

**ROUNDUP READY SUGARBEET – BRINGING BIOTECH TRAITS TO SPECIALTY CROPS.**  
Paulette E. Pierson, Technology Development Manager, Monsanto Company, St. Louis, MO 63167.

The launch of Roundup Ready sugarbeets was driven by the sugarbeet industry's desire for a better weed control option that would help them to remain competitive. Herbicides traditionally used for sugarbeets have not consistently provided growers with satisfactory levels of weed control and crop safety. Herbicides often had to be supplemented with mechanical weed control, including cultivation and arduous hand weeding. Roundup Ready sugarbeets created an opportunity to introduce a new in-crop herbicide mode of action into the production system.

An effective partnership among the sugarbeet industry the biotechnology industry and growers resulted in the successful launch of Roundup Ready sugarbeets. The launch was led by the seed companies, processors and by growers. Monsanto provided the Roundup Ready trait, supported the use of Roundup agricultural herbicides and led product stewardship efforts. KWS developed the transgenic event, H7-1. All sugarbeet seed companies are using this same event in the development of Roundup Ready sugarbeet hybrids and the seed companies lead the marketing efforts.

A key component in the successful product launch was the formation of the Sugar Industry Biotech Council (SIBC). The SIBC is a collaborative group representing U.S. and Canadian sugarbeet and U.S. sugarcane growers and processors, the sugar industry, technology companies and seed companies. The Council plans its work jointly and all council members have specific responsibilities. The SIBC developed a biotech acceptance platform and a communication framework for the sugar industry. Although the first product is Roundup Ready sugarbeets, other products for both sugarbeets and sugarcane are anticipated in the future.

The multilateral and multidisciplinary scope of the SIBC enabled the organization to anticipate potential concerns and effectively address them. The council was able to respond to challenges that have confronted other biotech food crops and maintain acceptance and active support throughout the sugar supply chain. The unique understanding and support built through the SIBC accelerated delivery of Roundup Ready sugarbeets' benefits to all parties, helped sustain an important crop and built a continuing platform for future collaborative efforts.

The international sugar industry is now looking to SIBC leadership to share the council's success as a model for supporting the acceptance of biotechnology in Australia, South Africa and Brazil, as well as for restarting the process in Europe. The collaborative model can also be applied to other crops and other world areas.