

Policies and Regulations of Genetically Modified Trees, especially in Europe

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Summary

Genetically modified trees (GM trees) are expected to contribute to solve the problems such as global environmental issues and stable supply of wood resources. While numbers of field trials of GM trees are being conducted in various countries in the world, their commercial cultivation are seen only in U.S. and China. But there are concerns that the technology's consequences may have adverse affect especially on the environment. The scientific data of the potential impacts of GM trees is not currently available, and given the scientific uncertainty on the use of GM trees, it has been pointed out that the precautionary approach should be applied when considering the use of GM trees.

In the reflection of little commercial use of GM trees, general regulations on GMOs are applied to GM trees even in the EU where many people are environmentally conscious, and those regulations don't specifically focus on GM trees. GM trees may arise ethical issues more seriously than GM crops. Policy makers and the industry need to work together with the public on deciding future directions of the utilization of GM trees.