

Japan, SKorea ban Canadian wheat imports over bioengineered plants

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The world's sixth largest wheat producer sought to reassure trading partners on Monday that genetically modified wheat plants discovered

on an Alberta farm were few and posed no food safety risks, after Japan and South Korea halted Canadian wheat imports.

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The temporary import bans were another blow to Canadian farmers who faced costly delays in getting grains to markets this year due to a disruption in rail shipping to ports blamed on winter storms.

"South Korea and Japan have initiated a temporary suspension of trade in [wheat](#) while they undertake a review of the comprehensive investigation and testing already completed by Canadian officials," trade department spokesman Jesse Wilson told AFP.

"That testing concluded that this wheat is not in the food supply, it has never been approved or used in trade and that the wheat was isolated to a few plants along an access road," he said in an email.

Ottawa, he added, "is working with foreign trading partners to ensure they have all the necessary information to make informed decisions and limit market disruptions."

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency announced on June 14 that a genetically modified (GM) wheat plot was discovered last summer by a farmer in Alberta who was surprised to see wheat resist after a Roundup spray.

Canadian authorities determined the herbicide-tolerant wheat was a banned Monsanto GM wheat line (MON71200), which had been used in several confined field trials two decades ago in Canada and the United States.

The stray GM wheat was found about 300 kilometers (185 miles) from one of those testing sites.

Unauthorized GM wheat was also found in US states of Oregon in 2013, Montana in 2014 and Washington two years ago. But these were not the same strains as those found in Canada.

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