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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: Spanish

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL
(CAS) ON GENE EDITING TECHNIQUES**

COMMUNICATION FROM ARGENTINA

The following communication, received on 14 March 2019, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

1 OVERVIEW

1.1. The Agriculture Ministers of the member countries of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS) – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay – have highlighted the role of gene editing techniques in addressing challenges arising from the need to increase agricultural production in a sustainable manner.

1.2. Gene editing techniques represent an opportunity for national agricultural research institutes and biotech SMEs to develop products similar to those generated by conventional breeding methods.

1.3. The primary objective is to coordinate efforts to ensure that the regulatory approaches for these techniques are scientifically based and internationally harmonized.

1.4. The text of the Declaration is non-binding on supporting countries. It seeks to prevent regulatory asymmetries and, in turn, potential trade disruption.

1.5. The Declaration highlights the importance of these techniques for national agricultural research institutes.

2 TEXT OF THE "MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL (CAS) ON GENE EDITING TECHNIQUES"

GENE EDITING TECHNIQUES
SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL (CAS)
XXXV ORDINARY MEETING

CAS/Council, Declaration II (XXXV 2018)
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 20 September 2018
Original: Spanish

Ministerial Declaration:

The Agriculture Ministers of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, member countries of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina,

Consider that:

1. Crops improved by gene editing have the potential to play a fundamental role in addressing the challenges facing agricultural production by helping to increase the supply of foods and other agricultural products in a sustainable manner.
2. Gene editing can generate crops similar to those obtained through other conventional breeding methods.
3. The CAS countries are making public and private investments in the development of crops improved by gene editing because this can speed up access for agricultural producers and consumers to new features of interest for production and agro-industry, while representing an opportunity for the transfer of technologies developed by national agricultural research institutes and biotech SMEs.
4. Any arbitrary and unjustified distinctions between agricultural products obtained by gene editing and those obtained through other breeding methods must be avoided.

Declare that:

1. They will exchange information on the development of products and existing regulatory frameworks applicable to them, exploring science-based opportunities for the harmonization of regional and international regulations.
 2. They will seek to work together with third countries to avoid non-science-based barriers to trade in agricultural products improved by gene editing.
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