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PaperTitle **Detection of Transgenic Sequences in Commercially Available Processed Foods in Botswana**

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**ABSTRACT**

Although plant biotechnology was introduced as a potential solution to food insecurity as well as the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition, genetically modified (GM) foods still represent a subject of a major debate worldwide. In most developed countries, a number of systems have been designed to monitor the production and use of the GM foods. Similar systems also exist to alert consumer and inform their choice to eat or not to eat processed foods containing genetically modified ingredients. This is not the case with many developing countries including Botswana.

Currently, Botswana is not known to produce any GM foods. However, the country is a net importer of food commodities and there is no legal requirement to discriminate between modified and non-modified food ingredients. The absence of legislation on GM foods, including requirements for GM labeling, has led to the assumption that there are no GM foods in the country. A survey of commercially available soy and maize/corn based processed food products collected from retail outlets in Gaborone and Kanye, Botswana was conducted during 2006/07. A total of 25 samples containing soy and corn-derived ingredients were analyzed using a Polymerase Chain Reaction based method that detects the 35S promoter and NOS terminator gene sequences. The findings from this survey indicate that transgenic sequences are present in some of the processed food products.