



Monthly Bulletin
on *Genetic Engineering*
July 2011

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ADDITIONAL LINKS:

1. India paying heavy for not adopting GM crops' June 28, 2011 13:14 IST
<http://news.nabou.com/cgi-bin/newsframe/437892yks4328903Dnabou2Blnews421789994asgw3798etys6787/18A8047A97056E4D9B2CDA039BFF5E58backheadline3DHow2Bdo2BI2Bcut2Ba2Boout3Fnews26o3D0/Framelt.cgi?Url=http://c.moreover.com/click/here.pl?r4895394750>
2. Wednesday, June 15, 2011 Public kept in the dark on Roundup link with birth defects - new report
http://gmoreport.blogspot.com/2011_06_01_archive.html
3. Millet cultivation more viable than commercial crops
<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/agri-biz/article2104287.ece>
4. Industry body seeks early meet of Bt crops panel
<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/agri-biz/article2093913.ece>
5. ISB NEWS REPORT JUNE 2011 Impacts of GE Crops on Biodiversity Janet E. Carpenter
6. Race to feed the world : June 2011, Reuters
7. Farmer to Farmer: The Truth about GM Crops (Video) Presented and Narrated by Michael Hart Edited by Pete Speller 2011, 24 minutes Websites: gmcropsfarmertofarmer.com

SAGE CHRONICLE

SAGE TAMILNADU

On 19 June 2011, the SAGE TN Steering committee met at Mukunthanur of Thiruvavur district. This was the first meeting for the current financial year 2011-12 and the meeting was organized by Create. Committee members discussed the programme budget for SAGE activities in Tamil Nadu and chalked out a detailed action plan.

SAGE – KARNATAKA

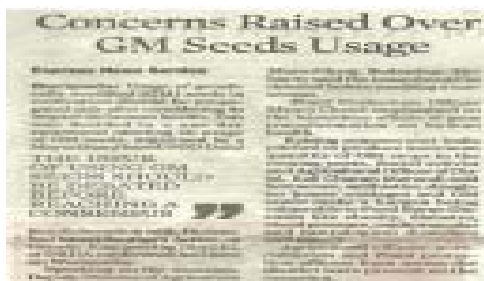
On 16 June 2011, SAGE organized a civil society dialogue. Around 40 participants from 15 districts participated in it. The theme of the dialogue was Salt Then, Seed Now- Civil Society Dialogue on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture and Threats to Seed Sovereignty.

Many farmer groups and civil society organizations like Green Foundation, NST, AME, BAIF, Vikasana participated in the dialogue. Seed conservation activists Deepika Kundaji, Sunita Rao and Sunanda Jayaram, D D. Bharamagoudara .K.P..Suresh C.K. Raghu, Aruna Kalashtri V. Gayathri Prof. Ramesh, and P. Babu initiated discussion on various issues around GE. The meeting decided to have four regional workshops and seed exhibitions as part of the campaign before 11 October 2011,

SAGE – SAMVADA

In June 2011: SAGE – SAMVADA Mysore published a series on “FAQs-GE” in a popular newspaper called ANDOLANA's Sunday Supplements. (June 13, 20, 27 and July 3, 2011 issues)

A Booklet on FAQs on GE in Kannada is in the press.



SAGE ODISHA

On 4 June 2011 a “Health Workers' Sensitization Programme on GMO” was organized about 30 members participated in Sirsa and state agriculture officers' meet was organized on June 8 about 80 officers participated on GM Food and Agriculture in Baripada.

OTHERS:

- ◆ On 1 June 2011, SAGE MEDAK had a press meet at Pastapur village in Zaheerabad Mandal of Medak District of Andhra Pradesh on Industry's false propaganda on farmers' preference for BG2 and RRF cotton.
- ◆ On 16 June 2011 DDS organized a 30-farmer meet to initiate non bt. Cotton cultivation.
- ◆ In response to ABLE's demand for a early GEAC meeting, SAGE wrote a letter to Mr. Jai Ram Ramesh MoEF on 19 June 2011
- ◆ A compilation of SAGE Bulletins from April 2010 through April 2011 was brought out as Tracking Genetic Manipulation a dossier of SAGE bulletins 2010 11



National News

Scientist calls for rational approach towards GM

- M.P. Praveen

KOCHI: Genetic Modification (GM) technology should be rationally approached and kept open as one of the components of future food security, said M. Vijayan, distinguished scientist and DAE Homi Bhabha professor at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Talking to The Hindu on the sidelines of a colloquium on Research and Development-Industry interface for biotech development in Kerala here on Wednesday, Prof. Vijayan called for a cost-benefit analysis on GM and not to completely ignore it.

"It will be unwise to throw the baby out with the bath water. There is risk involved in travelling by aircraft, but does that stop us from flying," he said while urging for a rational discussion on the issue.

"The available evidence is that genetically modified crops are no more allergic or dangerous than ordinary food," the scientist said.

Prof. Vijayan, however, emphasised that GM was not a panacea and just one of the components of future food security.

He said there was nothing mysterious about GM. "What nature has been doing, we are trying to do it intelligently," he said.

Asked about the apprehensions that some changes induced by GM were irreversible, Prof. Vijayan said nature was changing the genomes continuously. "So, in my opinion a change in one gene leaves only a small impact," he said.

For any new technology there will be an impact. But, it is not possible to introduce a technology after solving all apprehensions, Prof. Vijayan said.

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/01/13/stories/2011011359210300.htm>

GEAC meet delay may put off trial plans for GM crops

Sanjeeb Mukherjee

New Delhi June 07, 2011, 0:07 IST

Trial plans for biotech version of crops like rice, cotton, corn, castor, sorghum and potato could be delayed since a crucial meeting of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) was postponed by a month from scheduled date of June 8.

The meeting was expected to discuss permission of field trials and research for some biotech crops during the coming kharif season.

Biotech industry representatives said the deferment in considering the cases for field trials for biotech crops could seriously delay the trial plans because after GEAC gives permission for field trials, consent from respective state where the trials would be held is also needed.

The GEAC has not given any specific reason for postponing the meeting. Its website just said the 110th GEAC meeting was now rescheduled for July 6.

Agenda for the same meeting would be posted on the website in due course of time, the statement posted on the website said.

The crops are being developed by some private companies like Bayer, Du Pont Pioneer and Mahyco and even some government-run institutions like Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Central Research Institute For Dryland Agriculture and Central Potato Research Institute.

Of these, paddy, corn and cotton crops are grown during the Kharif season sowing for which starts around June-July.

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/geac-meet-delay-may-put-off-trial-plans-for-gm-crops-/438131/>

GLOBAL

GM chickpea undergoes tests in US lab

Smita Bhattacharyya

Jorhat, June 21: Research into genetically modified crops continues for B.K. Sarmah and others working in the agricultural biotechnology department of the Assam Agricultural University, as the debate over the safety of such produce, like the BT brinjal, rages elsewhere.

A product of the department, the weevil resistant chickpea, (but mah), is currently being tested in a university in America to determine how safe it is for human consumption.

“The tests for allergenicities in human beings will be completed in the next six months to one year and then the bio-safety can be proved without doubt,” said Sarmah, the professor of the department.

Sarmah said he was sure that the genetically modified chickpea would be much safer than those doused in pesticides to prevent weevil infestation, as is done in many places of Assam.

“A few years ago, there was a furore in the state over the deaths of many schoolchildren after eating soaked chickpeas. The other day people were taken ill after consuming the same during a festival in Lahdoigarh and the most likely reason was that these were dunked in pesticides before storage,” he said.

Sarmah said the International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics, Hyderabad, had bought the weevil resistant technology.

Mahyco, another company dealing in genetically modified crops, had bought the technology, which conferred resistance against pod borers, which attacks the chickpeas, resulting in heavy losses to the farmer.

Both the companies are working at introgression, that is, transferring the characteristic to other varieties for commercial production.

The scientist said in America, processed genetically modified crops were being consumed for quite some time now.

Of late, even BT papaya was being eaten uncooked.

However, the European Union was opposed to these crops, apprehensive that they were harmful for humans because of the insertion of a gene, which was resistant to the antibiotic kanamycinin.

This had to be done to differentiate the genetically modified crops from the other crops.

Kanamycinin was thought to produce resistance in humans to bacteria.

“The safety of the antibiotic was well established in the past but it was only in 2009 that it has been approved by the European Food Safety Authority. Despite this European countries are yet to take to GM crops, Sarmah said.

He added that in India, the regulations were even stricter.

At first, a crop has to go through the institute's bio-safety committee, where the vice-chancellor or his nominee is the chairperson, a medical doctor and a nominee of the department of biotechnology government of India are members, among others.

Next comes the Review Committee of Genetic Modification where an AIIMS director, director of forestry and environment, director general of ICAR among others, are members.

Then it will have to be passed by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee, the apex body of transgenic crops in India.

“Transgenic crops will prevail one day and in this regard, we are continuing our research with the support of the vice-chancellor of the university, K.M. Bujarbaruah, who has given us the go-ahead for research in this field,” Sarmah said.

Report: Regulators Knew Glyphosate Caused Birth Defects

Wed, Jun 8, 2011

General, Pesticide Toxicity

Don Huber, an emeritus professor at Purdue University and retired U.S. Army Colonel, was virtually ignored after writing a letter in January to Tom Vilsack, head of the USDA, about the environmental and animal health dangers associated with the use of glyphosate and requesting a moratorium on deregulating crops genetically altered to be immune to Roundup.

Dr. Huber was sent a polite letter in response, and, less than three weeks later, the Obama administration approved 2 new Roundup Ready® GMO crops, intended to be planted this past spring (though a U.S. Supreme Court ruling should, ideally, be holding up that process).

In his letter, Huber commented on the herbicide itself, saying, "It is well-documented that glyphosate promotes soil pathogens and is already implicated with the increase of more than 40 plant diseases; it dismantles plant defenses by chelating vital nutrients; and it reduces the bioavailability of nutrients in feed, which in turn can cause animal disorders."

Now we're learning that regulators have known as early as 1980 that glyphosate, the chemical on which Roundup is based, can cause birth defects in laboratory animals. A report released yesterday by international researchers at Earth Open Source, titled "Round-up and birth defects: Is the public being kept in the dark?", says that regulators misled the public about glyphosate's safety and as recently as last year, the German Federal Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety- the German government body dealing with the glyphosate review- told the European Commission that there was no evidence glyphosate causes birth defects.

Although glyphosate was originally due to be reviewed in 2012, the Commission decided late last year not to bring the review forward, instead delaying it until 2015. The chemical will not be reviewed under more stringent, up-to-date standards until 2030.

"Our examination of the evidence leads us to the conclusion that the current approval of glyphosate and Roundup is deeply flawed and unreliable," write the report authors in their conclusion. "What is more, we have learned from experts familiar with pesticide assessments and

approvals that the case of glyphosate is not unusual."

<http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2011/06/report-regulators-knew-glyphosate-caused-birth-defects/>

EU allows unapproved GM material in feed imports

Monday, 27 June 2011 14:29

Reuters

6/24/2011, Charlie Dunmore

Original Source

BRUSSELS, June 24 (Reuters) - The European Union adopted new rules on Friday allowing traces of unapproved genetically modified (GM) material in animal feed imports, in a bid to secure grain fodder supplies to the import-dependent bloc.

"The regulation ... addresses the current uncertainty EU operators face when placing on the market feed products imported from third countries," the Commission said in a statement.

The EU and its trading partners -- backed by industry -- argue the 0.1 percent threshold is needed to avoid a repeat of supply disruptions in 2009, when U.S. soy shipments to Europe were blocked after unapproved GM material was found in some cargoes.

But environmental campaigners and consumer groups have accused the EU of caving in to GM-industry lobbying by reversing its "zero-tolerance" policy on unauthorised GM crops.

Some environmentalists argue that the effect of consuming GM crops is unknown and say these varieties have not completed the EU's safety assessment process.

The GM crops in question must have been approved in a non-EU producing country and an EU authorisation request must have been lodged with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for at least three months.

EFSA must also have issued an opinion that the presence of GM products at 0.1 percent does not pose risks to health or the environment.

The 0.1 percent threshold will only apply to imports of animal feed and not human food, despite warnings from traders and exporting states that it is impractical and costly to separate global grain supplies into those destined for humans and those for animals.

The EU currently imports some 45 million tonnes of protein crops a year, much of it soy beans and soy meal from Brazil, Argentina and the U.S. destined for use as animal feed.

The majority of soy beans grown in these countries are GM varieties developed by biotech companies such as Monsanto .

A majority of EU governments are reported to be in favour of a similar threshold for food imports,

but the Commission has said it currently has no plans to table such a proposal. (Reporting by Charlie Dunmore; editing by Jason Neely)

<http://news.nabou.com/cgi-bin/newsframe/437892yks4328903Dnabou2Blnews421789994asgw3798ety6787/18A8047A97056E4D9B2CDA039BFF5E58backheadline3DHow2Bdo2B12Bcut2Ba2Boout3Fnews26o3D0/Framelt.cgi?Url=http://c.moreover.com/click/here.pl?r4895091437>

GE FOOD

New FAO Chief Accepts GMOs, Not Seed Monopolies

The newly elected head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization today expressed tolerance for genetically modified crops but not for monopolies on seeds.

José Graziano da Silva of Brazil was elected FAO director general this week and will take office on 1 January 2012. He has been a senior field officer for FAO since 2006, according to a UN press release.

During a 27 June press conference, Graziano da Silva said that "biofuels were not 'a silver bullet,' but should not be demonized; the science of genetically modifying crops should not be discarded, but there should be no monopoly on seed sales; land grabs are important in theory, but their impacts so far are "minimal;" and food prices are liable to continue being volatile," the UN said in another release.

In a 25 June speech, he outlined his proposed programme for when he takes office. He included five main goals, according to the UN: "eradicating hunger, promoting a shift to sustainable food production, ensuring greater fairness in global food management, swiftly implementing agreed internal FAO reforms, and expanding South-South cooperation."

The science of genetically modified crops likely refers to the positive impact it can make on agriculture. Monopolies on seed sales likely refers to increased patenting of seeds, which some see as reducing availability in developing countries.

In the election he received 92 of 180 votes cast by FAO member states in the second round of balloting, defeating Miguel Ángel Moratinos

Cuyaube, a former foreign minister of Spain, the UN said.

Mr. Graziano da Silva, 61, will be the eighth person and first from Latin America to lead the FAO since it was established in 1945. His term will expire on 31 July 2015, but he will be eligible to run for a second, four-year term. He succeeds Jacques Diouf, who has served as FAO Director-General since 1994.

<http://www.ip-watch.org/weblog/2011/06/27/new-fao-chief-accepts-gmos-not-seed-monopolies/>

GM Food: Poisoning Our People?

By Glenn Ashton

One of the most massive unregulated experiments on humans ever is being carried out right here in South Africa. South Africans are the first people in the world to consume a genetically modified (GM) food as a staple. According to industry sources more than 75% of our white maize is now GM. This means that the pap and samp consumed daily in the majority of South African households is now mainly comprised of genetically modified maize.

The industry claim that nobody has become ill from GM foods is scientifically dishonest. It is based on the principle of "don't look - don't find." Because GM foods are not clearly identified through clear labelling, it is impossible to know what sicknesses are related to the consumption of the product.

We are repeatedly told these are the most widely tested foods ever. However, GM producers claim their products to be 'substantially equivalent' identical to their natural counterparts. As such they do not require testing. Where testing has been done it has fallen prey to the same pitfalls that

have dogged chemical and toxicological testing for decades. This is unsurprising as the GM companies have without exception evolved from agricultural chemical companies, infamous in their abuse of statistical and experimental protocols.

Most food tests have been undertaken and submitted by the very companies seeking approval. The design of these tests has been opaque and misleading. Research has shown results to have been routinely manipulated and skewed to the extent that epidemiologist Judy Carman said, "Their whole approach to the analysis would fail a basic statistics class."

The earliest analysis of all feeding studies found exactly three experiments. Even these indicated worrying trends. More recent meta-analyses have reinforced these concerns. A consistent finding has been damage to the liver and kidneys. It is notable that liver and kidney disease has increased since GM crops were introduced in the US.

What is remarkable is that when researchers employed or connected to the developers of GM foods did studies, no problems were reported. On the other hand, studies undertaken by independent scientists consistently raised concerns. A recently published analysis highlighted this trend. This relationship is common in analyses of other chemicals and foodstuff.

Of even more concern is the fact that feeding studies were extremely short term, with most lasting three months. Crucially, none of them used more than one-third of GM product in the diet. In South Africa we eat unidentified GM white maize as a staple food at levels that may in many cases reach 100% of the diet. The question is: If statistically worrying damage is shown to kidney, liver and other organs when animals are fed one third of their diet as GM products, in studies lasting three months, then what on earth will happen to those of us who eat a diet that is predominantly based on GM maize, every day for years on end?

This is nothing less than a massive, unregulated experiment. To make matters worse this experiment is not being undertaken on a healthy population but one that is doubly compromised: First through most people not eating a sufficient or varied enough diet and secondly because we have the highest burden of HIV, AIDS and TB infections in the world.

There are numerous other studies that have indicated problems from consuming GM crops, even at reduced levels of a third of the total diet. Studies have shown reduced sperm count and even sterility. Researchers have consistently called for further work to be done. All the GM industry does is consistently try to spin itself out of trouble.

This outrageous situation is assisted by our poor regulation of GM food that will only need to be labelled later this year. In other words we have been eating the world's first GM staple food in total ignorance of the fact. So far not one independent, multi-generational dietary test has been undertaken locally by independent scientists. This amounts to little less than criminal negligence by our government, which has consistently ignored all of these concerns, instead taking the side of an industry with a seriously blemished track record.

Of course this industry insists that the EU and others have produced reports clearing GM crops of any health risk. The fact remains that EU regulators have relied upon exactly the same compromised tests consistently produced by the industry itself. Secondly, the influence of industry within the regulatory regime is significant. This industry has not only routinely misinformed regulators, through supplying tests with skewed statistical data, but it has consistently interfered in the regulatory regime itself.

For instance, the regulations governing GM crops in the US were drafted by the ex-Monsanto head of regulatory affairs, Michael Taylor, who left Monsanto to work in government in order to draft industry friendly legislation. He then returned to Monsanto. He has since returned to government, in what is known as 'the revolving door'. This is not by any means an isolated case and a similar situation exists in South Africa.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are repeated documented cases of this industry restricting and prohibiting independent testing of its products. This is possible because these products are patented and owned by the companies and permission must be granted for access to various crucial aspects of information in scientific testing, which is consistently refused.

It is not only the inherent dangers associated with GM crops themselves. The most widely grown GM crop in the world, herbicide resistant soy, has been linked to sharply increased levels of the herbicide Roundup, made by Monsanto, which

also owns the patents on over 90% of all GM crops grown globally. Monsanto is also rapidly introducing herbicide resistant maize, now being grown in South Africa. Despite claims that GM crops reduce chemical use, we have seen exactly the opposite occurring around the world.

For instance, in Argentina, herbicide use has increased 180 fold in 13 years. In the USA, 174 000 tonnes more are used per year. In Brazil it is up by 95%. Responsibility for the downstream health impacts is not the farmers' concern but is simply passed onto consumers who are none the wiser. And the risks of these chemicals are increasingly been proven to be as worrying, if not more so, than the concerns about the GM crops themselves.

When the first GM crops were introduced the amount of herbicide residue on food was permitted to be increased by 200 times in the case of the European Union, with similar increases elsewhere. Roundup is linked to serious human health impacts, including damage to embryo and fetus growth (tetragenic impacts) as well as cellular damage, amongst many other impacts on mammals. There are literally dozens of published studies indicating concerns about this chemical. It also affects amphibians, insects, earthworms and soil bacteria that liberate plant nutrients.

Besides these serious concerns, there is a final, glaring inconsistency in the argument that GM crops are required to feed the world. This is the fact that the most widely grown GM crop in the world, GM soy, has consistently been shown to yield less than conventional, natural soy. Despite years of promises of more nutritional or drought resistant GM crops, these promises remain unmet.

Oxfam recently released a report stating that food prices will more than double, from already high levels, over the next two decades. How do we address this problem? We are constantly informed by supporters of GM crops that we must adopt their technology to feed the world. The reality is that conventional plant breeding programmes have achieved far more, at far lower cost, enhancing yield, viral resistance, nutritional improvement and drought resistance.

Fifteen years of growing GM crops in South Africa has demonstrated that the rapid uptake of GM crops has had no impact at all on the amount of food reaching the mouths of the most needy. The only conclusion can be that GM crops are not

the solution. More importantly we are playing a dangerous game of genetic roulette with the health of our people.

The four year International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), in its report entitled "Agriculture at a Crossroads" indicated that GM crops would at best play a limited role in tackling global hunger. The focus on high-input industrial farming and GMOs has marginalised far more effective agricultural practices. The IAASTD study was funded by the World Bank and several leading UN organisations, and involved over 400 agricultural experts from around the world.

The perverse focus on GM crops over the past two decades has been instrumental in retarding development of urgently needed research. Instead of focussing on the proven, climate resilient and community based food production systems we require to encourage true food security and independence, the political-corporate focus on GM crops has steered us towards reliance on the dependency model epitomised by industrial agriculture, while simultaneously eroding our already tenuous health status.

Every way you look at it, GM crops epitomise the problem, not the solution.

<http://www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/684.1>

Scientists reject human trials of GM wheat

SCIENTISTS and researchers from around the world have urged Australia not to go ahead with human trials of genetically modified wheat. The CSIRO is carrying out a study of feeding GM wheat grown in the ACT to rats and pigs and could extend the trial to humans. The modified wheat has been altered to lower its glycaemic index in an attempt to see if the grain could have health benefits such as improving blood glucose control and lowering cholesterol levels. But eight scientists and academics from Britain, the US, India, Argentina and Australia believe not enough studies have been done on the effects of GM wheat on animals to warrant human trials.

The CSIRO has dismissed their concerns, insisting no decision has been made on if or when human trials will begin. In a letter to the CSIRO's chief executive Megan Clark, the scientists expressed their "unequivocal denunciation" of the experiments.

"The use of human subjects for these GM feeding experiments is completely unacceptable," the letter said. "The experiments may be used to dispense with concerns about the health impacts of consuming GM plants, but will not in fact address the health risks GM plants raise. "The feeding trials should not be conducted until long-term impact assessments have been undertaken and appropriate information released to enable the scientific community to determine the value of such research, as against the risks."

Among the signatories were Dr Michael Antoniou, of the gene expression and therapy group at King's College London School of Medicine, and Professor David Schubert, from the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California. The scientists said they were concerned that the CSIRO had inadequately described the biological and biochemical make-up of the GM wheat being used in the trials. They said that, based on previous research, GM food products had been shown to be prone to having multiple effects, including damaging the health of animals which had eaten them. They believed the CSIRO's animal feeding trials of up to 28 days were "completely inadequate" to assess such risks. But CSIRO spokesman Huw Morgan said animal trials of the GM wheat, which began in 2005,

were still continuing. "No decision has been made as yet to undertake human trials," he told AAP. "It's still something that we are considering."

Mr Morgan said many studies carried out in the past 15 years had shown GM foods had no detrimental impact on human health. The CSIRO's trials were trying to determine whether the new type of GM grain had health benefits for people with conditions such as colorectal cancer and diabetes, he said. Greenpeace food campaigner Laura Kelly said GM experts recommended that long-term animal feeding studies of two years should be carried out before human testing to evaluate any carcinogenic, developmental, hormonal, neural and reproductive dysfunctions. "This is the first generation of Australian children that will be exposed to GM in food for a lifetime," she said. "If Julia Gillard doesn't stand up to foreign biotech companies, soon they'll be eating it in their sandwiches and pasta, even though it has never been proven safe to eat."

<http://news.nabou.com/cgi-bin/newsframe/437892yks4328903Dnabou2BInews421789994asgw3798etys6787/18A8047A97056E4D9B2CDA039BFF5E58backheadline3DHow2Bdo2BI2Bcut2Ba2Boout3Fnews26o3D0/FrameIt.cgi?Url=http://c.moreover.com/click/here.pl?r4894253618>

GE & AGRICULTURE

EU adopts new rules on GM contaminated feed imports

by **Aquafeed.com Staff**
06/27/2011

In a move welcomed by the European feed sector, the European Commission adopted a 'technical solution' to GM contamination of feed imports on Friday, June 24, 2011: the new regulations define a technical zero level of contamination at 0.1 %.

Patrick Vanden Avenne, president of the European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation, FEFAC, said his organization welcomed the final EU adoption of a technical low level presence (LLP) solution to non-approved genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in imported feed materials but said "Trade problems resulting from asynchronous approval will remain serious threat to supplies for EU livestock and feed sector."

Pointing to increased legal certainty for feed business operators Mr Vanden Avenne commented that test results on GMO traces can now be interpreted more accurately and are reproducible.

"Until now, the burden of proof of systematic or accidental differences between laboratories or analytical methods as well as mistakes in sampling or sample treatment exclusively rested on the feed chain. At least this situation should change now", the FEFAC President said.

Mr Vanden Avenne, however, emphasized the imminent risks for the supply of feedstuffs to the EU feed and livestock sector linked to the persisting slow pace of asynchronous approvals of GM crops in the EU: "EU feed and livestock producers may lose access to maize products from Brazil and the US in the autumn of 2011 and possibly soy products from Brazil in spring

2012 due to the cultivation of new GM maize and soy events which have not yet and may not receive full EU approval prior to harvest in these countries”.

“The “technical zero” laid down in the new regulation will not be sufficient to cover potential carry-over in shipments to the EU from GM seeds which have been sold for cultivation in key export countries”. He therefore stressed that “there is no time for complacency: the EU

must urgently continue its efforts to seek full synchronisation of EU approvals of GM crops with key exporting countries in order to safeguard vital feed supplies and the competitiveness of the EU livestock sector”.

Aquafeed.com Staff

GM Technology is Destroying Africa

Posted on June 23, 2011 by dscoffins

Source: Institute of Science in Society

Date: 06/20/2011

Civil society and private sector organisations come together to fight introduction of GM technology.

Dr. Eva Sirinathsinghji

The recent introduction of GM (genetic modification) technology into Tanzania has prompted local and international campaign groups to join forces in expressing concern for the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, which is crucial for food security and food sovereignty. Groups such as the African Centre for Biodiversity, Action Aid, International Tanzania, Biolands, BioRe, BioSustain, Envirocare, PELUM Tanzania, Swissaid, Eastern & Southern African Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) and Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement, formed the Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity in recent weeks to urge the government to resist pressure from GM companies and stakeholders to relax the strict safety legislation to allow the widespread introduction of GM technologies [1]. One liability clause states that 'a person who imports, arranges transit, makes use of, releases or places on the market a GMO or product of a GMO shall be strictly liable for any harm caused by such a GMO or product of a GMO' and that 'the harm shall be compensated'. In a previously GM-free country, the alliance wants to base the assessment of GM crop safety on the

precautionary principle, and state that 'GM crops or animals are not the solution to poverty and hunger' in the region.

Currently, Tanzania, along with Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana are performing field tests on GM crops; maize and cassava are being tested in Tanzania. The Tanzanian Cotton Board has also approved the introduction of Bt cotton. South Africa, Burkina Faso and Egypt have already started cultivating GM crops.

South Africa has experienced problems with crop yields; farmers have reported up to 80 percent loss in corn production, with GM corn not producing kernels in a proportion of plants.

Monsanto has been expanding into the African continent with support from United States Agency for International Development USAID, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), also founded by the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations (see [2] Beware of the “Doubly Green Revolution”, SiS 37) . Bill Gates is a huge proponent of GM biotechnology and has recently invested in 500,000 shares of the Monsanto stock worth an approximate US\$23.1 million. This investment represents a strong conflict of interest between their purported role of 'alleviating poverty and hunger among small-scale farmers' and Monsanto's track record of disregard for the interests and well-being of small farmers around the world. Small scale farmers are the largest source of food for much of the region.

A movement is building up across African countries to counter the expansion of agribusiness, with a number of alliances already formed in additional countries including South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, and Uganda.

The Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity has called on the government to be cautious when inviting new investments in GM technologies. Farmer Mr. Shaha, Regional Chairman of ESAFF, spoke to the Daily News in Kenya about the intense pressure from foreign biotech companies, who are 'paying our scientists very well to support their work and are imposing their agenda on what we should grow and eat'. ActionAid Tanzania's Director, Aida Kiangi, also commented, “We are one of many NGOs who have seen the fallout from this technology on small farmers and their families in other countries, and I urge my fellow Tanzanians to beware of the serious risks before it is too late.”

Kenya has also seen a new coalition of small-scale organic farmers form in the past weeks, with an advocate and member of African Biodiversity Network stating that 'organic foods can provide a food secure and ecologically healthy future, while the introduction of patented seeds and related chemicals into our farming systems threatens our agricultural practices, our livelihoods, the environment, and undermines our seed sovereignty'.

The African Union is also to establish an organic

farming platform to provide guidance in support of the development of sustainable organic farming systems and improve seed quality, promoting small-scale farming systems (see [3] African Union to Support Organic Farming, SiS 50). There is growing resistance to foreign agricultural practices especially cultivation of GMOs; and this may well increase food security in the region.

<http://dscoffins.blog.com/2011/06/23/gm-technology-is-destroying-africa/>

This monthly bulletin is brought out by Southern Action on Genetic Engineering (SAGE), a coalition of civil society activists, farmers, scientists, academicians, and consumer groups of four Southern States of India, viz., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. SAGE has been waging a concerted battle against genetic engineering through a series of activities that involve public protests, media actions, seminars, consultations and publication of a series of educational materials.