though still a draft pending approval from the Cabinet, directs national biotechnology and biosafety regulations. The Policy explicitly mandates the compulsory labeling of products of modern biotechnology. The Bureau of Standards also adopted the CODEX standard for food additives, which states that foods containing GE material should be identified on labels.

In 2007, the Jamaican Parliament passed the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST) Act. The Act outlines the Commission's role as "promoting the sustainable development and utilization of local science and technology capacities for competitive and profitable production through education of the populace, partnership with government, private sector, academic institutions and such other bodies or institutions as the Commission considers appropriate." The NCST is the National Focal Point for Biosafety and Biotechnology. As part of the agreement under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Jamaica also established a clearinghouse where any information on the protocol could be accessed. This clearinghouse resides with the Institute of Jamaica. As established by the Cartagena Protocol, a competent authority is required to lead the administrative framework of the legislation. The Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) was selected to manage this area.

In Jamaica, the legislation governing modern biotechnology and its products is not comprehensive. The Framework does not list or outline the protocols for the deregulation and commercialization of products derived from GE interventions. Post is unaware of any regulations that direct Living Modified Organisms (LMO) imports for animal feed or processing of commodities (corn and soybean) or high value products (cooking oil and breakfast cereals) that are derived from GE crops. The importation of LMOs for commercial release into the natural environment is prohibited; however, there are regulations that guide LMO imports for experimental purposes.

- b) **APPROVALS:** Post is not aware of any lists identifying plants or crops which are registered for trading or local production.
- c) **STACKED OR PYRAMIDED EVENT APPROVALS:** No additional approval is required from the Government of Jamaica for stacked or pyramid events.
- d) **FIELD TESTING:** Jamaica allows field-testing of GE crops. This research is monitored by a National Biosafety Committee, established for this purpose. The Plants (Importation) Control regulations (1997) under the Plants Quarantine Act, 1994, is the only legal instrument that directly addresses the issues of biosafety. This was enacted in 1997 and amended in 2005. Under guidelines, the National Biosafety Committee is empowered to monitor the importation of any plant, seed, cutting or slip, which has been genetically engineered and imported into Jamaica for the purpose of research.
- e) **INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES:** N/A
- f) **COEXISTENCE:** N/A

- g) LABELING: Jamaica does not have specific labeling requirement for GE products/ingredients. It is important to note that the labeling standards of Jamaica are based on the guidelines of the CODEX standards.
- h) MONITORING AND TESTING: No monitoring and testing for GE traits in imported products
- i) LOW LEVEL PRESENCE (LLP) POLICY: Currently, there is no LLP policy in Jamaica.
- j) ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS: None
- k) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR): N/A
- l) CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION: Jamaica ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) to the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity on September 25, 2012. The Protocol came into force on December 24, 2012.
- m) INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FORA: Jamaican officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry, Investment, Commerce and Health participate in international standard setting bodies such as:
- Agreement of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)
 - Agreement of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
 - Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex)
 - International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
 - Trade Related-Aspects of International Property Rights (TRIPS)
 - World Trade Organizations Agreements (WTO)
 - World Organization for Animal Health. (OIE)
- (n) RELATED ISSUES: N/A

PART C: MARKETING

- a) Public/Private Opinions:
Post has not identified any active organizations or groups that are lobbying for or against the use of GE plants in Jamaica.
- b) Market Acceptance/Studies:
Presently there are some concerns regarding the marketing of GE products in Jamaica. A study conducted by Abdulkadri, Pinnock and Tennant (2007) indicated that while Jamaicans are fairly

knowledgeable about GE in food production they are concerned about the safety of these products and many recommend that GE products are clearly labelled.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279698314_Public_perception_of_genetic_engineering_and_the_choice_to_purchase_genetically_modified_food_in_Jamaica

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

Jamaica does not conduct research related to genetically engineered animals or use genetically engineered animals for food production.

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: N/A

b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: N/A

c) EXPORTS: N/A

d) IMPORTS: N/A

E) TRADE BARRIERS: N/A

PART E: POLICY

a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: N/A

b) INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES: N/A

c) LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A

PART F: MARKETING

Public/Private Opinions: N/A

Market Acceptance/Studies: N/A

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

- a) PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: N/A
- b) COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: N/A
- c) EXPORTS: N/A
- d) IMPORTS: N/A
- e) TRADE BARRIERS: N/A

PART H: POLICY

- a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: N/A
- b) INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES: N/A
- c) LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A

PART I: MARKETING

- b) Public/Private Opinions: N/A
- c) Market Acceptance/Studies: N/A

Attachments:

No Attachments