

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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Date: 9/15/2015

GAIN Report Number: MX5039

Mexico

Post: Mexico

Educational Biotechnology Videos Promote Science-Based Rulemaking

Report Categories:

Biotechnology and Other New Production
Technologies

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Report Highlights:

In an effort to support the development and adoption of science-based rulemaking FAS Mexico developed ten educational videos on biotechnology and genetically engineered organisms in Spanish. FAS Mexico used the State Biotech Outreach fund. A new video will be released each week. The first video was distributed on August 10, 2015 and reached more than 1000 views during the first two weeks.

General Information:

In Mexico there has always been controversy and negative media coverage on the use of biotechnology. Twenty years after the initial release of genetically modified crops in Mexico, the public does not understand what genetic modification does for agricultural production. As a result, activist groups use misinformation to cause fear in the public. These groups have prevented biotechnology companies, universities, or public research institutes from planting genetically engineered corn over the last two years with an ongoing injunction. Additionally, in December 2016, the Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 13) will be held in Cancun, Mexico. Having Mexico as the host country will heighten the attention of Mexican activist groups and bring international focus on biotechnology.

In an effort to support the development and adoption of science-based rulemaking FAS Mexico developed ten educational videos on biotechnology and genetically engineered organisms in Spanish. The videos were made in consultation with researchers from U.S. Land Grant Universities such as Michigan State University and New Mexico State University, as well as Mexican universities. The communication strategy is to release one video per week. Each video is 1-4 minutes long and will be distributed via social media on YouTube, twitter and the Facebook page for United States Embassy in Mexico. The videos have also been shared with other FAS Spanish speaking offices to encourage global development and adoption of science-based standards on biotechnology.

The public's initial response to the videos has been positive and generated discussions that promote scientific arguments. Part of the success is due to videos format. These videos are concrete and simple and can be used by teachers starting in middle and high school in support of their science curricula. The channel with all the videos is named: 10 Verdades Sobre los OGMs. Cuando la Ciencia Responde (Ten truths about GMOs. When Science Responds):

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCULrUTG_MdZ_9uOP7h8DRrA

The videos cover the following topics:

1. Coexistence
2. Gene flow
3. Corn domestication
4. Honey and soybean
5. Safe food
6. Applications on agro-biotechnology
7. Cotton GM
8. Bt corn
9. Biosafety
10. Production vs importation

FAS Mexico used the State Biotech Outreach fund. The funds are targeted towards public outreach to develop support for U.S. trade and development of policy positions on biotechnology. Department of State suggests that projects should aim to provide accurate information on the benefits of biotechnology to policymakers and consumers in other countries and to encourage the adoption of science-based

regulatory systems.