Volume 18 Number 2, 2017 www.usask.ca/esteyjournal

The Estey

Journal of International Law and Trade Policy

Abstract

Genomics, International Trade and Food Security

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Genomic information and its associated technologies appear to have the potential to significantly increase agricultural productivity and, hence, contribute to meeting the food security challenges that feeding nine billion people by 2050 presents. The costs of genomic information and the associated implementation technologies continue to fall. Much of the output of genomic-based improvement may not qualify for protection as intellectual property. It also does not suffer from the concerns that have been associated with transgenic technology – GMOs – such as potential risks to human health and the environment, ethical issues and highly concentrated control of the food system. As a result, both the regulatory and trade regimes need not be as rigorous as has been the case for GMOs in some jurisdictions. A regulatory regime that encourages investment in genomics-based agricultural technology and an open trade regime will facilitate the ability of the technology to contribute to global food security.

Keywords: agricultural productivity, food security, genomics, international trade, regulation

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