

Peru's Congress approves 10-year GMO ban

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Peru's Congress announced Friday it overwhelmingly approved a 10-year moratorium on imports of genetically modified organisms in order to safeguard the country's biodiversity.

The measure bars GMOs — including seeds, livestock, and fish — from being imported for cultivation or to be raised locally.

Exceptions include the use of GMO products for research purposes in a closed environment, but those will be closely monitored, the legislature's official news service said.

The bill, approved late Thursday, now goes to President Ollanta Humala to be signed into law. Humala, who has been in power since late July, has repeatedly said he opposes GM programs.

According to the Agriculture Ministry, Peru is one of the world's leading exporters of organic food, including coffee and cocoa, with \$3 billion a year in revenues and 40,000 certified producers.

Congress approved a similar 10-year moratorium in June, but outgoing president Alan Garcia, who was seen as being favorable to GM, did not ratify the ban.

There was friction over GM in the previous government's ministries of agriculture and environment.

The head of Peru's Consumer Agency, Jaime Delgado, said the moratorium is long enough to learn from scientific studies that will emerge on the effects of GMO products.

The country's leading group representing farmers and ranchers, the National Agrarian Convention, said that by this measure Peru "defends its biodiversity, its agriculture, its gastronomy and its health."

Source:<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/peru-parliament-backs-10-gm-moratorium-180330633.html>