

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Highlights:

On May 19, 2022, the Philippine Department of Agriculture issued Memorandum Circular No. 8, governing the rules and procedures for evaluating new plant breeding techniques. The regulations provide a science-based and minimally bureaucratic process for reviewing genome edited plants and determining when such products are not considered genetically engineered.

Background

On May 19, 2022, the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) issued Memorandum Circular No. 08 Series of 2022, “Rules and Procedure to Evaluate and Determine When Products of Plant Breeding Innovations (PBIs) Are Covered Under the DOST-DA-DENR-DOH-DILG Joint Department Circular No. 1, Series of 2021 Based on the NCBP Resolution No. 1, Series of 2020.” This follows the revised [Joint Department Circular No. 1 \(JDC1\)](#), which provides the regulatory policy of genetically engineered plants and plants products and the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines, [NCBP Resolution No. 1](#), or the “Regulation of Plant and Plant Products Derived from the Use of Plant Breeding Innovations (PBIs) or New Plant Breeding Techniques (NBTs).” DA leads in evaluating and monitoring products of PBIs and determining when products derived from PBIs are genetically engineered and, therefore, regulated under the revised JDC1.

Highlights

The circular classifies genetically engineered (GE) plants as containing a novel combination of genetic material obtained through biotechnology, with the resulting genetic combination in a living organism not being possible through conventional breeding. Products of PBIs may therefore be deemed non-GE if they do not contain a novel combination in the final product.

The circular sets the requirements for the conduct of a Technical Consultation for Evaluation and Determinations, which determines if a PBI is genetically engineered. When the PBI product is officially determined as not GE, a Certificate of Non-Coverage from the JDC1 shall be issued to the developer. The certificate shall not excuse the developer from complying with other relevant regulations such as those involving quarantine, pest risk analysis, varietal registration, and crop specific standards/programs.

The approval of PBIs is expected to accelerate the development of crop varieties and improve the ability to breed crops that perform better with fewer inputs that reduce costs to farmers, minimize impacts to the environment, and adapt to climate change.

Recent Developments

Passage of the PBI Memo Circular adds to the Philippines’ recent achievements in biotechnology. This includes the [revised JDC1](#), which streamlined the overall regulatory framework for genetically engineered plant products in January 2022 and approval of [Golden Rice](#) for commercial propagation and Bt eggplant for direct use in 2021. Biotechnology will continue to support the country’s [sustainable development goals](#) (SDGs) of Zero Hunger (SDG 2) and Climate Action (SDG 13).

Attachments:

[DA MC No 8 2022 Plant Breeding Innovations.pdf](#)