

GM EVENT APPROVAL PAVES THE WAY FOR MAIZE IMPORTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Pretoria, 19 March 2014 – The approval of the MONSANTO GM stack event - **MON88017 x MON89034**, by the Executive Council for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO EC) at its meeting held in Pretoria on 18 March 2014, clears the way for maize imports into South Africa from one of its traditional trading partners, Argentina, the last of which took place in March 2010. According to Mr De Wet Boshoff, Executive Director of AFMA and the SACOTA Secretariat, this approval follows a process of cooperation between the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and industry which started in mid 2011 under the leadership of the Animal Feed Manufacturers' Association (AFMA) and the South African Cereal and Oilseed Trade Association (SACOTA) with the technical assistance of the South African National Seed Organisation (SANSOR). The process was sparked after serious concerns from AFMA, SACOTA and their members regarding the consistency of supply and availability of maize for feed and food purposes, with a direct impact and bearing on South Africa's food security and food inflation.

After a number of engagements between DAFF, AFMA and SACOTA, a number of GM maize commodity clearance approvals were released during September 2011. This, however, left South Africa with a situation whereby the lack of a single GM maize commodity clearance approval prevented South Africa from importing GM maize, forcing the country to revert to importing non-GM maize from Black Sea origins at a premium. Monsanto's cooperation and assistance allowed AFMA and SACOTA to facilitate the tabling of Monsanto's application to DAFF during early December 2013, to enter the DAFF GM approval process.

AFMA and SACOTA want to congratulate and commend DAFF and the GMO EC for their exceptional effort and understanding of the vulnerable situation that this specific GM commodity clearance application has created. Industry will most definitely engage with DAFF and value chain partners to prevent such a situation from reoccurring in future.

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