

South Asia Biosafety Program

NEWSLETTER FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY – NOT FOR SALE



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UPCOMING EVENT SPOTLIGHT

A New Webinar Series by the Agriculture and Food Systems Institute (AFSI): Global Regulatory Dialogue on Microbial Products, Starting with Biostimulants

Dr. Sarah Richards, Scientific Program Manager, Agriculture and Food Systems Institute

The Agriculture and Food Systems Institute (AFSI) is pleased to announce the *Global Regulatory Dialogue on Microbial Products for Agriculture (MPA) Webinar Series*. This series will provide a platform for global regulatory bodies, researchers, and the private sector to share resources, exchange experiences, and promote knowledge for the adoption and use of agricultural microbial products, including biofertilizers, biopesticides, and biostimulants. Each session will explore topics based on regulatory need and interest expressed by stakeholders, drawing on the *Global Regulatory Compendium for Agricultural Biological Products* as a free and shared resource to contextualize the subjects covered. Authored by Terry Stone, Founder of Stone Biological Solutions, and published by AFSI, the compendium provides a comparative view of current regulatory frameworks for biological products across 32 jurisdictions in six world regions. The aim of these virtual sessions is to enhance regulatory clarity, create and sustain an ongoing global dialogue through an ever changing regulatory landscape, and contribute to the responsible advancement of biological products worldwide.

On September 29, 2026, at 1:00–3:00 pm (ET), AFSI will host the first installment in the series: "Mapping the Regulatory Landscape of Biostimulants in the United States". The term "biostimulant" covers a wide range of products, from living microbial inoculants to non-microbial inputs such as humic and fulvic substances, seaweed extracts, and amino acids. These products are generally intended to support plant nutrition, stress tolerance, or yield, and have significant potential to help mitigate the environmental footprint of agriculture by supplementing the need for synthetic inputs. Interest in these products continues to grow rapidly, with the global biostimulants market estimated at USD 4.54 billion in 2025 and projected to reach USD 12.86 billion by 2034 (*Fortune Business Insights*). In turn, frameworks guiding how they are defined, classified, and regulated are constantly adapting to keep pace.

An essential foundation for building effective regulatory policy is the ability to define the product intended for regulation, but defining complex biology is often not as straight forward as scientists and regulators may wish. In the case of biostimulants, multiple mechanisms of plant benefit may occur simultaneously by a single product and can vary by microbial species or across source material and growing conditions (for example, seasonal variation can lead to different chemical make-up across seaweed batches). In some cases, the underlying mechanism of plant-benefit is not yet fully understood, making a single, universal definition a more challenging, and perhaps unrealistic goal.

Biostimulant terminology began appearing in scientific literature around the early 90s and has changed considerably over time. It was initially broadly characterized as materials that promote plant growth through pathways distinct from plant nutrition. Some iterations have further distinguished biostimulants from biofertilizers, which are products intended to promote nutrient availability or uptake. This distinction, however, is not universally reflected across regulatory frameworks, and many microbial products can fit the characteristics of both categories. Some regulatory approaches aim to define biostimulants by what they do rather than what they contain, for instance, enhancing nutrient use efficiency, abiotic stress tolerance, or crop quality, regardless of their composition. This functional framing is now the foundation for how several regulatory systems globally approach biostimulants, particularly in the European Union (EU), though rarely in exact identical terms.

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In the United States (U.S.), the regulatory pathway for a product marketed as a biostimulant is largely determined by the claims made on its label. Generally, products that support nutrition, stress tolerance, or yield, without making pesticidal or plant-growth-regulator claims, are regulated at the U.S. state level as fertilizers, soil amendments, inoculants, or “beneficial substances.” Products making claims that meet the federal definition of a pesticide or plant growth regulator may instead be subject to regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Most regulatory activity for biostimulants occurs through the first pathway, at the state level, with the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO), which provides a forum for greater consistency across state regulations. Live microbial products can also add an additional layer of regulatory complexity, as novel or exotic strains may also require a permit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture before crossing state lines or being released into the environment (although well-characterized, low-risk organisms can be fast-tracked through rational deregulated pathways).

In summary, the complexity of biostimulant biology and the diversity of approaches to regulate such products will likely continue to change as biostimulants become more integrated into agricultural practice. While they are no panacea, they represent one promising component of a broader toolbox of biological approaches to improve the productivity and sustainability of agriculture. Continued dialogue on scientific advances, regulatory successes and challenges, and policy developments can help stakeholders achieve the flexibility needed to address their unique regulatory needs and contexts, while adapting approaches based on current scientific evidence.

Register for Session 1 – Mapping the Regulatory Landscape of Biostimulants in the United States:
foodsystems-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/2217900806414/WN_FF5m3yvwSCK_EcCM4S987A

Agenda and Speaker Bios:
foodsystems.org/event/mpa-global-regulatory-dialogue-2026-01/

INDIA

Roundtable on Reforms in Regulations and Approval of Genetically Modified and Genome-Edited Crop Plants

Dr. Vibha Ahuja, Senior Advisor, South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) and Technical Advisor, Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL)



Co-chairs, guests, and speakers at the Roundtable on Reforms in Regulations and Approval of Genetically Modified and Genome-Edited Crop Plants (25 July 2026).

The Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII), organized the high-level “Roundtable on Reforms in Regulations and Approval of Genetically Modified (GM) and Genome-Edited (GE) Crop Plants” on 25 July 2026, at the National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC) in New Delhi to address growing climate risks, declining agricultural productivity, and the evolving technological landscape.

The event was co-chaired by Dr. Raj Paroda, TAAS Chairman and Dr. M. Ramasami, Founder Chairman of Rasi Seeds Pvt. Ltd. It commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Paresh Verma, followed by introductory remarks setting the context for the day's deliberations by Dr. Bhag Mal, TAAS Secretary. Setting a strong scientific and economic foundation, the session featured keynote addresses by Dr. CD Mayee on the need for reforms in regulatory processes, Dr. Rhodora Romero-Aldemita on global developments in regulatory frameworks and potential harmonization, and Dr. Graham Brookes on the economic impact of GM/GE crop plants. The opening session wrapped up with an interactive discussion among participants and synthesizing remarks by the co-chairs, laying a solid foundation for the subsequent technical panel discussions. The event brought together over 80–90 key stakeholders, including regulatory

decision-makers, eminent agricultural scientists, biotechnologists, policymakers, industry leaders, agricultural economists, and international experts.

Dr. ML Jat, Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), emphasized ICAR's commitment to evidence-based agricultural innovation. He stressed the necessity of

“The event brought together over 80–90 key stakeholders, including regulatory decision-makers, eminent agricultural scientists, biotechnologists, policymakers, industry leaders, agricultural economists, and international experts.”

a balanced, predictable regulatory structure that facilitates safe, fast-tracked adoption of biotechnologies for food and nutritional security, climate resilience, and farm viability. Dr. RS Paroda, Chairman, TAAS, highlighted that updating regulatory mechanisms is critical to maintaining farm productivity amid escalating

climate pressures and global competitiveness. He emphasized the need to revisit the existing multiple guidelines, reduce testing time, enhance funding for outreach and public awareness, place greater focus on digitization, and organize such dialogues periodically.

Dr. Graham Brookes (PG Economics Ltd) shared global best practices and demonstrated how countries like the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Japan, and Australia have implemented enabling, product-based frameworks that reduce developer compliance costs while maintaining safety.

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Participants at the roundtable (25 July 2026).

Dr. CD Mayee, South Asia Biotechnology Center (SABC) President, along with panelists from public institutes and private seed developers, discussed economic loss caused by delayed technology approvals and emphasized that transparent rules are vital to encouraging public and private start-ups.

Participants at the roundtable reached a consensus on several imperative action points:

- **Risk-Proportionate and Time-Bound Clearance:** Shift toward streamlined, predictable, and time-bound approval pathways that evaluate products based on scientific evidence rather than process-based delay mechanisms.

- **Optimized Biosafety Data Requirements:** Rationalize required testing data by utilizing existing global safety data to eliminate redundant trials without compromising safety standards.
- **Harmonized Regulatory Pathways:** Clear regulatory boundaries for gene-edited traits (SDN-1 and SDN-2) to expedite commercialization for both public institutions and private start-ups.
- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** Strengthen alignment between the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), and state governments to establish seamless, multi-agency decision-making.

More details: <https://www.taas.in/News.aspx?id=122>

BANGLADESH

Production Constraints and Sustainability Concerns in Potato Cultivation in Bangladesh

Dr. Mohammad Zabed Hossain, Department of Botany, University of Dhaka



Traditional harvesting.



Irrigation practice.



Pesticide spray.

Potato is one of the most important vegetable crops in Bangladesh, accounting for nearly half of total vegetable production. It plays a significant role in the daily diet of people across the country. Therefore, it not only contributes to food security but also provides an important source of income and livelihood for rural people in Bangladesh.

Due to increasing demand, farmers in Bangladesh have been cultivating potato as both a food and cash crop. Over the years, potato cultivation has become the backbone of rural livelihoods in some parts of the country. However, the crop has become a symbol of both hope and hardship for many farmers, making potato cultivation a complex story. The untold stories of farmers have been shaped by a number of factors, including biological threats, market pressures, climate uncertainty, and the growing challenges of keeping potato cultivation sustainable. A scientific study among 553 farmers from 14 potato producing districts under four administrative divisions—Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, and Barishal—reveals insights of potato cultivation

“A scientific study among 553 farmers from 14 potato producing districts under four administrative divisions—Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, and Barishal—reveals insights of potato cultivation in the country.”

in the country. This study's findings help paint a vivid picture of the constraints that shape potato growers' lives and decisions.

When farmers were asked about the problems they face during potato cultivation, 11 different issues were identified. Among these issues, widespread disease infestation stands out as the most severe.

More than 60% of the farmers identified disease outbreaks as a challenge threatening potato production, although the situation varies among the divisions, with the highest at about 90% in Barishal. This double burden not only reduces crop yield but also increases spending on disease control. Many farmers in Rangpur and Barishal speak of pests as a chronic problem they face year after year. Pest control is costly, time-consuming, and environmentally damaging. Farmers are also exposed to these hazardous chemicals and suffer from pesticide poisoning.

Unexpected rainfall has emerged as another dominant source of stress for the farmers. It disrupts planting and harvesting schedules, damages seedlings, and causes disease to spread more quickly. The

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frequency of this problem varied largely among the four divisions, with nearly half of the farmers in Rajshahi and more than 40% in Barishal. Untimely rain can cause multiple problems, such as waterlogging, which can kill plants, delay harvest, and reduce fertilizer effectiveness. Untimely rainfall during the 2026 cropping season caused devastating losses for potato farmers. Many farmers had to sow potato seeds again, while others had to grow other crops. Although mentioned by only a few farmers in Rangpur division, foggy weather is a problem for potato cultivation. It can limit sunlight, delay crop growth, and contribute to fungal disease. Unexpected rainfall and foggy weather reflect the climate uncertainty in crop production due to climate change. These observations underscore the subtle but significant ways climate change is altering Bangladesh's agricultural landscape.

Farmers also noted that potato prices often plummet at harvest, when market supply peaks. Nearly one-fourth of the farmers of the Dhaka division reported low selling prices as a major challenge for potato cultivation. This situation happens because several farmers want to get returns immediately after harvesting and do not want to preserve their potatoes in cold storage, which adds extra costs. Moreover, the cost of potato production has increased over the years due to a rise in the cost of labor, agrochemical inputs, plowing, and transportation. Thus, economic vulnerability has made farmers frustrated and caused chronic financial insecurity. Without a fair and stable market price, potato cultivation has become a gamble that many farmers reluctantly continue because they have few alternatives.

Lack of access to quality seeds is another notable constraint farmers face frequently. Although on average, 6% of the farmers mentioned this as a problem, it is almost double in Rangpur division. Poor quality seed weakens plant vigor and increases vulnerability to disease and pest attacks, contributing to lower yields. Poor yield reduces farmers' ability to invest in better seeds the following season. Other problems reported by the farmers include lack of irrigation and cold storage facilities, unavailability of pesticides and fertilizers, and shortage of funds and labor. Managing these problems adds extra costs to potato production. These problems widen the gap between production costs and selling prices. Irrigation requires fossil fuels and therefore contributes to global warming. The lack of nearby cold storage facilities pushes farmers to sell their products during peak harvest time. If not preserved properly, potatoes spoil quickly, leading to quality degradation and post-harvest loss. As a result, both farmers and consumers are disadvantaged. Transporting potatoes from the field to cold storage sites adds costs. Fertilizer and pesticide shortages and high prices are other problems for potato production. This may cause delays in the sowing schedule and pest management. Shortage of labor or high labor costs are the bottlenecks for profitable and comfortable potato production in Bangladesh.

Taken together, all these constraints reveal a fragile production system under strain. The sustainability of potato cultivation is threatened on multiple fronts, including biological, climatic, and economic factors. Difficulties in managing pests and disease are leading farmers to use inorganic fertilizers and pesticides that continue to degrade soil quality and the surrounding environment, as well as put farmers' health at risk. Using varieties resistant to pests, diseases, and abiotic factors, including waterlogging, is a must to tackle these hurdles faced by potato farmers. To support sustainable potato production in Bangladesh, it is important to invest in developing new varieties resistant to biotic and abiotic stresses, improving crop management systems, expanding access to quality seeds, improving irrigation facilities, enhancing early weather forecasting systems, strengthening fair pricing mechanisms, and establishing easily accessible cold storage. Moreover, encouraging sustainable farming practices such as integrated pest management, organic farming, and crop rotation can reduce farmers' dependence on inorganic inputs while improving long-term soil health. It is also important to empower farmers with training, personal protective equipment, information tools, and networking for crop management and marketing structures to help them adapt more successfully to the rapidly changing agricultural environment. Addressing all these constraints is not simply a matter of improving yields; it is a matter of securing livelihoods, protecting agroecosystems, and ensuring a sustainable future for generations of farmers who continue to feed the nation.

Table 1: Constraints faced by the potato growing farmers of Bangladesh (n=553).

Sl.	Problems	Frequency of Response (%)
1	Disease infestation	61.8
2	Pest attack	51.2
3	Unexpected rainfall	28.4
4	Low price of produced potato	8.1
5	Unavailability of seeds	6.0
6	Lack of irrigation facility	2.9
7	Lack of cold storage facility	2.0
8	Lack of fertilizer/pesticides	1.5
9	Lack of adequate funds	0.5
10	Labor crisis	0.2
11	Foggy weather	0.2
12	No problem	10.0

Source: Hossain et al. (2025) SAARC Journal of Agriculture 23(1); 40-53

INDIA AND BANGLADESH

UNEP-GEF Multi-country Workshop on Strengthening Cooperation for the Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks in Asia

Ms. Tashi Yangzom, Korea Institute for Promoting Asia Biosafety Cooperation (KIPABiC)

Representatives and biosafety experts from Bangladesh, India, Mongolia and the Philippines participated in the United Nations Environment Programme Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF) Multi-country Workshop on Strengthening Cooperation for the Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks in Asia, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 6-10 July 2026. The workshop was conducted under the project "Promoting the Safe Application of Biotechnology through Multi-country Cooperation in the Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks in Asia (GEF ID 10991)." The workshop was organized by the Korea

"The workshop brought together 20 participants from participating countries, including Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, and the Philippines, as well as UNEP and KIPABiC."

Institute for Promoting Asia Biosafety Cooperation (KIPABiC), co-hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia, with technical support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and co-financing from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MoTIE) of the Republic of Korea.

The workshop provided an opportunity to review progress in implementing National Biosafety Frameworks, exchange experiences, discuss technical and implementation issues, and review the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) to support implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

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The workshop brought together 20 participants from participating countries, including Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, and the Philippines, as well as UNEP and KIPABiC, to review progress in project implementation and facilitate the exchange of information and experiences on implementing National Biosafety Frameworks. Country representatives presented findings from their national Stocktaking and Inventory Reports, which informed the preparation of a Comparative Assessment Report highlighting common strengths, gaps, and priorities across participating countries. The discussions facilitated the exchange of best practices and lessons learned on implementing National Biosafety Frameworks, including biosafety policies and regulatory frameworks, risk assessment and risk management, decision-making, institutional coordination, and project implementation.

Technical sessions also examined the use of the BCH, covering the status of national records, information-sharing practices, and approaches to improving the quality and accessibility of biosafety information. Mongolia presented its BCH Digital platform, and feedback was invited on its design, functionality, and content to support its further development. The program also included a visit to the National Reference Laboratory for Food Safety in Mongolia, where delegates were introduced to the laboratory's analytical and diagnostic capabilities, quality management system, and its role in supporting food safety monitoring and biosafety-related activities.

The Fourth Multi-country Project Steering Committee Meeting was held on 9 July 2026 to review overall project progress, implementation status, and planned activities. The meeting also considered recommendations to support timely implementation of project activities in

the participating countries. The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment to sustain collaboration, strengthen national biosafety systems, and enhance information sharing in support of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The workshop was organized as an initiative under the GEF multi-country biosafety project (10991). The objective of the project is to strengthen institutional, human, and regulatory capacities and promote cooperative measures in the implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks for the safe transfer, handling, and use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) in Asia.

It has four components:

- Multi-country collaboration and cooperation on Biosafety issues;
- Facilitating the establishment, further development and effective implementation of biosafety systems at the national level;
- Development of systems for information sharing, knowledge management, education and public awareness, and
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Lead executing agency is KIPABiC and the four executing agencies are:

- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (Mongolia)
- National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP, Philippines)
- Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (Bangladesh)
- Biosafety Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India)

INDIA

Workshop on Biosafety and Bioethics for Excellence in Modern Entomological Research

Dr. Ashok Karuppannasamy, Scientist (Entomology), Division of Entomology, Indian Council of Agricultural Research Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-IARI)



Participants at the Workshop on Biosafety and Bioethics for Excellence in Modern Entomological Research (12 August 2026).

The three-day Workshop on Biosafety and Bioethics for Excellence in Modern Entomological Research was organized from 12-14 August 2026 by the Division of Entomology, Indian Council of Agricultural Research Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-IARI) in New Delhi at the NRL Auditorium.

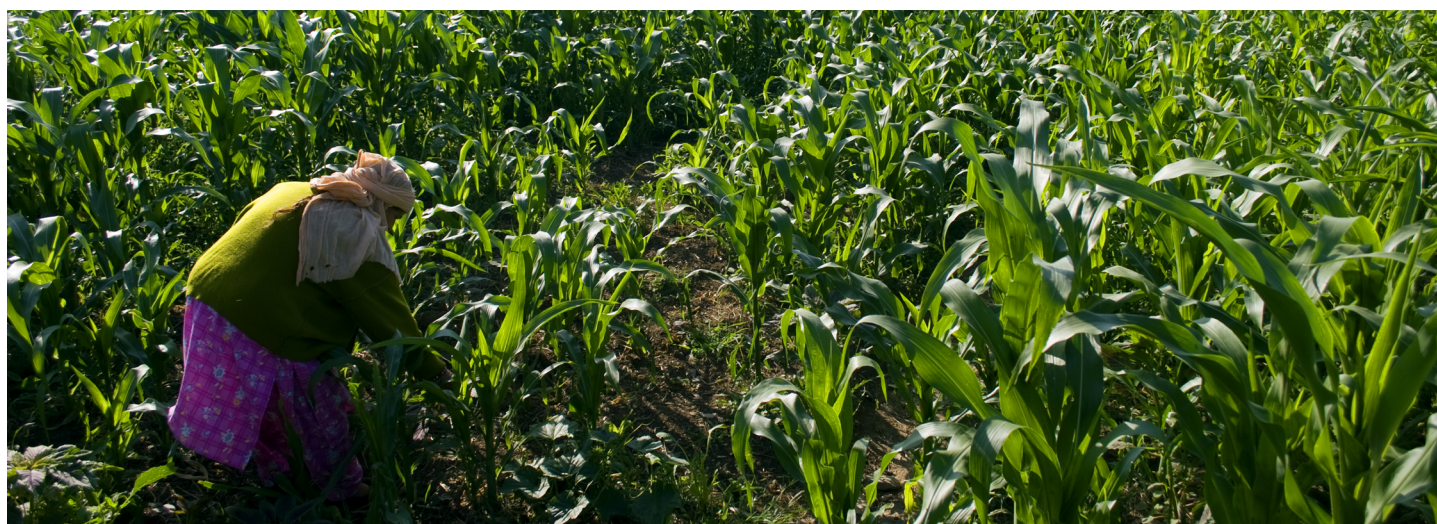
The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao, ICAR-IARI Director, as the Chief Guest, in the presence of Dr. C. Viswanathan, ICAR-IARI Joint Director (Research), and Dr. Anupama Singh, ICAR-IARI Dean and Joint Director, along with distinguished scientists, experts, course directors, research scholars, and participants. The objective of the workshop was to create awareness and capacity in biosafety, biosecurity, bioethics, laboratory safety, risk assessment, and responsible conduct of research in the rapidly evolving field of modern entomology. In his inaugural address, Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao highlighted the importance of this workshop to the students and young researchers and encouraged them to deliver the lectures in their respective institutions or colleges when they complete the workshop, to spread the importance of biosafety and bioethics in research.

“The three-day program brought together expert lectures from different organizations, practical demonstrations, and laboratory-oriented activities.”

With increasing applications of molecular biology, RNA interference, CRISPR-based genome editing, insect transgenesis, synthetic biology, microbial biocontrol, and insect cell culture, the program emphasized the importance of conducting innovative research in a safe, ethical, and environmentally responsible manner. The three-day program brought

together expert lectures from different organizations, practical demonstrations, and laboratory-oriented activities covering biosafety regulations, BSL/IBSL facilities, safe handling of biological materials, genetically modified organisms, insect pathogens and microorganisms, hazardous chemicals, laboratory waste management, emergency preparedness, environmental safety, research integrity, publication ethics, and responsible research practices. Dr. Vibha Ahuja, Senior Advisor, South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) and former Chief General Manager, Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL) delivered a presentation on the “Scope of Insect Genome Editing and its Regulatory Framework in India.” Overall, 31 participants attended the workshop, representing early-career scientists, research scholars, and technical and research staff.

EVENT	ORGANIZED BY	DATE	WEBSITE
INDIA			
Hands-on Training Programme on Next Generation Sequencing Data Analysis - 2026	Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)	22-25 September 2026 Coimbatore	https://tnau.ac.in/news-2/https://tnau.ac.in/site/cpmb/next-generation-sequencing-data-analysis-2026/
Conference on Advancing Sustainable Agriculture through Plant Biotechnology: A Roadmap for the Future	Assam Agricultural University (AAU)	28 September 2026 Jorhat	https://aau.ac.in
Training on Strengthening Biosecurity and Biosafety through Diagnostics, Phytosanitary Treatments and Regulations	Indian Council of Agricultural Research National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBPGR)	5-16 October 2026 New Delhi (Virtual)	https://nbpgr.org.in/nbpgr2023/
Training Course on Biotechnology Innovation and Biosecurity	The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) and the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit	12-16 October 2026 New Delhi	https://www.icgeb.org/meeting-and-courses/
1 st International Maize Conference 2026 – Next-Generation Maize: Security Pathways for 4F with Environmental Sustainability	Maize Technologists Association of India (MTAI), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Professor Jayashankar Telangana Agricultural University (PJTU), ICAR-Indian Institute of Maize Research (ICAR-IIMR), and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)	26-28 October 2026 Hyderabad	https://mtaisociety.weebly.com/events.html
Hands-on Training on Molecular Breeding for Crop Improvement - 2026	Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)	28-29 October 2026 Coimbatore	https://tnau.ac.in/news-2/https://tnau.ac.in/site/cpmb/hands-on-training-on-molecular-breeding-for-crop-improvement-2026/
4 th International Weed Conference (IWC)	Indian Society of Weed Science, Punjab Agricultural University, ICAR– Directorate of Weed Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)	18-21 November 2026 Ludhiana	https://pau.edu/index.php?_act=manageBanner&DO=viewUcEventsDetail&intID=7268
3 rd International Symposium of ISCAR on Climate Smart, Digital and Green Technologies for Transforming Coastal and Allied Agro-Ecosystems	Indian Society of Coastal Agricultural Research (ISCAR), Dr. B.S. Kondal Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli Chapter of the Indian Society of Coastal Agricultural Research, and the ICAR-Central Soil Salinity Research Institute	19-22 November 2026 Sindhudurg	https://www.dbskkv.org/
National Seminar on Emerging Trends in Plant Health Management for Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability	Assam Agricultural University (AAU)	20-21 November 2026 Jorhat	https://aau.ac.in/ips_nez/



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EVENT	ORGANIZED BY	DATE	WEBSITE
Golden Jubilee Convention of Indian Agricultural Universities Association & National Conference on Advancements for Next Generation Agriculture (ANGA - 2026)	Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA) and Bihar Agricultural University	28-29 November 2026 Bihar	https://www.bausabour.ac.in/
ThinkAg Harvesting Tomorrow Summit (THTS 2026): Future-Ready AgFood Systems for the Global South- Scaling Innovation, Climate Resilience & Cross-Border Partnerships	ThinkAg	8-9 December 2026 Bengaluru	https://thinkag.co.in/harvesting-tomorrow-summit-2026/
67 th Annual International Conference of the Association of Microbiologists of India (AMI): Microbiological Innovations at the One Health Interface for Sustainable Development	Department of Plant Pathology, Assam Agricultural University (AAU) and the Association of Microbiologists of India (AMI)	22-24 December 2026 Jorhat	https://aau.ac.in/ami_event/
National Conference on Next-Generation Plant Pathology: Smart Crop Health Management, Precise Diagnostics, and Biosecurity	Indian Council of Agricultural Research National Research Centre for Banana (ICAR-NRCB), Indian Phytopathological Society (IPS), and the Society for Banana Research & Development (SBRD)	21-23 January 2027 Tiruchirappalli	https://conference.ipsdis.org/national/nrcb
Indian Seed Congress 2027	National Seed Association of India	3-5 February 2027 Hyderabad	https://isc.nsai.co.in/
INTERNATIONAL			
Global Regulatory Dialogue on Microbial Products for Agriculture (MPA) 2026 Session 1: Mapping the Regulatory Landscape of Biostimulants in the United States	Agriculture & Food Systems Institute	29 September 2026 Washington, DC, USA (Virtual)	https://foodsystems.org/event/mpa-global-regulatory-dialogue-2026-01/
Biosafety Clearing-House and Risk Assessment Training Workshop	CBD Secretariat	17-18 October 2026 Yerevan, Armenia	https://www.cbd.int/meetings?thm=CPB
Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	CBD Secretariat	19-30 October 2026 Yerevan, Armenia	https://www.cbd.int/meetings?thm=CPB
Asian Seed Congress 2026	Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA)	1-5 December 2026 Antalya, Türkiye	https://apsaseed.org/asian-seed-congress/
3 rd Global Congress on New and Emerging Genetic Biocontrol Technologies on New and Emerging Genetic Biocontrol Technologies	African Genetic Biocontrol Consortium	15-18 March 2027 Nairobi, Kenya	https://conference2027.genbioconsortium.africa/



SOUTH ASIA
BIOSAFETY PROGRAM

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Mapping the Regulatory Landscape of Biostimulants in the United States

September 29, 2026 | 1:00–3:00 pm (ET) | Virtual via Zoom

The term “biostimulant” covers a wide range of products, from living microbial inoculants to non-microbial inputs such as humic and fulvic substances, seaweed extracts, and amino acids. These products are generally intended to support plant nutrition, stress tolerance, or yield, and have significant potential to help mitigate agriculture’s environmental impacts. As part of Agriculture & Food Systems Institute’s *Global Regulatory Dialogue on Microbial Products for Agriculture (MPA)* webinar series, this virtual session offers an overview of the current regulatory landscape for biostimulants in the United States, from the federal definition to state-level frameworks that have taken shape. It will provide a platform for agricultural stakeholders to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and stay informed on the regulatory policies being shaped in the United States.

Objectives

- Provide an update on the current federal and state regulatory landscape for agricultural biostimulants in the United States.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the research, development, and approval of biostimulant products to advance agricultural productivity.
- Discuss and highlight the technical and policy barriers in the application of biostimulant products.

Speakers and Panelists



Dr. Patrick Brown (Speaker)
Distinguished Professor
University of California, Davis,
USA



Dr. Sarah Richards (Speaker)
Scientific Program Manager
Agriculture & Food Systems
Institute (AFSI), USA



Dr. Patrick du Jardin (Panelist)
Professor of Plant Biology
Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University
of Liège, Belgium



Dr. Andrew F. Roberts (Speaker)
Chief Executive Officer
Agriculture & Food Systems
Institute (AFSI), USA



Mr. John Gorsuch (Speaker)
Vice President –
Research & Development
BiOWiSH Technologies, USA



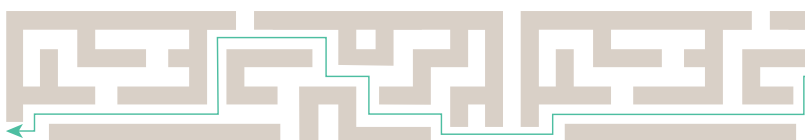
Mr. Terry Stone (Speaker)
Founder
Stone Biological Solutions, LLC,
USA



Mr. Keith Matthews (Speaker)
Principal
Matthews Law, LLC, USA



Mr. Ed Thomas (Speaker)
Vice President – Government Affairs
The Fertilizer Institute, USA



Register:
[foodsystems.org/event/
mpa-global-regulatory-dialogue-2026-01/](https://foodsystems.org/event/mpa-global-regulatory-dialogue-2026-01/)