



# Status and Experiences Related to Implementation of GMO Legislation: Perspective from Qatar

Mohamed Ahmedna, Ph.D.  
Professor and Associate Dean for Research  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Qatar University

# Historical Perspective

## ■ 2006

- ✓ Reports circulated about GMOs in Foods sold in Qatar (40% of food types tested in Qatari market were GM positive based on efforts by Greenpeace)

## ■ 2007

- ✓ Qatar signs Cartagena Protocol on regulation of biotechnology (second to join in GCC countries)
- ✓ HH Heir Apparent, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani issues a decree to form a committee on biosafety protocol and formulate rules and regulations on GMOs and GM Foods.

Biosafety Committee now in effect and working on rules

## Status of Allowance/Enforcement

- Growing of GMOs not allowed in the country
- Labeling of GM Foods is required
- Products containing GM Foods allowed on market (if labeled)
- No strict monitoring to detect non-compliance with labeling
- Country awaiting the harmonized GCC rules for strict enforcement of GM food testing for compliance



# Agencies In Charge

- Ministry of Environment
  - ✓ Biotechnology Center
    - GM Food Testing using Uniplex RT PCR platform
    - Lab is well equipped and tests samples referred by relevant agencies such as Supreme Health Council
- Supreme Health Council (Ministry of Health)
  - ✓ Central Food Lab
    - Well equipped lab (ramping up to include GMO detection)
    - Inspection at port of entry
    - Specifications and safety testing of imports
    - Monitoring food safety nationally

# Conclusions

- Legislation & some rules and procedures for testing GM Foods
- No strict monitoring of compliance with GM Food labeling
- Decision on GM Food testing and enforcement differed till GCC rules are finalized and in effect
- GCC countries are meeting regularly to discuss the issue
- GCC Subcommittee for Organic, Functional and Genetically Modified Foods held its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in UAE last May and a harmonized rule on GMOs in GCC is expected
- This workshop could provide a push toward harmonized standards, rules, and specs in a network for GMOs detection.



# THANK YOU

Contact

[ahmedna@qu.edu.qa](mailto:ahmedna@qu.edu.qa)

974-4403-4848