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Mascoma garners favorable FDA scientific review on MGT yeast

By [Holly Jessen](#) | February 28, 2012

Following a scientific review of Mascoma Corp's yeast for corn ethanol plants, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine has come out in support of establishing a new feed ingredient definition for the product. Mascoma Grain Technology, trademarked as MGT, is a yeast product jointly marketed by Mascoma and the product's manufacturer and distributor, Lallemand Ethanol Technology. "Our initial MGT product, which is a bioengineered yeast, is the first such product that we believe the FDA has accepted for use in corn ethanol production of distillers coproducts for animal feed," Bill Brady, president and CEO of Mascoma told EPM. "The FDA's acceptance is based on its comprehensive review that included the product's safety and utility."

Mascoma announced the favorable review Feb. 22, after the FDA sent a letter to in the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). The company has been working to get MGT included in AAFCO's official publication as an acceptable product for use in dry grind corn ethanol plant production of distillers grains for animal feed, a voluntary step for ethanol yeasts. "We believe that it is an important [step] to maximize a product's marketability, as DDGS are an important coproduct of the corn ethanol conversion process," Brady said.

MGT is the company's first commercial application of Mascoma's proprietary consolidated bioprocessing (CBP) technology. CBP utilizes microorganisms that allows the company to streamline the biomass conversion process to convert a variety of feedstocks to renewable fuels and chemicals. The technology will also be utilized in the 20 MMgy hardwood cellulosic ethanol plant Mascoma is working to build through a 20-year [joint venture with Valero](#). Construction is expected to begin on the Kinross, Mich., plant this summer.

Commercial-scale testing of MGT began during the fourth quarter of 2011 at multiple corn ethanol plants, Mascoma told EPM. It is now commercially available and the company expects to start generating revenues this quarter. The product is designed as a "drop-in substitute for conventional yeast" and will lower costs because producers won't need to purchase most of the enzymes currently used. "By using our initial MGT product we believe that corn ethanol producers can reduce their enzyme costs by approximately 1 cent to 2 cents per gallon, of which a portion would be provided to Mascoma under commercial arrangements," he said.

Future generations of MGT are being tested by ICM Inc. in pilot-scale test runs. So far, yield improvements of up to 3.4 percent have been demonstrated and Mascoma expects that will be improved with additional research and development.



Mascoma's laboratories are located in Lebanon, N.H., where scientists and engineers perform tasks such as strain development, metabolic pathway engineering, small-scale fermentation and more.

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