

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 115

To provide for a program to educate the public regarding the use of biotechnology in producing food for human consumption, to support additional scientific research regarding the potential economic and environmental risks and benefits of using biotechnology to produce food, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 3, 2001

Mr. HOLT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To provide for a program to educate the public regarding the use of biotechnology in producing food for human consumption, to support additional scientific research regarding the potential economic and environmental risks and benefits of using biotechnology to produce food, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Food Biotechnology
3 Information Initiative Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) Biotechnology has been used for many years
7 to develop new and useful products used in a variety
8 of industries.

9 (2) Biotechnology holds the potential for bene-
10 fits to mankind in a number of areas by allowing in-
11 dividual, well-characterized genes to be transferred
12 from one organism to another organism and thus in-
13 creasing the genetic diversity available to improve
14 commercial plant species.

15 (3) Plant varieties created with biotechnology
16 will offer foods with better taste, more nutrition, and
17 longer shelf life. Farmers will be able to grow these
18 varieties more efficiently, leading to lower costs for
19 consumers and greater environmental protection
20 through effective and targeted pesticide and herbi-
21 cide use and a reduction in soil erosion through an
22 increase in the use of no-till farming.

23 (4) On April 5, 2000, the National Research
24 Council released a report entitled “Genetically Modi-
25 fied Pest-Protected Plants: Science and Regulation”.

26 The report emphasized that there is no evidence that

1 foods produced through biotechnology are unsafe to
2 eat, but that, given the current level of public con-
3 cern over these foods, Federal agencies should con-
4 duct more research to reduce the concern about po-
5 tential harm to human health and the environment.
6 In addition, the report recommends that the quan-
7 tity, quality, and public accessibility of information
8 on the regulation of transgenic pest-protected plant
9 products should be expanded.

10 (5) The Food and Drug Administration, the
11 Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental
12 Protection Agency are all involved in the regulatory
13 process for the use of biotechnology in foods.

14 (6) United States consumers are increasingly
15 concerned that food safety issues regarding the use
16 of biotechnology in foods are not being adequately
17 addressed.

18 (7) All foods, including those based on bio-
19 technology, should continue to be subject to a rig-
20 orous Government regulatory process that evaluates
21 the safety of the products to the consumer and the
22 environment. This process should continue to be
23 based on scientific methods that meet state-of-the-
24 art scientific standards.

1 (8) Ensuring that the underlying scientific in-
2 formation and the regulatory framework for man-
3 aging biotechnology is shared with consumers is im-
4 perative and should be an integral part of United
5 States food and agriculture programs.

6 **SEC. 3. PROGRAM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION REGARDING USE**
7 **OF BIOTECHNOLOGY IN PRODUCING FOOD**
8 **FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
10 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agri-
11 culture, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and
12 Human Services (acting through the Commissioner of
13 Food and Drugs and in consultation with the Adminis-
14 trator of the Environmental Protection Agency), shall de-
15 velop and implement a program to communicate with the
16 public regarding the use of biotechnology in producing
17 food for human consumption. The information provided
18 under the program shall include the following:

19 (1) Science-based evidence on the safety of
20 foods produced with biotechnology.

21 (2) Scientific data on the human outcomes of
22 the use of biotechnology to produce food for human
23 consumption.

24 (3) An analysis of the risks and benefits to the
25 environment of such use, conducted in accordance

1 with established scientific principles, and including
2 information from the Administrator of the Environ-
3 mental Protection Agency.

4 (b) ADMINISTRATION AS COMPONENT OF PRESI-
5 DENT'S FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE.—Subsection (a) shall
6 be carried out as a component of the Food Safety Initia-
7 tive announced by the President on January 25, 1997, and
8 carried out by the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
9 ices, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environ-
10 mental Protection Agency. Of the funds available for such
11 Initiative for fiscal years 2001 and 2002, not more than
12 \$10,000,000 may be expended each such year for carrying
13 out subsection (a).

14 **SEC. 4. GRANTS FOR RESEARCH ON ECONOMIC AND ENVI-**
15 **RONMENTAL RISKS AND BENEFITS OF USING**
16 **BIOTECHNOLOGY IN FOOD PRODUCTION.**

17 (a) EXPANSION OF CURRENT RESEARCH PRO-
18 GRAM.—Subsections (a) and (b) of section 1668 of the
19 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
20 (7 U.S.C. 5921) are amended to read as follows:

21 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to—
22 “(1) authorize and support research intended to
23 identify and analyze technological developments in
24 the area of biotechnology for the purpose of evalu-
25 ating the potential positive and adverse effects of

1 such developments on the United States farm econ-
2 omy and the environment and addressing public con-
3 cerns about potential adverse environmental effects
4 of using biotechnology in food production; and

5 “(2) authorize research to help regulators de-
6 velop policies, as soon as practicable, concerning the
7 introduction and use of biotechnology.

8 “(b) GRANT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Agri-
9 culture shall establish a competitive grant program to pro-
10 vide the necessary funding for research designed to further
11 the purposes specified in subsection (a). The grant pro-
12 gram shall be conducted through the Cooperative State
13 Research, Education, and Extension Service and the Agri-
14 cultural Research Service”.

15 (b) TYPES OF RESEARCH.—Subsection (c) of such
16 section is amended—

17 (1) by redesignating paragraph (4) as para-
18 graph (5); and

19 (2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the fol-
20 lowing new paragraph:

21 “(4) Research designed to evaluate the poten-
22 tial effect of biotechnology developments on the
23 United States farm economy, the competitive status
24 of United States agricultural commodities and foods
25 in foreign markets, and consumer confidence in the

1 healthfulness and safety of agricultural commodities
2 and foods.”.

3 (c) PRIORITY.—Subsection (d)(1) of such section is
4 amended by inserting before the semicolon the following:
5 “, but giving priority to projects designed to develop im-
6 proved methods for identifying potential allergens in pest-
7 protected plants, with particular emphasis on the develop-
8 ment of tests with human immune-system endpoints and
9 of more reliable animal models”.

10 (d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—(1) Subsection
11 (g)(2) of such section is amended by striking “for research
12 on biotechnology risk assessment”.

13 (2) The heading of such section is amended to read
14 as follows:

15 **“SEC. 1668. GRANTS FOR RESEARCH ON ECONOMIC AND**
16 **ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS AND BENEFITS OF**
17 **USING BIOTECHNOLOGY IN FOOD PRODUC-**
18 **TION.”.**

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