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Prepared By:

Approved By: Chris Frederick

Report Highlights:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA) regulations allow the importation of biotech plant products, but they must be labeled if they contain more than 1% genetically engineered (GE) plant ingredients. As a result, many retail packaged food importers do not import biotech foods because they fear that biotech labeling could damage their image. However, Saudi Arabia imports large quantities of biotech U.S. corn and soybeans. KSA, as well as Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO) regulations, prohibit the import of genetically modified animals, birds, and fish. Biotech planting seeds are permitted for import, but there are currently no ongoing commercial development activities for GE plants in Saudi Arabia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Saudi Arabia depends on imported food and agricultural products to meet approximately 70 percent of its food and agricultural product consumption. Dairy and poultry farms rely entirely on feed corn, soybean meal, and soybeans produced in the leading plant biotech-producing countries. In 2001, KSA officially allowed the import of GE plant products and microbial food products if two conditions were met: the products were approved in the country of origin for human or animal consumption, and they were biotech-labeled if the GE content exceeded 1%.

In 2011, the Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO) issued two main biotech regulations, GSO 2141/2011 (General Requirements for Genetically Modified Unprocessed Agricultural Products) and GSO 2142/2011 (General Requirements for Genetically Modified Processed Agricultural Products). They have not revised their plant biotech regulations since 2011, but FAS Riyadh will report any substantive updates if they occur. The two biotech regulations are implemented in GSO (GCC) member states (KSA, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Yemen, and UAE). The two GSO regulations contain similar biotech labeling conditions that KSA has been implementing since 2001, as discussed above.

The United States has historically been a significant supplier of corn, corn oil, Distiller's Dried Grains with Solubles (DDGS), soybeans, soybean meal, and soybean oil to the Kingdom. In 2024, the KSA imported 3.4 million metric tons (MMT) of feed corn (12.5 percent from the U.S.); 30,077 MT of DDGS (98 % from the U.S.); 32,996 MT of corn oil (35 percent from the U.S.); 319,204 MT of soybeans (29 percent from the U.S.); 1,160,171 MT of soybean meal (U.S. market share 0.5 percent); and 29.533MT of soybean oil (3 percent from the U.S.).

Although Saudi Arabia has adopted regulations allowing the import of biotech seeds, Saudi farmers have shown no interest in importing or planting them. Saudi Arabia does not have a separate policy on microbial biotechnology; it considers it part and parcel of agricultural biotechnology. As such, all regulations and standards applicable to the production and consumption of agricultural biotechnology apply to products produced using microbial biotechnology.

KSA and GSO member countries allow the importation of GE seeds but prohibit the import of GE animals, birds, fish, and their products to all member countries for religious reasons (halal issues). Currently, there are no discussions taking place to rescind the ban. More detailed information on Saudi Arabia’s food and agricultural import regulations can be found in our annual Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Country Report at this link.

CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

There is no ongoing development of GE plants in Saudi Arabia.

b. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

Although Saudi Arabia has implemented the 2011 GSO biotech regulations, which allow for the import and planting of biotech seeds under strict conditions, Saudi farmers have shown no interest in importing or planting them so far.

c. EXPORTS

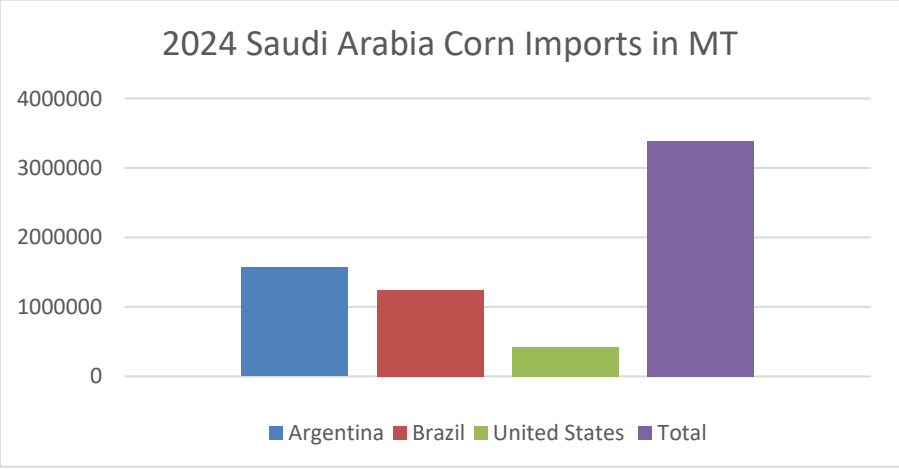
Not applicable.

d. IMPORTS

In 2024, KSA imported approximately $27 billion worth of food and agricultural products, of which nearly 50 percent were highly processed. It is likely that a significant percentage of the processed foods contain GE plant ingredients. The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) inspects imported high-value food products and processed feed at Saudi ports of entry. The inspection of unprocessed animal feed and planting seeds is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture (MEWA). KSA imports animal feed ingredients (e.g., corn, soybeans, soybean meal, and DDGS, as well as cooking oils derived from GE crops such as corn and soybean) directly from the main GE crop-producing countries (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, and the United States).

- **Feed Corn**

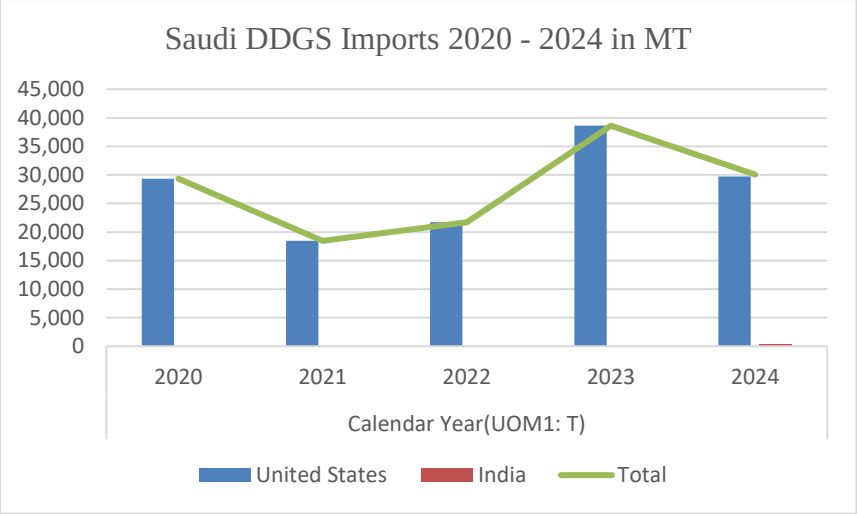
In 2024, Saudi Arabia imported a total of 3,393,692 MT of feed corn, an increase of approximately 24 percent from total imports in 2023. Argentina was the largest supplier with 46 percent market share, followed by Brazil at 36 percent, and the United States was third with 12 percent



Source: Trade Data Monitor (TDM)

- **DDGS (230330, Brewing or Distilling Dregs and Waste)**

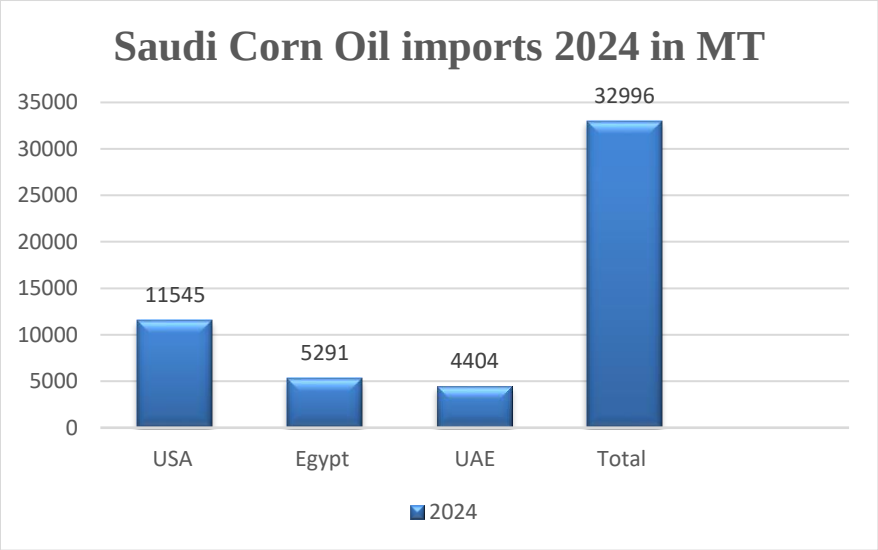
Saudi Arabia is becoming a significant importer of DDGS due to the expansion of its local animal feed processing sector. Feed processors use DDGS as a replacement for corn when its price is more competitive. In 2024, the KSA imported 30,077MT of DDGS. The United States is the main supplier of DDGS to Saudi Arabia.



Source: (TDM)

- **Corn Oil**

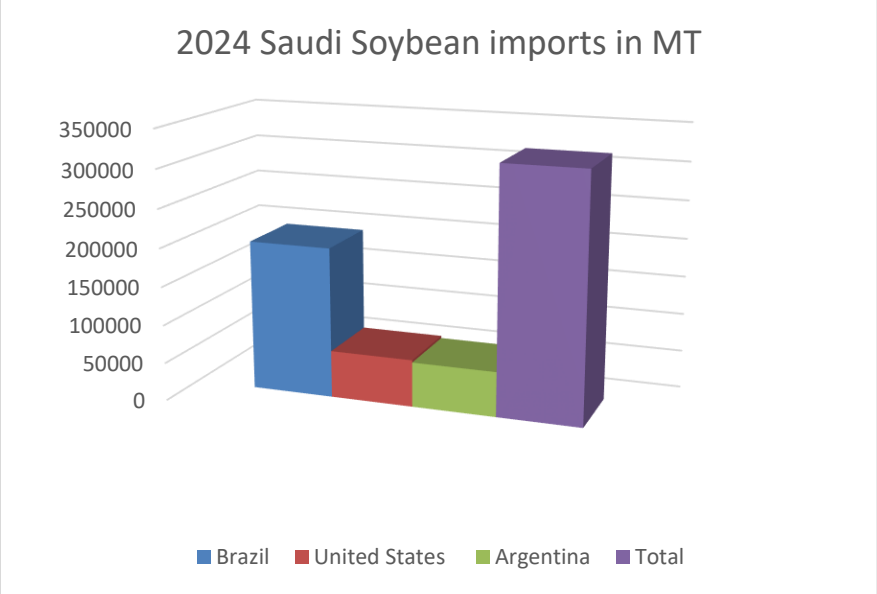
In 2024, Saudi Arabia imported 32,996 MT of corn oil. The United States was the dominant supplier, with almost 35 percent market share, followed by Egypt and the UAE with 16 percent and 13 percent, respectively.



Source: (TDM)

- **Soybeans**

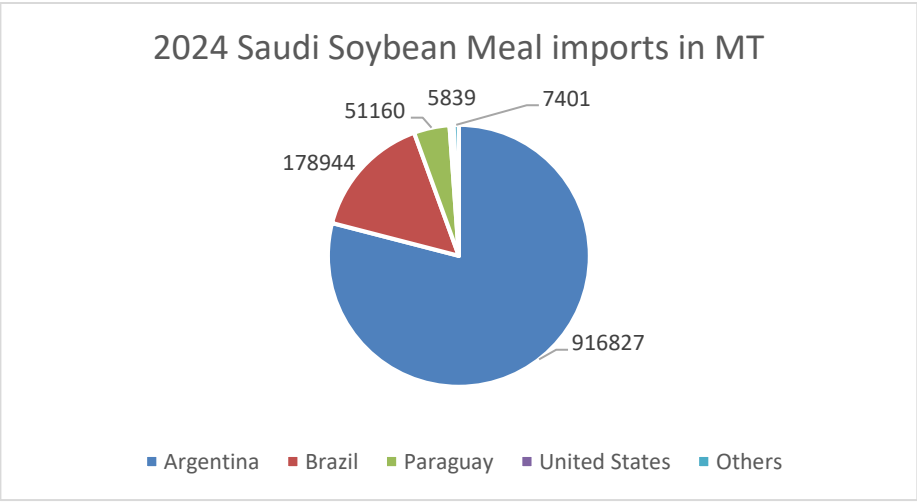
KSA has been importing a significant amount of soybeans over the past several years butt because one of the main crushers closed, the market switched to importing soybean meal. In 2024, KSA imported a total of 319,204 MT of soybeans. Brazil, the USA, and Argentina supplied 62 percent, 19.5 percent, and 18.5 percent, respectively, last year.



Source: (TDM)

- **Soybean Meal**

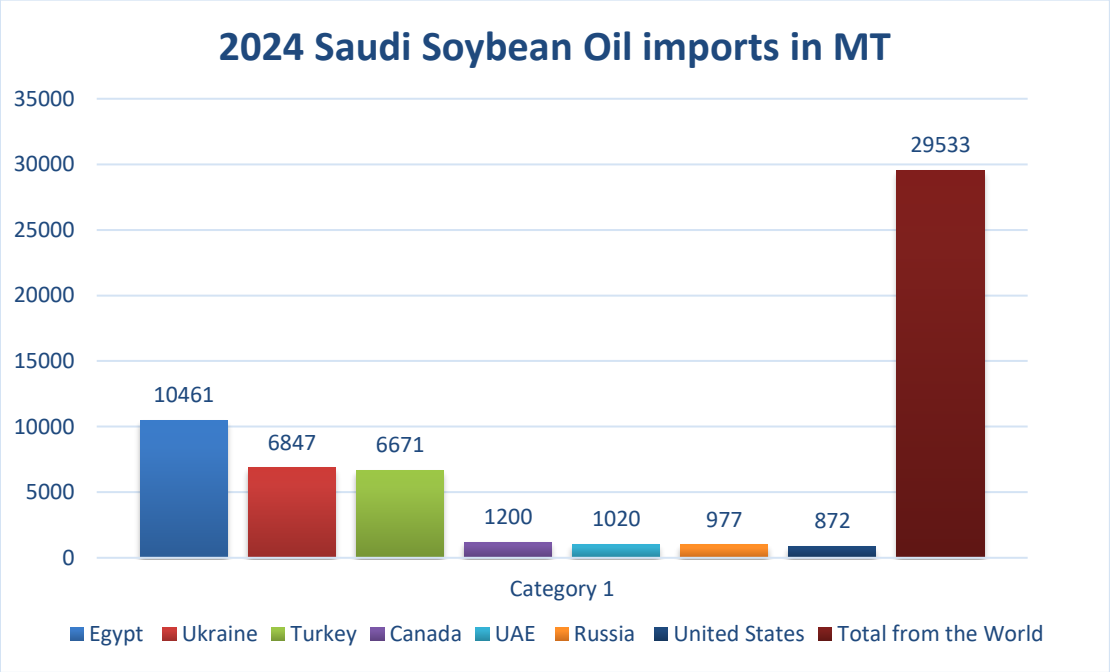
Last year, Saudi Arabia imported 1,160,171 MT of soybean meal, with Argentina as the leading supplier at approximately 79 percent, followed by Brazil at 15 percent. Paraguay was ranked third with 4.5 percent. The United States was ranked fourth with 0.5 percent.



Source: (TDM)

- **Soybean Oil**

Because of the shutdown of one of the major soybean crushers, in 2024 Saudi Arabia imported 29,533 MT of Soybean oil. Egypt accounted for 35 percent of the import market, followed by Ukraine with 23 percent and Turkey with 22 percent.



Source: (TDM)

e. FOOD AID

Saudi Arabia provides food aid for nearby disaster-stricken countries and is not a recipient of Food Aid.

f. TRADE BARRIERS

GE labeling discourages the import of retail-packed food products, as importers fear it could jeopardize their image and lower market share. Saudi consumers have limited knowledge about agricultural biotechnology (Please note the labeling section below).

PART B: POLICY

a. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

In February 2005, the Saudi government established a National Committee for Biotechnology (NCB) headed by the Saudi Arabian Standard Organization (SASO) and including representatives from four ministries (Agriculture, Commerce, Health, and Municipalities), as well as from Saudi universities and the private sector. This committee, now headed by SFDA, is responsible for reviewing government policy on biotech activities and standards in the Kingdom. SFDA is an influential member in the GSO and plays a leading role in setting the GCC food and agricultural regulations and standards.

The regulatory framework of the Saudi NCB is based chiefly on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The NCB finalized the country's biosafety framework, laws, regulations, guidelines, and implementation mechanism, which is currently awaiting the government's approval for implementation.

The NCB has been working with MEWA to ensure that biotech animal feed grain imports are safe for human and animal health and do not have adverse effects on biological diversity.

Until the end of 2011, Saudi Arabia was the only GSO country that regulated the import of processed and unprocessed biotech agricultural products. The Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) and MEWA implemented GE decrees on processed foodstuffs and animal feed, which was issued in January 2001 and December 2004, respectively. The decrees mandated positive biotech labeling if a product contained more than 0.9 percent of biotech vegetable (plant) ingredients.

In October 2011, Saudi Arabia implemented two new GSO agricultural biotech technical regulations GSO 2141/2011 (General Requirements for Genetically Modified Unprocessed Agricultural Products) and GSO 2142/2011 (General Requirements for Genetically Modified Processed Agricultural Products). The two technical regulations require positive biotech labeling if unprocessed agricultural products, processed food products, feed products, or seeds contain more than 1% GE plant or microbial ingredients. GSO 2141/2011 prohibits the import of genetically modified animals, birds, fish, and their products.

GSO-issued standards are implemented in the seven member countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Saudi Arabia implements GSO regulations and standards if they are more recently updated than the existing SFDA regulations and standards. English copies of the GSO standards mentioned in this report and other food/agricultural-related regulations are copyrighted documents and are available for purchase from the GSO headquarters in Riyadh via this link: GSO Standards Store. SFDA regulations may be purchased at this link.

Legal Term (in English)	Laws and Regulations where term is used	Legal Definition (in English)
Genetically Modified Unprocessed/Processed Agricultural Products	SFDA.FD GSO 2371	Any technical application using biological systems, organisms, or derivatives to make or modify products or processes for a particular purpose.

b. REGULATIONS

KSA implements several regulations and standards on the production, import, and export of food products produced using agricultural and microbial biotechnologies. SFDA.FD GSO 2371 defines biotechnology as any technical application that uses biological systems, organisms, or derivatives to produce or modify products or processes for a specific purpose. The regulation states, "***In this technology, organisms (microorganism, plants, and animals) are treated at molecular and sub-molecular levels where a range of genetic modifications is carried out to achieve maximum industrial, agricultural, and eventually economic benefits***."

The two 2011 GSO regulations (GSO 2141 and 2142) superseded the MOCI December 2001 ministerial decree, which made Saudi Arabia the first GSO country to regulate biotech food imports. The December 2001 MOCI decree required positive biotech labeling for processed food products or animal feed that contained more than 0.9 percent GE vegetable (plant) ingredients.

In addition to GSO-issued biotech regulations, SFDA implements some Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) guidelines and standards issued by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in their original languages (as is) for food and agricultural products using agricultural and microbial biotechnologies.

Currently, Saudi Arabia implements the following Codex guideline:

1. SFDA.FD GSO CAC/GL 44 "Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology." The purpose of these Principles is to provide a framework for undertaking risk analysis on the safety and nutritional aspects of foods derived from modern biotechnology. This document does not address environmental, ethical, moral, or socio-economic aspects of the research, development, production, and marketing of these foods.

2. SFDA.FD GSO CAC/GL 45 "Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants." This guideline supports the Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology. It addresses safety and nutritional aspects of foods consisting of, or derived from, plants that have a history of safe use as sources of food that have been modified by modern biotechnology to exhibit new or altered expression of traits.

3. SFDA.FD GSO CAC/GL 46 "Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Food Produced Using Recombinant-DNA Microorganisms." This guideline supports the Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology. It addresses safety and nutritional aspects of foods produced by recombinant-DNA microorganisms. The recombinant-DNA microorganisms used to produce these foods are typically derived, using modern biotechnology, from strains with a history of safe, purposeful use in food production. However, in instances where the recipient strains lack a safe history, their safety must be established. Such food and food ingredients may contain viable or non-viable recombinant-DNA microorganisms or may be produced by fermentation using recombinant-DNA microorganisms from which the recombinant-DNA microorganisms may have been removed.

c. APPROVALS

Saudi Arabia does not approve individual biotech events. Suppose imported food, feed, or seed contains more than one percent biotech content. In that case, each shipment must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by a competent government agency stating that "the GE ingredient/s used in the foodstuff, or grains is/are approved in the country of origin for human or animal consumption or for planting seeds."

For U.S. corn, soybeans, and soybean meal, MEWA still accepts the one-time biotech grain certification statement that was issued in 2003 by the USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). The statement certifies that the exported transgenic feed grains and oilseeds (corn, soybeans, and soybean meal) are identical to those consumed in the United States. The approved statement eliminates the need for a shipment-by-shipment positive biotech certification for unprocessed agricultural products, as required in section 4.1.5 of GSO 2141/2011.

SFDA accepts health certificates issued by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and by federal or state departments of agriculture for high-value and processed feed products containing more than 1% biotech content. Post has not received any complaints from Saudi food product importers regarding U.S. suppliers' ability to provide the required biotech certificates. Biotech health certificates issued by exporting companies or other private organizations, including notary public statements, are not recognized.

d. STACKED or PYRAMIDED EVENT APPROVALS

Stacked or pyramid events are not treated separately and are covered by the product approvals as outlined above.

e. FIELD TESTING

Saudi Arabia allows for the import and planting of GE seeds under strict conditions. However, Saudi farmers have shown no interest in importing or planting GE seeds, and there is no indication that research centers are currently researching them.

f. INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES

Saudi Arabia does not have an official position on genome-edited or plant-based food products. The general rule for food, feed, and seed produced by innovative biotechnologies is that the products must be approved by competent authorities in the countries of origin, be safe for consumption by the targeted group, and be widely consumed in the exporting countries to be allowed entry into the Kingdom market.

g. COEXISTENCE

Local farmers are not interested in planting GE seeds. Conventional crops, which are produced from non-GE crop varieties, are planted in separate locations from organic crops. The local organic farming sector is small but growing, and it receives various support from MEWA. This link provides information on how MEWA assists the local organic farming sector.

h. LABELING and TRACEABILITY

Since October 2011, Saudi Arabia has applied the two GSO agricultural biotech technical regulations: GSO 2141 and GSO 2142. The regulations raised the biotech threshold from 0.9 percent to 1 percent and rescinded the ban on the import of biotech planting seeds. The GSO biotech regulations stipulate the import requirements for food products produced through agricultural biotechnology when the biotech content exceeds 1%. The regulations allow for the import of plant biotech agricultural and microbial food products if they are approved in the country of origin for human or animal consumption or planting. The two GSO regulations have the following labeling requirements:

- Positive GE labeling: If a product contains one or more GE plant ingredients with more than one percent GE content, the words "genetically modified" or "produced from genetically modified" (name of the ingredients must be included) should appear clearly and easily in parentheses immediately following the ingredients along with the same font size and different color. GSO biotech regulations do not allow the import of food containing GE animal products. According to the SFDA, local food producers must also comply with the biotech labeling requirements.

- Labeling and adjoining explanatory statements must be in Arabic and, where another language is used, it should also be alongside Arabic. All information that is provided in another language must be identical to what is written in Arabic. The biotech statement must be clearly written in Arabic and English, in the same font size and a different color from the main product label.

- If the GE food product is different from its conventional counterpart, the label must mention any characteristic or property concerning the following:
    - Composition
    - Mode of storage and packing
    - Nutritional value or nutritional effects
    - Intended use of product
    - Any health implications for certain groups of people, certain animals, or the environment
    - Physical characteristics (color, odor, taste, and touch).
    - Methods for safe handling, storage, transport, and use

- If the food product does not have a conventional counterpart, the label must include appropriate information about the nature and characteristics of the food product.

- Suppose the mode of storage, preparation, or cooking of the product is no longer equivalent to, or differs significantly from, the corresponding conventional food. In that case, clear instructions for use must be given on the product label.

The following additional SFDA\GSO and ISO regulations and standards are implemented in labeling plant agricultural products:

- SFDA.FD GSO 2143 "General Requirements for Risk Assessment and Traceability for Genetically Modified Products." This standard provides details on the labeling requirements for processed food and feed, and following is a text from the technical regulations describing the labeling requirements:

4/2 LABELLING REQUIREMENTS: Without prejudice to what is stated in GSO item 2.1, the following requirements must be clearly identified on the label:

4/2/1 If the product consists of more than one ingredient, the words “genetically modified” or “produced from genetically modified” (name of the ingredient) must appear clearly and easily to be read in the list of ingredients in parentheses immediately following the ingredient concerned with the same font size and a different color.

4/2/2 If the name of a category designates the ingredient, the words “contains genetically modified” (name of organism) or “contains (name of ingredient) produced from genetically modified” (name of organism) must appear clearly and easily be read in the list of ingredients with the same font size and different color.

4/2/3 If there is no list of ingredients, the words “genetically modified” or “produced from genetically modified” (name of organism) must appear clearly and easily to be on the labeling.

4/2/4 Labeling must not mislead the purchaser as to the characteristics of the foodstuff and among other things, to its nature, identity, properties, composition, method of production, and manufacturing.

4/2/5 The indications referred to in (4/2/1 and 4/2/2) may appear in a footnote to the list of ingredients, and in this case, they must be printed in a font at least the same size as the list of ingredients. If there is no list of ingredients, they must appear clearly and easily be read on the label.

4/2/6 If the food is offered for sale to the final consumer as non-pre-packaged food or as prepackaged food in small containers of which the largest surface has an area of less than 10 cm square, the information required in (4/2/1 and 4/2/2) must be permanently and visibly displayed either on the food display or immediately next to it, or on the packaging material and in a font sufficiently large to be easily identified and read. The focus of this standard is the polymerase chain reaction.
reaction (PCR) based methodologies. However, due to the rapid pace of technological change in this area, other technologies may be considered in the future.

- SFDA.FD GSO ISO 24276:2006 “Food Stuffs - Methods of Analysis for the Detection of Genetically Modified Organisms and Derived Products- General Requirements and Definitions.” ISO 24276 was prepared by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 275, *Food analysis — Horizontal methods* in collaboration with Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

- SFDA.FD GSO 9 “Labelling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs” stipulates that it must be declared on the label of a food product in case biotechnology is used to obtain this product or any of its ingredients.

- SFDA.FD GSO 2502 “Compilation of Codex Texts Relevant to the Labelling of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology.” The purpose of this document is only to recall and assemble in a single document some important elements of guidance from Codex texts, which are relevant to labelling of foods derived from modern biotechnology.

Even though Saudi Arabia implemented its agricultural biotech labeling in 2001, the labeling requirement has not affected the import of biotech food and feed grains. However, no retail packaged food products with positive biotech labeling have been imported into the Kingdom to date. In general, Saudi importers of retail-packed food products do not import foods with GE content above 1% because they require labeling, and they are concerned that biotech labeling could jeopardize their product image and result in market share loss, especially since Saudi consumers have limited knowledge of agricultural biotechnology. Locally produced food products that use imported biotech oil or corn and soybean by-products are not labeled for biotech content.

i. MONITORING AND TESTING

GSO has adopted six ISO standards on methods of analysis for the detection of genetically modified organisms and their derived products in their original languages. GSO has also adopted three Codex standards for its risk analysis and safety assessment of foods derived from agricultural biotechnology.

In 2009, SFDA took over the responsibility for inspecting imported and domestically produced processed foods, feed, and feed concentrates. MEWA is responsible for inspecting imported fruits, vegetables, planting seeds, and unprocessed animal feed.

SFDA randomly tests new-to-market processed foods for biotech content using the Real-Time PCR method for random GE testing in processed food products. Samples for laboratory analysis are taken in accordance with GSO ISO standards 21098, 21569, 21570, 21571, 21572, and 24276. Food product importers are required to declare biotech levels of more than 1% and must provide the competent authority with an attested certificate indicating that the biotech ingredient(s) are used in foods consumed in the country of origin.

j. LOW LEVEL PRESENCE (LLP) POLICY

KSA does not approve or disapprove biotech plant varieties by event but accepts those approved by supplying countries for human or animal use. This policy effectively precludes LLP issues.

k. ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for Unprocessed GE Agricultural Products for Human Consumption:

- If the products are sold by weight, number, or volume, they should be kept in separate areas and isolated from conventional products.

- The product should have a clearly defined and difficult to eliminate label or printed card placed on a suitable place on the specified food stating that “this product is genetically modified using biotechnology."

- It should not be used for agricultural purposes or for any kind of plant propagation.

- It should comply with the GSO traceability and risk assessment requirements.

Requirements for Unprocessed GE Agricultural Products for Animal Feed:

- It is prohibited for use in human food.
- It should be placed on the market in a separate location and isolated from conventional products. The product should have a clearly defined and difficult to eliminate label placed in a suitable location on the specified feed stating that "this product is genetically modified using biotechnology."
- The label should also state that "this product is not for human consumption or for agricultural use," meaning it cannot be used for planting purposes.
- It should not be used for agricultural purposes or for any kind of plant propagation.

l. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

The newly established Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property (SAIP), a Saudi government agency, is developing regulations to better protect intellectual property rights.

Requirements for GE Planting Seeds:

- The seed import process should not conflict with the regulations of importing countries, particularly regarding plant diseases, harmful weeds, narcotic plants, germination, purity, and humidity levels.
- Written permission should be obtained from the competent authorities at least 10 days prior to the consignment's arrival.
- All chemicals and their concentrations used in the treatment of the seed must be declared.
- The GE planting seed should be treated with a different color to facilitate differentiation from the conventional counterparts.
- The final user adheres to the rules of agricultural planting land surveyors and guarantees not to mix with non-GE seeds.
- If the GE planting seed does not have a conventional counterpart, the label or the accompanying documents must contain appropriate information about its nature and characteristics.
- The product must have a clearly written, easy-to-read, and difficult-to-remove label stating that the product is for agricultural use and not for human or animal consumption.

- Information on safe handling, storage, transport, and use should be provided.
- Should comply with the GSO traceability and risk assessment for the GE unprocessed agricultural products for agricultural use according to item 2.16 (GSO 2143/2011).
- Sampling shall be taken according to the following standards: GSO ISO 21098, 21569, 21570, 21571, 21572 and 24276, and sampling stated in the GSO standard for each product.

Requirements for GE Processed Food and Feed, as specified in GSO 2142/2011:

- Must be compatible with the ethical regulations applied in the importing country.
- No adverse effects on human health, animal health, plant health, or the environment.
- Should not differ from the product that it is intended to replace to such an extent that its normal consumption would be nutritionally disadvantageous for humans or animals.
- The product must be accompanied by a certificate proving that it is permitted for consumption in the country of production.
- Must declare the presence of any food or food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification or genetic engineering of allergens transferred into any foods or ingredients.

m. CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION

Saudi Arabia ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in August 2007 but has not yet signed the Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

n. INTERNATIONAL TREATIES & FORUMS

Saudi Arabia is a member of international organizations that set standards for agricultural products, such as Codex, the ISO, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Trade Organization's (WTO) TBT and SPS Committees. It regularly attends meetings of these organizations and typically takes positions only after international consensus is reached. In general, Saudi and GSO agricultural biotech regulations and standards are based on Codex and ISO standards.

o. RELATED ISSUES

Not applicable.

PART C: MARKETING

a. PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS

Local newspapers have published articles about agricultural biotechnology that have mostly focused on the alleged negative impacts of biotech products on human health and the environment. Some articles, taken from European newspapers and written mainly by Greenpeace and other anti-agricultural biotechnology groups, have been republished in Saudi newspapers. Government agencies and agricultural research centers have not launched media campaigns to provide the public with unbiased information about biotech food. SFDA has made it clear on several occasions that the primary reason for requiring labeling of biotech foods is the consumers' right to know. Consequently, importers have asked their U.S. suppliers to place "biotech free" symbols on product labels to align with initiatives taken by many European suppliers. Shoppers in local supermarkets can now find many American and European foodstuffs with biotech-free labels. Food products with less than 1% GE content are considered biotech-free.

b. MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES

Since the establishment of biotech labeling requirements in Saudi Arabia in 2001, no GE retail packaged food products have been imported into the country. Major Saudi food importers do not import food products derived in part from genetic engineering and therefore do not put biotech labels on their products. They are concerned that dealing with biotech products could jeopardize their product image and result in losing market. Saudi consumers have limited knowledge about agricultural biotechnology and, in general, hold negative attitudes towards biotech products. On the other hand, some Asian, European, and local food producers put the "biotech free" symbol on their product labels to promote their products.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

There is no ongoing development of GE animals in Saudi Arabia.

b. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

Not applicable.

c. EXPORTS

Not applicable.

d. IMPORTS

Section 4.1.7 of GSO 2141/2011 prohibits imports of any GE animals, birds, fish, and their products to all member countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Yemen).

e. TRADE BARRIERS

Saudi Arabia is a member of the GSO, which bans the import of GE animals and animal products.

PART E: POLICY

Bans the import of GE animals and animal products.

a. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Section 4.1.7 of GSO 2141/2011 prohibits the import of any GE animals, birds, fish, and their products to all member countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Yemen).

b. APPROVALS

Not applicable.

c. INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES

Not applicable.

d. LABELING and TRACEABILITY

Not applicable.

e. ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable.

f. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

Not applicable.

g. INTERNATIONAL TREATIES & FORUMS

Not applicable, but KSA is an active member of OIE.

h. RELATED ISSUES

Not applicable.

PART F: MARKETING

a. PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS

Not applicable.

b. MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES

Not applicable.

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

As discussed in the Plant Biotechnology Section, SFDA's microbial biotechnology definition is identical to the plant biotechnology definition. As such, all regulations and standards for the production, trade,

and marketing of food products produced using plant biotechnology apply to those produced using microbial biotechnology, and the same plant biotech policy applies to microbial biotech.

PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

KSA allows the production of food products using microbial biotechnology, provided products containing more than 1% (total amount of microbial biotechnology ingredients) are labelled.

b. EXPORTS

Permissible to export food products obtained using microbial biotechnology if pertinent labeling regulations are met.

c. IMPORTS

It is permitted to import food products obtained using microbial biotechnology as long as pertinent labeling regulations are met.

d. TRADE BARRIERS

Other than the required labeling regulation, no trade barriers are identified.

PART H: POLICY

a. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Based on GSO and ISO regulations and standards, as discussed in the Plant Biotechnology Section.

b. APPROVALS

Products approved in the country of origin are automatically approved entry to Saudi Arabia if they meet the labeling requirements discussed earlier.

c. LABELING and TRACEABILITY

If a product contains one or more percent microbial biotech content, immediately following the ingredient(s) concerned, the words “genetically modified” or “produced from microbial genetically modified” must appear clearly and easily read in parentheses in the same font size and different color. See Plant Biotech Section for detailed discussion.

d. MONITORING AND TESTING

SFDA uses several ISO standards on methods of analysis for the detection of “genetically modified organisms” and their derived products in their original languages. PCR is widely used to determine the presence of GE ingredients in food and feed products.

e. ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable.

f. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

The newly established SAIP government agency is working on regulations to better protect intellectual property rights.

g. RELATED ISSUES

Not applicable.

PART I: MARKETING

a. PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS

Microbial biotechnology is not covered in the local media either positively or negatively.

b. MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES

Microbial biotech has not been discussed, and the public lacks adequate information about technology. As such, the issue does not warrant market acceptance studies.

Attachments:

No Attachments