



# LES BIOTECHNOLOGIES *dans* L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE

[HOME](#)
[Déclaration de la FAO  
sur les biotechnologies](#)
[Documents de la FAO](#)
[Activités de la FAO](#)
[Forum Électronique](#)
[Vues d'ensemble  
sectorielles](#)
[Nouvelles](#)
[Événements](#)
[Glossaire](#)
[Contacts](#)
[Documents sur  
les politiques  
nationales](#)
[FAO-BioDeC](#)
[Liens](#)
[Forum Home](#) | [Practicalities](#) | [Join Forum](#) | [Forum News](#) | [Contact Forum](#) |

The FAO Electronic Forum on Biotechnology in Food and Agriculture was established in March 2000 with the aim of providing quality balanced information on agricultural biotechnology in developing countries and to make a neutral platform available for people to exchange views and experiences on this subject.

Thirteen moderated e-mail conferences have been hosted by the Forum so far. The first six e-mail conferences, held in 2000-2001, lasted on average 9 weeks. Conferences held from 2002 onwards have been shorter, lasting 4-5 weeks, and 350-650 people have subscribed to each one. In the conferences held so far, over 1100 e-mails have been posted, coming roughly 50:50 from people living in developed and developing countries.

The last conference, Conference 13, ran from 6 June to 3 July 2005 and was entitled "[The role of biotechnology for the characterisation and conservation of crop, forest, animal and fishery genetic resources in developing countries](#)". The conference, as usual, was open to everyone and was moderated. About 650 people subscribed and [127 messages](#) were posted, from people in 38 different countries.

The previous conference, Conference 12, ran from 17 January to 13 February 2005 and was entitled [Public participation in decision-making regarding GMOs in developing countries: How to effectively involve rural people](#). Over 500 people subscribed and [116 messages](#) were posted, from people living in 35 different countries.

Conference 11 ran from 14 June to 15 July 2004 and was entitled [Biotechnology applications in food processing: Can developing countries benefit?](#) A total of 411 people subscribed to the conference and [68 messages](#) were posted, roughly 70% from people living in developing countries.

Conference 10 ran from 17 November to 14 December 2003 and was entitled [Molecular marker assisted selection as a potential tool for genetic improvement of crops, forest trees, livestock and fish in developing countries](#).

The report of the first six conferences has been published as FAO Research and Technology Paper 8. It is available in English, entitled "[Agricultural Biotechnology for Developing Countries - Results of an Electronic Forum](#)". Since November 2003, the report is also available in Spanish, entitled "Biotecnología agrícola para países en desarrollo - Resultados de un foro electrónico", in [HTML](#) or [PDF](#) format.

## FORUM PUBLICATION

In [English](#) and  
[Spanish](#)

>> [Conference 1](#)

(Crop sector)

>> [Conference 2](#)

(Forestry sector)

>> [Conference 3](#)

(Animal sector)

>> [Conference 4](#)

(Fisheries sector)

>> [Conference 5](#)

(Food security)

>> [Conference 6](#)

(IPRs)

>> [Conference 7](#)

(GMOs gene flow)

>> [Conference 8](#)

(Ag Research)

>> [Conference 9](#)

(GMOs-Regulation)

>> [Conf. 10](#)

(MAS)

>> [Conf. 11](#)

(Food processing)

>> [Conf. 12](#)

(Public  
participation)

>> [Conf. 13](#)

(Genetic  
resources)

## Objectives of the Forum:

To provide an open forum that will allow a wide range of parties, including governmental and non-governmental organisations, policy makers and the general public, to discuss and exchange views and experiences about specific issues concerning biotechnology in food and agriculture for developing countries. This is done through a series of moderated e-mail conferences, each running for a limited time period only, on specific topics, for which background (before the conferences) and summary documents (after) are produced.

## Background to the Forum:

Farmers and specialist breeders have developed and used many biotechnologies to improve plants and animals within agriculture, or to make food and agricultural products. Now, improvements in molecular science and in reproductive biology and a radical new understanding of genetics have resulted in the development of a range of new cutting-edge techniques. These allow us to directly modify genetic material, better study the extent/pattern of genetic variation, and they may greatly speed up progress. They may also help us to tackle so far intractable problems. The Forum will focus on such techniques.

Biotechnology is a collection of tools that can be applied to many areas of food and agriculture (including animals, crops, fish and forest trees). This collection comprises scientific tools that are very diverse and sometimes highly controversial. They may pose ethical problems and require substantial debate among policy makers, researchers and the public at large. Particularly in some areas of biotechnology, the debate has become quite polarised and there is therefore an increasing need for quality, unbiased, factual information. It is in this spirit that the Forum was established in March 2000.

## Conferences that have been held so far

Conference 1 (March 20 - May 26, 2000):

[How appropriate are currently available biotechnologies in the crop sector for food production and agriculture in developing countries](#)

Conference 2 (April 25 - June 30, 2000):

[How appropriate are currently available biotechnologies for the forestry sector in developing countries](#)

Conference 3 (June 12 - August 25, 2000):

[The appropriateness, significance and application of biotechnology options in the animal agriculture of developing countries](#)

Conference 4 (August 1 - October 8, 2000):

[How appropriate are currently available biotechnologies for the fishery sector in developing countries ?](#)

Conference 5 (November 1 - December 17, 2000):

[Can agricultural biotechnology help to reduce hunger and increase food security in developing countries ?](#)

Conference 6 (March 30 - May 13, 2001):

[The impact of intellectual property rights \(IPRs\) on food and agriculture in developing countries](#)

Conference 7 (May 31 - July 5, 2002):

[Gene flow from GM to non-GM populations in the crop, forestry, animal and fishery sectors](#)

Conference 8 (November 13 - December 17, 2002):

[What should be the role and focus of biotechnology in the agricultural research agendas of developing countries?](#)

Conference 9 (April 28 - May 25, 2003):

[Regulating GMOs in developing and transition countries](#)

Conference 10 (November 17 - December 14, 2003):

[Molecular marker assisted selection as a potential tool for genetic improvement of crops, forest trees, livestock and fish in developing countries](#)

Conference 11 (June 14 - July 15, 2004):

[Biotechnology applications in food processing: Can developing countries benefit?](#)

Conference 12 (January 17 - February 13, 2005):

[Public participation in decision-making regarding GMOs in developing countries: How to effectively involve rural people](#)

Conference 13 (June 6 - July 3, 2005):

[The role of biotechnology for the characterisation and conservation of crop, forest, animal and fishery genetic resources in developing countries](#)

---

### **Awards/Reviews of the Forum website**

1) Selection by The Internet Scout Project for inclusion in the Scout Report (May 26, 2000), a weekly current awareness publication that highlights new and newly discovered Internet resources of interest to researchers and educators. See <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/report/sr/2000/scout-000526.html>.

2) Chosen as a "Hot Pick" in the Netwatch section of the journal Science (28 July 2000). See <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/summary/289/5479/503b>

3) Chosen by New Scientist as the "Site of the Day" on 29 December 2000. See review on <http://www.newscientist.com/weblinks/categories/agriculture2.jsp>.

---

Page Last Updated: 5 July 2005. [Top of page](#)