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Cibus pushes toward 2027 rice launch as gene-editing momentum builds globally

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Agricultural technology company Cibus Inc. is accelerating commercial and regulatory momentum across its gene-edited crop portfolio, with its flagship herbicide-tolerant rice programme moving closer to a targeted 2027 launch in Latin America amid a rapidly evolving global policy environment for precision breeding technologies.

Reporting first-quarter 2026 results, the Nasdaq-listed company said it continues to deepen partnerships with global seed companies while expanding the commercial pathway for its proprietary Rice herbicide tolerance (HT) platform. The company also highlighted growing international regulatory acceptance of New Genomic Techniques (NGTs), particularly in Europe, where policymakers continue advancing legislation governing gene-edited crops.

â??We are pleased to report continued momentum across our priority programs during the first quarter of 2026,â? said Peter Beetham, Interim Chief Executive Officer of Cibus. â??Our Rice herbicide tolerance program is advancing on multiple fronts, including meaningful progress toward commercialization with our Latin American seed partners, including initially Interoc, as we continue to eye our targeted 2027 initial launch.â?•

Cibusâ?? HT Rice programme has emerged as one of the companyâ??s most commercially advanced assets. The platform currently supports seven active customer relationships representing an estimated 5â??7 million peak addressable acres and more than $200 million in potential annual royalty opportunities at maturity. While the company continues targeting an initial Latin American launch in 2027, it has revised its U.S. commercialisation timeline from 2028 to 2029 following delays in herbicide registration processes being handled by its partner Albaugh.

The company has intensified engagement across major rice-growing regions. In January 2026, Cibus signed a non-binding Letter of Intent with Latin American agribusiness company Interoc to establish a framework for commercialising co-developed herbicide-tolerant rice traits across key regional markets. That relationship advanced further in March, when Interoc secured an additional import permit enabling future transfer of material bearing HT traits. By May, Cibus had completed the transfer of gene-edited traits into Interocâ??s rice seeds, paving the way for regional testing and potential market deployment.

Beyond Latin America, the company has also initiated discussions with major Indian rice-sector participants through strategic collaborations involving RTDC and AgVayÄ•, signalling a broader international expansion strategy targeting some of the worldâ??s largest rice-producing markets.

The companyâ??s broader narrative is increasingly tied to global food security and agricultural resilience. Beetham noted that disruptions in global fertiliser supply chains and tightening nitrogen availability continue to create mounting pressure on farmers, particularly in nitrogen-intensive crops such as rice, wheat, and canola. Against this backdrop, Cibus believes its precision breeding technologies offer scalable pathways to improve resilience, productivity, and input efficiency.

While Rice HT and Sustainable Ingredients remain near-term priorities, the company says significant longer-term value also exists across its broader opportunity pipeline, including canola disease resistance, nutrient-use efficiency traits, soybean editing platforms, wheat trait development, and forage crop innovations.

Cibusâ?? Sustainable Ingredients programme is also gaining traction. Following its first customer payment in late 2025, the company has expanded R&D activities with increased funding commitments and expects additional scale-up orders for biofragrance products during the second half of 2026. Management believes the programme could become an increasingly important commercial pillar as demand grows for biologically derived specialty ingredients.

At the same time, regulatory developments continue to strengthen the commercial outlook for gene editing globally. In April 2026, the Council of the European Union formally adopted its first-reading position on proposed NGT regulations, advancing legislation that would create a clearer pathway for gene-edited crops across European markets. The proposal now moves toward a European Parliament plenary vote expected later this year.

The regulatory shift follows a series of global milestones achieved in 2025, including Ecuadorâ??s decision to classify Cibusâ?? HT1 and HT3 Rice traits as equivalent to conventionally bred crops, as well as continued progress in the United Kingdomâ??s Precision Bred Organisms framework, where Cibus participated as a test case under the countryâ??s new review process.

Beyond commercial expansion, Cibus has spent the past year aggressively restructuring operations to improve capital efficiency. Chief Financial Officer Carlo Broos said the company remains on track to reduce annual net cash usage to approximately $30 million or less during 2026, supported by cost-cutting measures and operational consolidation initiatives.

Research and development expenses declined to $8.7 million during the first quarter, compared with $11.8 million a year earlier, while SG&A expenses fell sharply to $5.1 million from $9.9 million. The company attributed the reductions to operational streamlining and the absence of significant litigation expenses recorded during the prior-year quarter.

Cibus also strengthened its balance sheet through two equity offerings completed earlier this year, raising approximately $37 million in gross proceeds. The capital is expected to support working capital requirements and continued advancement of the companyâ??s priority commercial programmes.

As of March 31, 2026, Cibus held $30.3 million in cash and cash equivalents, which management believes is sufficient to fund operations into late first quarter 2027 without additional financing.

Financially, the company reported a first-quarter net loss of $21.2 million, a substantial improvement from the $49.4 million loss recorded during the same period last year. Net loss per share improved to $0.33 from $1.34, driven partly by the absence of a prior-year goodwill impairment charge and broader expense reductions.

Meanwhile, the company continues expanding its scientific and commercial capabilities. In April, Cibus appointed agribusiness veteran Thomas Urban to its Board of Directors, adding more than three decades of experience spanning Pioneer Hi-Bred International, CellFor, and Goldman Sachs.

As regulatory acceptance of gene editing accelerates and global agricultural systems face mounting pressure from climate volatility, fertiliser disruptions, and food-security concerns, Cibus is positioning itself at the intersection of precision breeding, crop resilience, and next-generation agricultural innovation.