

3. SECTORIAL INTEREST

Israel does not have any significant fermentation industry, nor particular strength in pharmaceuticals. It has, however, a dynamic agriculture and agro-industry and a strong research community. There is a general feeling that the development and funding of biotechnology related to agriculture (plants and soil microorganisms) should enjoy a high priority. Also considered worth promoting is medical diagnostics, since only modest funding is required to commercialize it, and since there are already several companies involved in this field. Activities related to health care are also accorded high priority, especially new biological entities and drug delivery technologies related to biological products, as there exists a significant and advanced basic research activity in the biomedical field. There is a growing interest in aquaculture and in algae and its products, as well as in sewage and waste-water treatments. Another growing field is biological pesticides.

4. LEGISLATION

In 1976 the National Academy of Sciences set up a committee, chaired by Prof. L. Sachs, for regulatory oversight of DNA experiments. The NIH guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules were adopted by the Committee and accepted by scientists in the universities and in industry.

The ministry of Agriculture has appointed a special committee to recommend guidelines for experiments relating to transgenic plants. Its report will be submitted in late 1989.