

Bayer's Commitments to Transparency: Opening Up Our Science to Build Public Trust

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Abstract

Bayer is a global leader in health care and nutrition. Being a leader in science requires social acceptance of what we do. At Bayer Crop Science, our number one priority is to develop safe and sustainable agricultural tools and practices for all our customers around the globe. We meet and often exceed the highest international standards regarding the safety of our products. However, it is difficult to communicate our efforts to the general public and to convey the underlying complexity and the challenges we face. Industry-sponsored research is considered by some as compromised by default, causing suspicion that industry scientists and their collaborators are generating results that are less than trustworthy. Promoting the acceptance of industry-sponsored science and building public trust through transparency is therefore crucial.

Bayer Crop Science drove this change voluntarily and has become the industry leader on transparent communication about the safety data for crop protection and GM crop products. Beginning in 2017, we launched an initiative to provide public access through the Bayer Crop Science Transparency website (<https://www.bayer.com/en/agriculture/transparency-crop-science>) to the safety study reports of our crop protection and genetically modified crop products that have been submitted to regulatory authorities around the world. Since its launch, the Bayer Crop Science Transparency website has received tens of thousands of unique visits and document downloads. More than 200 safety study reports have been requested from over 70 different entities, organizations, and individuals. Academics, journalists, and private citizens are among the top requesters.

In 2020, Bayer Crop Science extended its commitment to transparency through a new program called OpenLabs, inviting the public to observe how we conduct laboratory and field studies to determine if new crop protection products are safe for humans and the environment when used according to the label instructions.

In this presentation, we will share our experience so far and lessons learned to build public trust through Transparency.

Key words: transparency, public trust, safety, crop protection, genetically modified crops.