



Monthly Bulletin  
on *Genetic Engineering*  
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*For details:*

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Published: Monday, Sep 5, 2011, 19:54 IST

[http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report\\_stop-bill-on-genetically-modified-crops-ngos-tells-manmohan-singh\\_1583684](http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_stop-bill-on-genetically-modified-crops-ngos-tells-manmohan-singh_1583684)

*GM food on trial*

<http://www.mid-day.com/news/2011/sep/010911-Bt-brinjal-GM-consequences-food-problem->

**IFPRI Discussion Paper 01118 September 2011**

**Women Cotton Farmers Their Perceptions and Experiences with Transgenic Varieties - A Case Study for Colombia**

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## SAGE CHRONICLE

### SAGE – TAMILNADU

Kudumbam organized a village level publicity campaign on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to create awareness on the ill effects of pesticides and the negative effects of Genetic Engineering Technology. The campaign was organized in Alwanpatti village, in Kunnandar Koil Union, Pudukkottai District, Tamil Nadu. Around 50 farmers along with school going children were took part in the event. Mr. Suresh Kanna made a presentation, and explained to the audience the ulterior motives of the authorities engaged in promoting GE technology. In addition to the presentation, an animation film, laying out the perils of GE technology was also screened. The Panchayat president of Udayalipatti and the ward councilors also participated in the publicity campaign and pledged to discuss the issue in their gramsabhas to be able to prevent the entry of GE seeds in their villages. Information leaflets were distributed to the participants for sharing with others.

On 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011, Kudumbam organized a regional level course for trainers at their office in Trichy. Around 25 trainees took participated in the course. NGO staff members from Trichy, Pudukkottai and Karur; academicians and research scholars from the departments of Women's Studies, Environmental Management, Sociology and Economics of Bh Rathidasan University; and microbiology and commerce students from Urumudhalakshimi also played an active role in the training programme.

Mr. Oswald Quintal, SAGE TN Convenor, welcomed the gathering and explained the objective of this training. He also highlighted the growing food crisis all over the world, unsafe food production and lack consumer awareness about the food borne diseases, especially in India, Mr. Suresh Kanna made a power-point presentation on the threats of GE in agriculture; food and agro bio-diversity; the role of MNCs in pressurizing the State to bring new bills and acts which favors the expansion of GM crops throughout the country and destroy farmers' rights on seed and freedom of speech and expression; and the need for stemming this through sustained campaign at all levels; especially, the role of NGOs and students. Documentary films on Genetic Engineering and Slow Poisoning of India were screened. After the input sessions, a planning session was held to chart out the future course of action It was decided to organize massive awareness programmes in schools of Pudukkottai and Trichy districts. 15 schools were identified. A team was formed to prepare information materials.

### SAGE – ODISHA

DULAL facilitated a workshop on September 29, 2011 for lawyers at Baripada, on legal aspects of GE. About 22 lawyers took active participation.

### SAGE - KARNATAKA

ICRA participated in Krishi Mela-2011 of University of Agriculture Sciences, Dharwad during September 9 -12, at the main campus of Dharwad.

ICRA and SAGE Karnataka have brought out a publication titled – TERE MAREYA SATYA KADHE in kanada which contains a collection of articles by some of the renowned personalities from India.

### SAGE – ANDHRA PRADESH

On September 10, training on NPM practices was held at Warangal and 40 farmers participated from three organizations SYO, SEED and MARI. The programme was organized by MARI and Mr Abdul Qayum, Senior Scientist has facilitated the training.



## National News

**NEW DELHI: September 7, 2011**

### Campaign against Biotechnology Regulatory Authority Bill

#### Staff Reporter

Greenpeace members were joined by Delhiites at Dilli Haat near INA Market here on Tuesday morning to cook a record-making GM-free *baingan ka bharta* to oppose Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 2011.

The cooking was part of a public campaign that saw several people also signing a petition against the upcoming Bill, which is feared to become an easy single window clearance system for GM crops in the country.

A battery of chefs from Le Meridien and India Culinary Forum lead the cooking of the *bharta* that has been certified as a record by the Limca Book of Records. A delegation of Greenpeace members later submitted a signed petition to the Prime Minister's Office against the Bill.

“People have the right to say ‘no’ to GM food and that is exactly what we have done today, we hope that the Government would take notice of the voices of its citizens and stop the introduction of Bill which would become a non-transparent, autocratic body which will lower the bar for the GM crop approvals,” said Sustainable Agriculture campaigner with Greenpeace India Kapil Mishra.

“Bt. brinjal the first GM crop that came up for commercialisation was put under an indefinite moratorium last year due to opposition by scientists, farmers, consumers, political parties, as well as environmentalists. Brinjal has thus become a national symbol when it comes to opposition to GM crops and this event only resonates that cause,” he added.

Leading the cooking at the record event, Executive Chef at Le Meridien Davinder Kumar said: “We believe in doing whatever we can to ensure safe

food and a sustainable environment. We are happy that we could do our bit by joining this people's movement for safe food.”

According to Greenpeace, the *bharta* was made completely out of organic ingredients sourced from different organic food stores in Delhi to send a message that there are sustainable alternatives that need promotion and support of the Government instead of risky technologies like GM crops.

Rashmi Gupta, a Delhiite, who was present at the event and signed the petition said: “I will not compromise on my family's health because of such unethical regulations passed by the Government and that is the reason why I am here to participate in this event, I strongly believe that healthy eating is healthy living and GM food is a threat to it.”

The gathering also urged the government not to table the Bill but to come up with a biosafety protection legislation that will protect and enhance biosafety and ensure democratic processes are adhered to when dealing with issues as important as food and farming in the country.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/article2431919.ece>

### Hectic lobbying for Bt brinjal on

**New Delhi: September 5, DHNS:**

*With a new bill providing for the creation of an independent regulatory authority for biotech products on the horizon, pressure groups from both sides of the genetic divide have approached Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to take a decisive view on the contentious issue of genetically modified crops.*

In a memorandum to the prime minister, scientists and industry-backed pro-GM lobby on Monday suggested lifting the moratorium on genetically modified bt brinjal and allowing the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee under the environment ministry to take the final call on GM crops till the new biotech authority is in place.

The anti-GM activists, on the one hand, went hammer and tongs against the proposed Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India, which they claim would facilitate the smooth entry and proliferation of GM crops, including food crops, in India without checks and balances and compromising farmers' interests.

Activists of Greenpeace staged a demonstration outside Parliament when the BRAI bill was to be introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 17. Ultimately, the bill was not introduced on that day. Greenpeace is planning a massive demonstration in the capital on Tuesday in which the anti-GM activists plan to cook the world's biggest GM-

free "baingan bharta" (a traditional Indian brinjal dish) to mark its opposition to Bt brinjal and other GM crops.

Bangalore-based Foundation for Biotechnology Awareness and Education has appealed to the Prime Minister not to be swayed by the "propaganda of vested groups" and reverse the moratorium on Bt brinjal imposed by former union environment minister Jairam Ramesh.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/188772/hectic-lobbying-bt-brinjal-on.html>

## Global

### October is NON GMO MONTH

October is National Non GMO month. With the alarming spread of genetically modified foods and seeds, concerned retailers got together to create awareness of this crucial issue.

GMOs are created in a laboratory by combining genes from different plants, animals, viruses, bacteria and who knows what. They are designed to tolerate heavy application of herbicides and pesticides or create their own. Have you heard of Roundup? This is Monsanto's star pesticide, and GMO plants withstand heavy doses of this very dangerous pesticide. Roundup is known to cause cell disruption even in very low amounts leading to a host of serious health risks. You can find detailed studies with a quick google search and the chilling fact is that the dangers of Roundup have been known for years.

Monsanto is also responsible for engineering Terminator Seeds. Seeds that produce plants with no viable seeds! So you have to go back to them to get more seeds, the plants can't reproduce. Destroying our food supply is not smart. Animals won't eat these plants. Other countries don't allow GMOs. It seems all common sense and reason

goes out the window in the US where money is concerned.

For me, this is beyond bizarre. That we are even having this discussion—it's madness. The GMO issue reminds me of cartoons or comics I saw as a kid. There was the mad scientist who had come up with a crazy way to control the masses or a major resource to Rule The World. Luckily, Spiderman or some other benevolent force would foil the plan and save the day. Well, the mad scientist is real and it's Monsanto, and there's no Spiderman to save the day. The whole thing is surreal.

Over 80% of processed foods in American grocery stores contain GMOs. And you don't even know it because they are not required to label their food. This is yet another reason to buy ORGANIC FOODS ONLY.

Labeling GMO foods was in the works, but Monsanto, armed with millions in lobbying funds is not in favor of this. Of course not, at least a few people would be turned off by Frankenfood if they knew what they were eating. The [FDA stated](#) that GMO foods do not need to be labeled with disclosure.

The Non-GMO Project has come up with a new labeling system stating that the product is GMO free, with the “Non-GMO Project Verified” seal.

From what I understand, the FDA also opposed the notion of declaring foods GMO free, so I’m not sure how this will pan out. Whole Foods Market is in the process of having their 365 brand certified by the Non-GMO Project, so maybe they have found a way around the FDA who clearly is not serving the interest of the people.

The Non GMO Project is on a mission to make sure we all are aware of which foods contain GMOs so that we may willingly make the choice to eat them or not. Read more [HERE](#) on the Non GMO Month Website.

<http://www.greenwala.com/channels/family-go-green/blog/18202-October-is-NON-GMO-MONTH>

### Ministry seeks to ease GM food safety fears

**([Global Times](#))14:05, September 30, 2011**

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) on Thursday pledged to ensure safety of genetically modified (GM) crops amid scientists’ appeals for caution in commercializing such products.

“We will develop GM technologies in strict accordance with relevant regulations and ensure the safety of GM products,” Chen Xiaohua, a deputy MOA minister, told reporters on Thursday responding to questions on the import of GM corn from the US.

“China will continue its development of GM crops because this is an important strategic move for the whole nation,” Chen said, adding that the ministry is drawing up plans to expand corn production to meet increasing domestic demand.

According to [caixin.cn](#), China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corporation imported 61,000 tons of GM corn in July 2010.

In November 2009, the MOA issued a production safety certificate to two varieties of GM rice and one of GM corn, the first such case in the country. The move sparked long-running debates about the safety of GM foods and their impact on the environment.

The three main issues surrounding GM foods according to the World Health Organization are their potential for provoking allergic reactions, transferring harmful genes to the human body and crossbreeding with other plants.

Yuan Longping, a famous agricultural scientist known as the “father of hybrid rice,” has repeatedly urged the government to proceed cautiously with any move to commercialize GM crops.

“One of the major features of GM crops is their ability to resist insects, but even scientists do not know whether such an ability in these crops will have any effect on human beings,” the Nanfang Daily quoted Yuan as saying on Thursday.

“So far scientists have only conducted tests on animals, which does not rule out risks for humans in the long term,” he said, adding that crops that have been genetically modified to increase production might be safe.

However, Gu Xiulin, a professor with Yunnan University of Finance and Economics who studies the impact of GM crops, noted that aside from health concerns GM foods may not even help increase production.

“Western studies found that in some cases, insects and weeds became resistant to GM crops’ ability to kill them, thus affecting production. There are also reports that GM foods could cause infertility in humans,” Gu said.

“More alarming is that some GM foods or other commodities made from GM products have already reached the domestic market. For example, about 20 percent of corn grown in China is genetically modified,” Gu said, adding that the government should adopt a more vigilant attitude toward the technology.

A spokesperson with the MOA's GM product safety department told the People's Daily in 2010 that just because GM products have received a safety certificate does not mean they can be commercialized, and strict regional and production tests are obligatory before products reach the public.

The GM organisms, also known as 'transgenic' organisms, were developed in the 1970s. At present, genetically modified crops are grown on 134 million hectares of land worldwide.

US farmers adopted genetically engineered crops widely since their commercial introduction in 1996, notwithstanding uncertainty about consumer acceptance and economic and environmental impacts, the US Department of Agriculture said in a statement.

Currently, commercialized GM crops in the US include soy, cotton, canola, corn, Hawaiian papaya, zucchini and yellow squash, and sugar beets.

In Canada, four GM crops are under cultivation: corn, canola, soy and white sugar beet. The EU is much more cautious about the technology and has issued a series of bans on such products, the latest of which banned GM-tainted food from general sale earlier this month.

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine reported in 2009 that several animal studies indicated serious health risks associated with GM foods, including infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation and changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system.

The academy asked physicians to advise patients to avoid GM foods.

Xue Dayuan, an expert on transgenesis at the Nanjing Research Institute of Environmental Sciences, told the Global Times that authorities need to set up effective risk-evaluation and management mechanisms before commercializing GM products as some GM seeds are already circulating in the country.

"It is true that the GM technology is crucial for China's agricultural development, but compared with advances in the technology, more needs to be done in terms of supervision and management," Xue said.

Citing an MOA insider, the Shenzhen Economic Daily reported that authorities would slow down its GM crops development over the next decade, especially for GM rice, wheat and soybeans, but corn might be an exception.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90778/7608861.html>

## GE Food

### **Know your GMOs: Hidden ingredients, safe labels, and taking action**

[Jenna Blumenfeld](#), Delicious Living  
Sep. 28, 2011 7:48pm

#### **Glucose**

A simple sugar that can be naturally derived or chemically made from corn.

*Hides in:* Many sport drinks and soft drinks, baked goods, and sweets.

#### **Lecithin**

An emulsion derived from soy.

*Hides in:* Chocolates, ice creams, and desserts.

#### **Maltodextrin**

An additive made from starch (usually corn) used as a fat substitute, flavor stabilizer, and thickening agent.

*Hides in:* Instant soups, soda, candy, beer, and other processed goods

<http://newhope360.com/non-gmo/know-your-gmos-hidden-ingredients-safe-labels-and-taking-action>

### **Congress members seek to block approval of GM salmon**

Opposition to the engineered fish led by Alaska delegation that says modified salmon is a threat to the state's wild salmon industry

Associated Press [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Monday 12 September 2011 12.03 BST

Members of Congress are pushing to stop the [Food](#) and Drug Administration (FDA) from approving genetically engineered salmon, saying not enough is known about a [fish](#) they say could harm fishery businesses in coastal states.

It [appeared last year](#) that the FDA might approve the engineered salmon quickly. But the congressional pushback and a lack of action by the FDA could mean the fish won't be on the nation's dinner tables any time soon.

The fish, which grows twice as fast as the conventional variety, is engineered by [AquaBounty](#), a Massachusetts-based company, but not yet allowed on the market. The company's application has been pending for more than 15 years. If the agency approves it, it would be the first time the government allows such modified animals to be marketed for people to eat.

Congressional opposition to the engineered fish is led by members of the Alaska delegation. They see the modified salmon as a threat to the state's wild salmon industry.

In June, the House [adopted an amendment by Alaska Republican Don Young](#), to an agriculture spending bill that would prevent the FDA from spending any money on approving the fish. His amendment was approved by voice vote with no objections.

Alaska senator Lisa Murkowski said last week she will attempt to add the same amendment to the Senate version of the bill.

"It kind of gives me the heebie jeebies that we are messing with what Mother Nature did a pretty good job with in terms of a king salmon," Murkowski said.

While Murkowski's opposition is rooted in concern for her state's [fishing](#) industry, other senators have expressed worries about potential food safety or environmental risks. More than a dozen senators have written the FDA with concern about the approval process and food safety and environmental risks. Bills to stop the salmon have been introduced in both chambers.

Ron Stotish, the chief executive of AquaBounty, said he was optimistic when the FDA decided to hold hearings on the company's application. But a year later, he said, he is frustrated by the delay and has lost investors in his business.

"If you had asked me a year ago if we would be having this conversation, I would have said no," he said.

The FDA is still in the process of completing its review, spokesman Doug Karas said, "although we cannot predict when that will be."

Karas said the FDA is planning on releasing a review of potential environmental impacts of growing the salmon – and soliciting public comments on that review – before reaching a decision. That means a decision could be months or even years away.

In [the hearings last year](#), FDA officials said the fish is as safe to eat as the traditional variety. But critics [call the modified salmon a "frankenfish."](#) They say they are concerned it could cause human allergies and the eventual decimation of the wild salmon population if the engineered animals escape.

AquaBounty has maintained that the fish is safe and that there are several safeguards against environmental problems. The fish would be bred female and sterile, though a very small percentage might still be able to breed. The company said potential for escape is low. The FDA backed these assertions in documents released before these hearings last year.

Stotish acknowledged that approval of AquaBounty's product is likely more difficult because they are the first. Approval of the company's application would open the door for a variety of other genetically engineered animals, including an ["Enviropig"](#) being developed in Canada that has less-polluting manure or cattle that are resistant to mad cow disease. Each would have to be individually approved by the FDA.

"Blocking us is the best way to block anything that would come behind us," Stotish said.

[www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/sep/12/congress-gm-salmon](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/sep/12/congress-gm-salmon)

## EU bans GM-contaminated honey from general sale

Bavarian beekeepers forced to declare their honey as genetically modified because of contamination from nearby Monsanto crops

[Leigh Phillips](#) [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Wednesday 7 September 2011 11.28 BST



Honey bees on a honeycomb in Germany. A European court has ruled that honey which contains traces of pollen from genetically modified crops needs special authorisation before it can be sold. Photograph: Heribert Proepper/AP

The European Union's highest court on Tuesday ruled that honey which contains trace amounts of pollen from genetically modified (GM) corn must be labelled as GM produce and undergo full safety authorisation before it can be sold as [food](#).

In what green groups are calling a "groundbreaking" ruling, the decision could force the EU to strengthen its already near-zero tolerance policy on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Bavarian beekeepers, some 500m from a test field for a modified maize crop developed by Monsanto - one of only two GM crops authorised as safe to be cultivated in [Europe](#) - claimed their honey had been "contaminated" by pollen from the plant.

The European court of justice found in their favour, a ruling that should offer grounds for the beekeepers to claim compensation in a German court.

But the court's finding also potentially threatens recent EU legislation, introduced in July this year, [that permits traces of GMOs in animal feed without a safety review](#).

Mute Schimpf, food campaigner for Friends of the Earth Europe, said that the ruling "would confirm that existing laws allowing traces of unauthorised GM contamination are insufficient and would need revising."

French Green MEP José Bové, an ex-farmer well-known for his destruction of a McDonald's franchise in the south of France and the uprooting of GM crops in Brazil, said that the only protection farmers can have is for a complete ban on GMOs in Europe. "Beekeepers are powerless to prevent the contamination of their honey by GM pollen, as farmers are for their crops, and thus powerless to prevent the tainting of the foodstuffs they produce and the integrity of their product.

"The only sure way to prevent this is by precluding the cultivation of GMOs."

Greenpeace, describing the traces of pollen in the honey as "genetic pollution" said that Monsanto and the Bavarian state should be held liable for the beekeepers' losses as a result of their product having to be labelled as containing GMOs.

However, agricultural specialists criticised the ruling, saying that the decision has no grounding in science. Guy Poppy, the director of the centre for biological sciences at the University of Southampton, told the Guardian: "There is no safety issue. This honey is as safe as any other."

The corn in question is genetically engineered to produce an insecticide that naturally occurs in the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT). The production of this toxin protects the maize plants from European corn borer larvae.

"The Monsanto maize is genetically modified to produce the BT protein. But this same protein actually has been regularly used for years as a spray even by organic farmers," he added.

"The consequences of these sorts of ruling is that new methods of plant breeding, whether GM or other forms that are developed, could be thrown out of potential use, making it impossible to innovate."

Vivian Moses, professor of biotechnology at the University of London and the chairwoman of CropGen, an advisory group on GM foods, said: "These beekeepers believe that there is a sensitivity among consumers of the presence of GM material, that the honey containing GM loses quality. They are just protecting their economic interest.

"But scientifically this doesn't add up to anything, as the crop has been judged as safe for human consumption."

In response to the ruling, the European commission will in two weeks discuss the issue of GMOs and honey with EU member states.

According to Brussels, it is likely that the decision will have an impact on the honey into the EU as Europe does not itself produce sufficient quantities for the size of the market. The bloc produces 200,000 tonnes per year and must import an additional 140,000 tonnes.

Argentina and China, both GM-friendly countries and the two biggest importers of honey into the EU, are likely to be affected in particular, the commission warned.

"The honey is not dangerous. There is no health risk from honey in the EU," insisted EU consumer protection spokesman, Frédéric Vincent, worried that shoppers might stop buying honey as a result of the news.

"It's an important ruling from the court. I can't say at this point whether we need to change any laws," he added. "The contamination is done by the [bees](#) themselves. We can't put GPS tracking on the bees."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/sep/07/europe-honey-gm>

## GE Agriculture

### Kenya's scientists urged to engage in GM debate

Maina Waruru, 16 September 2011 | EN

NAIROBI] Kenya's agriculture secretary is urging researchers to join the debate on [genetically modified \(GM\) foods](#) — and not leave the issues to politicians.

Wilson Songa, who is also a practising scientist, said that, by keeping quiet, scientists are putting the public at risk of being misled by politicians.

There has been fierce debate at a high level about [allowing the import of GM maize](#) to improve [food security](#), and some politicians have claimed that GM foods are harmful.

“Our research institutions have experts who can educate the public and save them from dangerous propaganda,” said Songa. With the Horn of Africa faced with severe drought and crippling food shortages, he said scientists should inform the public of alternative options.

“We [scientists] must no longer be cowed into silence as our people face starvation year in year out while politicians make wild allegations,” he said. Songa was speaking at the fellowships awards ceremony for African Women in Agricultural Research and Development last month (18 August). He said scientists feared being seen to contradict ministers and policymakers.

Shaukat Abdulrazak, head of the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST), told *SciDev.Net* that scientific bodies such as the Kenya Agriculture Research Institute (KARI) and the National Biosafety Authority must educate the public, but stressed that this should be about the drawbacks of GM crops as well as their benefits.

“Scientists have a responsibility to link science with society. They must be proactive and inform the public on the pros and cons of GM technology. They must engage politicians and provide facts and figures for them,” he said.

Abdulrazak said that although scientists have been commenting on GM organisms (GMOs), it has been mainly within their ‘comfort zone’ — classrooms and conferences. “When scientists engage in public debate there is a suspicion that they are interested in politics,” he said.

He said that Kenyans are yet to have confidence in the ability of their scientific institutions to deal with the pressure from abroad to introduce GM foods.

But Shem Wandiga, managing trustee at the Centre for Science and Technology Innovations in Kenya, which is associated with UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), said that rather than fearing to enter the GM debate, scientists are avoiding “unnecessary controversy”. Wandiga said that the civilised approach would be for governments and policymakers to seek the opinion of scientists, which would then be given in a “sober manner”.

“But when politicians shoot from the hip like they have been doing in this case, then we do not want to get sucked into the mess.

“It is not that Kenya lacks scientists that can give advice but when there are vested interests, like in the GM maize importations, then we do not need to get involved,” he said.

<http://www.scidev.net/en/agriculture-and-environment/gm-crops/news/kenya-s-scientists-urged-to-engage-in-gm-debate.html>

## China says “no” to the commercialization of GE rice?

Feature Story - 2011-09-25

The Chinese government may be taking a bold new step by halting the commercialization of GE rice. It's a move that we at Greenpeace would widely welcome as the long-term effects of GE products on human health are still unknown. Rice is a staple food in China.

China's major financial weekly the Economic Observer quoted on Friday, Sept 23rd, 2011, an information source close to the Ministry of Agriculture that China has [suspended the commercialization of genetically engineered \(GE\) rice](#).

Greenpeace welcomes and supports this move by the government. “This step is a milestone in the process to end all GE rice commercialization in China,” said Greenpeace Food and Agriculture campaigner Pan Wenjing.

GE crop's long-term risks on human health and the environmental are still unknown. It has also been found that many of the GE rice lines in China are embedded with non-Chinese patents, which poses a huge risk on China's food security should they become commercialized.

Greenpeace believes that the suspension of GE rice shows that relevant government departments have heard and respected public opinion.

“Rice is the main staple food for 1.3 billion Chinese people. Any decisions related to rice must be taken seriously and must include the people's opinions,” said Pan Wenjing.

To protect food safety and food sovereignty, Greenpeace believes that the government should re-assess its GE policy and its massive GE investments, and instead invest more resources into modern ecological agriculture and other effective technologies. The goal should be to speed up the transition of China's agriculture to

a sustainable, ecological model, for the sake of protecting the environment, ensuring food safety, and securing the economic livelihood of farmers

<http://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/news/stories/food-agriculture/2011/china-halts-ge-rice-commercialization/>

## GMO CULTIVATION DROPS IN EU, EXCEPT IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

par [Christophe NOISETTE](#), September 2011

In the European Union, only eight countries (out of 27) commercially grow GMOs. Cultivations, however, decreased steadily since 2009, except in Spain and Portugal this year, where there is a slight increase. A brief overview of the different official data is collected below [\[1\]](#)

In Spain and Portugal, plantings of genetically modified Bt maize has increased slightly between 2010 and 2011. These two countries grow over 90% of transgenic crops in the European Union.

In other countries, the trend is consistent with what was found in February 2011 — that of a significant reduction of land devoted to transgenic crops, either Monsanto's Bt Mon810 corn, or BASF's Amflora potato.

In 2011, and assuming that the surfaces in Bt corn in Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic have not changed since 2010, GMO cultivation reached a total of 114,229 hectares in the EU, an increase compared to 2010 (82,250 hectares or 91,099 according to the figures chosen for Spain), clearly related to the increase in Spain and Portugal, as other countries have had their surfaces decrease.

In Romania, despite the support of GMOs on the part of government authorities, Bt corn cultivation declined further in 2011, from 823 hectares in 2010 to only 600 hectares (588), according official data published by the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture. This shows a significant decline since 2008, when more than 6000 hectares were planted with Bt corn.

In “Romania – Trojan Horse for GMOs in Europe,” written in partnership with Inf’OMG, our Romanian colleague, we explained this lack of enthusiasm for transgenic corn. MON810 is genetically modified to produce an insecticide against the corn borer *Ostrinia nubilalis*, a parasite that does not have a significant presence in Romania. The GM corn is not really of interest to Romanian farmers. In addition, the NGO Green Agent says that in 2007, in County Lasi, MON810 endured a very serious drought.

Swedish official figures also support the conclusion of a significant decline in Amflora GM potato cultivation. This is the second year that these potatoes are allowed to be cultured, and already the surfaces appear to be extremely small. All of the GM surfaces in Sweden reached only 25 hectares, spread over four areas (as against 103 hectares in 20 fields in 2010).

Germany, again, the area cultivated with GM fell sharply, to be reduced to an area of 2 hectares ... against 15 hectares in 2010 (a decrease of 87%, demonstrating in passing that the figures may be misleading: it has indeed been enough that one or two farmers changed their mind to cause this drop ...). Trials of GM crops represent this year, slightly less than 7.4 hectares.

According to the website of the German Ministry of Agriculture, the Czech Republic would not have grown potato Amflora in 2011.

Asked by Inf’OMG, the Czech Ministry of Agriculture announced he had not yet published the official data for 2011. Still, the MON810 has been cultivated in this country. Similarly, in Slovakia and Poland, we have not been able to obtain official data.

<http://www.infogm.org/spip.php?article4911>

**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.**