

# Directive

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## **PROFICIENCY PROGRAM: DETECTION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY EVENTS**

### **1. PURPOSE**

This Directive provides information on GIPSA's Proficiency Program, a program to improve the reliability of testing for biotechnology events in grains and oilseeds. This service is provided under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

The emergence of value-enhanced grains and oilseeds, development of niche markets for non-biotech commodities and the establishment of new regulatory requirements by U.S. trading partners has created a greater need for product differentiation in the marketplace. To this end, market participants are relying, in part, on product testing to obtain accurate information about products in the marketing chain and to comply with the new market demands. The efficiency of the marketing system will, therefore, depend on the availability of accurate and reliable testing.

To help meet the market's need for reliable testing, GIPSA offers a Proficiency Program for testing of biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds, as described in this Directive.

### **3. PROGRAM DEFINITIONS**

Biotechnology-Derived Grains and Oilseeds: Grains and oilseeds that have been altered using recombinant DNA technology (genetic engineering) to modify agronomic and/or quality characteristics.

Non-Biotechnology Grains and Oilseeds: Grains and oilseeds that have not been modified through modern biotechnology.

Control Samples: Samples that do not contain biotechnology-derived grain or oilseeds.

Fortified Samples: Samples of non-biotechnology grains or oilseeds to which a pre-determined quantity of biotechnology-derived grains or oilseeds has been added.

### **4. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The GIPSA Proficiency Program seeks to improve the reliability of testing for biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds by providing participants with the means to assess their capabilities and identify areas for improvement.

a. Participation.

Any organization providing testing or testing for biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds may participate in this voluntary Program.

b. Grains/Oilseeds Tested.

The Program includes biotechnology-derived corn and soybeans commercially produced in the U.S. The Program will be expanded to include other crops as additional biotechnology events are commercialized.

c. Samples.

GIPSA has developed and validated a procedure to prepare ground samples containing biotechnology events that is satisfactory for the purposes of this program.

GIPSA will mail samples on a quarterly basis to all participants.

Initially, each participant will receive fifteen ground samples (20 grams each): Twelve corn samples and three soybean samples. The samples will consist of both control and fortified samples. The fortified corn samples will contain a mixture of biotechnology-derived corn varieties that have been commercialized in the U.S. There is only one commercial biotechnology-derived soybean event, so the soybean samples will be either positive or negative for the event.

d. Results.

Participants will provide qualitative results only, i.e., the presence or absence of the event will be reported in each sample, and the testing technology used (i.e., protein-based, PCR, etc.).

For each round of samples, a date will be specified for submission of results. Results received after the specified date will not be included in the summary report.

e. Reports.

Each participant will receive a report on the performance for each round of samples, and a participant code to identify their particular results. The identity of the participants will not be reflected in these reports. Each participant will receive a report summarizing the performance of all participants, with a participant code to identify their particular results. The report will be posted on the USDA/GIPSA Biotechnology web page.

## 5. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Participants in the GIPSA Proficiency Program must provide the following information to the GIPSA Biotechnology Program Manager. This communication can be by letter or e-mail:

- Participant name and address.
- Participant contact person.
- Contact telephone number.
- Contact fax number.
- Contact e-mail address.

## 6. CONTACT INFORMATION

Direct any correspondence regarding this Program to the GIPSA Biotechnology Program Manager at the following sites:

- E-mail: [biotech-lab@usda.gov](mailto:biotech-lab@usda.gov)
- Mail Address:

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*/s/ Steven N. Tanner*

Steven N. Tanner, Director  
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