Impacts of Biotechnology and MRL Approval Processes on the International Trade of Grain

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Objective: to achieve a market and regulatory environment supportive of trade that avoids disruptions in the international trade of grain, oilseeds, pulses and derived products.
LLP occurs when there is a time gap in the authorization of GM crops between importing and exporting countries. This gap is widening:

Source of data: CropLife International
Misalignment in the establishment, maintenance and adoption of MRLs is impacting the grain trade with increasing intensity.

Source of image: Grain Trade Australia
Impacts of LLP and MRL Regulatory Misalignment:

- LLP and MRL misalignment are market access issues. **Neither is a safety issue.**
- Both create significant uncertainty for the global grain trade, jeopardizing the viable supply of raw materials at sustainable and affordable prices.
- When trade is impeded, it not only raises costs for the grain value chain, but ultimately impacts food security.
- Unnecessary food waste is created and consumers face less choice and higher costs for food and grain-derived goods.
- Beneficial innovations that support environmental sustainability (e.g., no-till production, new stress-resistant varieties) can be delayed or lost.
What’s Needed Now:

• The economic contribution of the grain trade and its role as a crucial component of global food security should be recognized and used to inform government efforts – zero or near zero thresholds are unnecessary and unworkable.

• Exporting and importing governments must work together to improve synchronization of GM product approvals and align MRLs and policies.

• Bilateral or regional agreements (e.g., mutual recognition agreements or trade agreements), should be encouraged and expanded.

“Where appropriate, the results of a risk assessment undertaken by other regulatory authorities may be used to […] avoid the duplication of work.”

CODEX PRINCIPLES FOR THE RISK ANALYSIS OF FOODS DERIVED FROM MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY (2003)
Benefits of Aligning MRLs and Biotech Product Approvals

- Improved trade predictability
- Secure, nutritious and safe food supply
- Faster access to innovation for farmers and consumers
- Environmental benefits of innovation