



## “The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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## Biotechnology

**Date of Adoption: 1999**

Keystone Agricultural Producers believes that biotechnology has been and can continue to be very beneficial technology in foodstuffs, in animal and human health, and in the protection of the environment. There have been tremendous gains in the medical field alone using products created through biotechnology.

There are, however, some issues related to the development of biotechnology and its products which will have a significant impact on agricultural producers. It is critical therefore that we as farmers have the ability to participate in the decision making process involving products derived from biotechnology.

### **KAP Definition of Biotechnology**

1. Biotechnology is a set of tools that employ living organisms (or part of organisms) to make or modify products, improve plants or animals, or develop micro-organisms for specific uses.
2. Early biotechnology includes traditional animal and plant breeding techniques, and the use of yeast in making bread, beer, wine, and cheese.
3. Modern biotechnology includes the industrial use of recombinant DNA, cell fusion, novel bioprocessing techniques, and bioremediation.

### **KAP's Role**

1. To study the implications of biotechnology and how new genetically modified organisms might impact the future of Canadian agriculture in the areas of production, processing, consumer acceptance and trade.
2. To represent producers in the development of regulation, enforcement, labeling requirements, and other controls on the development and marketing of products derived from biotechnology.

3. To be prepared to study and recommend for or against specific issues that directly affect the farming industry.
4. To become involved on behalf of agricultural producers in the public discussion related to biotechnology.

### **KAP's Policy**

Farmers who produce products derived from biotechnology must share in the benefits that accrue from the use of the technology. Products derived through biotechnology must be acceptable to our marketplace.

The debate over the ownership of the biotechnology process is a critical one. Biotechnology is a breakthrough technology which has immense potential for benefiting mankind. KAP is very concerned that the potential will be limited by an ownership regime which limits public access to the technology, whether due to cost or regulation. It is vital that the research and scientific communities have access to this technology for peer review, research testing, regulation, and further development. It is critical that there be a strong public research program with the goal of ensuring that technology remains in the public domain.

The Canadian regulatory system must be capable of registering these products quickly, recognizing an acceptable level of risk to humans, animals and the environment. Benefits and risks must be balanced in order for Canada to have a safe, secure, economical, efficient food production system. It is essential to have a process to amend previous decisions as new knowledge becomes available and that process must be based on consistent good science. Harmonization of regulatory processes is positive and welcome, as long as it is a system based on sound science and a reasonable level of risk.

The regulatory process must balance the need for competitive forces to ensure the affordability of the technology, while still facilitating the investment necessary for new technology development (e.g. patent legislation and data protection which does not eliminate the possibility of competition).

KAP supports labeling of products derived from biotechnology to identify nutritional values and food safety concerns. KAP does not support cumbersome labeling requirements where there is no scientific basis for concern with the product.

Agricultural producers must be involved in the creation of the regulation, enforcement, labeling requirements, and other controls on the development and marketing of products derived from biotechnology.

Both KAP and government have a role to play in helping the public recognize the benefits of biotechnology, the risks of the technology, and the risks of not using the technology.

### **Mandate**

1. To study the implications of biotechnology and how new genetically modified organisms might impact the future of Canadian agriculture in the areas of production, processing, consumer acceptance and trade.
2. To provide producer input on biotechnology issues and ensure farmer representation in processes that will determine when and how biotechnology is used.
3. To be prepared to study and recommend for or against specific issues that directly affect the farming industry.

### **Focus of KAP Policy**

One basis of KAP support of biotechnology is that the benefits of the technology accrue to the producer. There is a need for more publicly funded research to balance the effects/costs of multi-national fees for the technology.

Research funded publicly might also make the products more acceptable to consumers. In order to have the resources, we may need to co-operate with other countries in research funding to achieve the balance we need. Products derived through biotechnology must be acceptable to our marketplace.

The Canadian regulatory system must be capable of registering these products quickly, recognizing an acceptable level of risk to humans, animals and the environment. Zero risk to any species is not achievable or acceptable.

Benefits and risks must be balanced in order to enable us to produce food. It is essential to have a process to correct mistakes, and that process must be based on solid, consistent scientific proof. Harmonization of regulatory processes is positive and welcome, as long as it is a system based on sound science and a reasonable level of risk.

Regulatory process needs to encourage competition while still enabling research to continue. (e.g. patent legislation which does not eliminate the possibility of competition).

Both KAP and government have a role to play in helping consumers recognize the benefits of biotechnology, the risks of the technology, and the risks of not using the technology.