Oxitec Receives Landmark Biosafety Approval for New Fall Armyworm Control Solution

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- Approval of Oxitec's Friendly™ fall armyworm technology by the Brazilian government's regulatory agency CTNBio confirms that it is safe for people, animals and the environment
- Oxitec's Friendly™ fall armyworm is a new, safe, and sustainable solution to one of the world's most devastating crop pests
- CTNBio's decision is a significant step towards deployment on commercial corn fields in Brazil
- This is the world's first commercial biosafety approval of an agricultural Friendly™ insect solution, following the regulatory approval in Brazil for Oxitec's Friendly™ *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in 2020

Oxitec Ltd, the leading developer of insect-based biological solutions to control pests that transmit disease, destroy crops, and harm livestock, today announced that Brazil's biosafety regulatory agency, CTNBio, has approved the company's Friendly™ fall armyworm technology on March 9th as safe for application on farmers' fields nationally. This approval follows an in-depth, independent evaluation of scientific data by CTNBio, permitting the deployment of this solution on commercial crops across Brazil, and validating it as a safe, environmentally friendly, and sustainable crop protection solution. Oxitec will continue field validation and scale-up of the Friendly™ fall armyworm, prior to future commercial launch of the product.

Powered by Oxitec's Friendly™ technology, Oxitec's fall armyworm solution has been developed to protect farmers' crops and livelihoods and will now proceed to large pilot programs in Brazil. The deployment of Oxitec's Friendly™ fall armyworm will reduce populations of fall armyworm in a safe and environmentally friendly way. This approach is designed to work in parallel with the existing tools available to farmers.

Grey Frandsen, Oxitec's CEO, said "Our focus is on delivering value to farmers, and this national regulatory approval is a major step forward to providing farmers with a new, safe, and sustainable solution that can be used as part of new integrated pest management programs. Having driven thousands of miles across Brazil to meet with farmers of all types, I've seen first-hand how devastating the fall armyworm is and how urgent the need is for new solutions. Our Friendly™ fall armyworm represents a sustainable crop protection solution that not only reduces the impact of this destructive pest, but also preserves the benefits provided by insect-resistant biotech crops with the aim of reducing the need for chemical pesticides. This is an exciting step forward for Oxitec, for farmers, and for the agricultural industry as a whole."

Natalia Ferreira, Oxitec's Brazil Director, added "This regulatory approval represents the dedication of a diverse coalition of farmers, scientists, industry leaders, and other stakeholders who have come together with Oxitec to develop this powerful new solution. Similar to other farmers around the world, those in Brazil are suffering from fall armyworm and its ability to develop resistance to new chemical pesticides and biotech crops. We are now working around the clock to make this technology available for deployment on farmers' fields in the future. CTNBio's commercial biosafety approval provides another independent validation of the safety and environmental sustainability of Oxitec's Friendly™ technology platform."

The fall armyworm is a destructive pest, with the feeding caterpillars causing billions of dollars of crop damage and losses. It is native to the Americas, but in recent years it has crossed oceans to reach Africa and Asia, resulting in a considerable reduction in crop yields. In 2017, the annual economic fallout from fall armyworm damage in 12 African countries was estimated to be as high as US $6.3 billion. For Brazil, the fall armyworm presents a particular challenge to corn growers, where the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that farmers spend US $600 million annually to control the pest, and yet it still causes annual losses of US $400 million.

The CTNBio decision is available here.

- **Ends -**

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About Oxitec

Oxitec is the leading developer of insect-based biological solutions to control pests that transmit disease, destroy crops and harm livestock. Founded in 2002 at the University of Oxford, Oxitec is led by a passionate team comprised of 15 nationalities and is supported by world-class partners. Learn more at oxitec.com.

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