

IX. Conference of the European GMO-FREE REGIONS NETWORK

**“GMO-free” label – What is in it?
5th and 6th September 2012**

The components of the folder

1. The Hosts introduce them self
2. Summary of the lectures
3. Organizational advices

THE EUROPEAN GMO-FREE REGIONS NETWORK

Established in 2003 from the will of 10 Regions that engaged themselves to ask the European Commission to give assurances to avoid the genetic modified organism (GMO) presence in the traditional and organic farm, the Network currently involves 56 European Regions and Local Authorities with great perspectives of enlargement, is based on a political agreement with no binding juridical status and on four guiding objectives and principles: subsidiarity principle; precautionary principle; polluter-pays-principle; Freedom of choice for everybody. The Network mission is the introduction of a *juridical status of GMO-free areas* in the European legislative framework. Nowadays this status is impossible to reach by means of national, regional or local legislative provisions. This target emerged to protect the reputation and the appreciation on the market of the regional agri-food productions after years of regional policies aimed at improve and protect the quality and at reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. Policies that the European Union strongly supported and support with its programmes and funds. In order to reach the target, the Network established working groups on GM- free foodstuff, GM-free seeds, Non-GM labeling, Protective measures and is constantly shaping its efforts in playing a stronger and more active role as partners in the ongoing debates and forthcoming deliberations related to GMOs at European level.

<http://gmofree-euroregions.regione.marche.it>



Paolo Petrini,
President, European GMO-free Regions Network

The Free State of Thuringia joined the European Network "GMO-free regions" because of the parliamentary decision "Thuringia: active against the cultivation of genetically modified plants" from 17th June 2010 and the cabinet decision from 9th November 2010. For the Thuringian Ministry for Social, Family and Health affairs, it is a great honor to align the IX. annual conference. The event should hand some important impulses to the current debate over the labeling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food. At the same time, the conference will help to achieve the objectives of a Thuringian GMO-free farming, and also support forward-looking perspectives.

Sincerely yours

Uwe Büchner



Thuringia Ministry of Social, Family and Health affairs

Press officer
Werner-Seelenbinder-Straße 6
99096 Erfurt
Tel. 0361/3798730
Fax 0361/3798874
Mob. 0170/2213638
uwe.buechner@tmsfg.thueringen.de
www.thueringen.de/tmsfg

TOP 1: GMO-Labeling: Consumer aspects and monitoring

1. "No to GMO: A choice that is beneficial for the protection of consumers and the growth of our economy."
Rosario Trefiletti, President, National Consumers' association, Italy
2. „Genetic engineering and food – What consumers want to know“
Dr. Ralph Walther, Managing Director, Consumers' Association of Thuringia
3. "Do German negative labeling provisions for GMO deceive consumers?"
Stephan Schäfer, Scientific Assistant, University Bayreuth, Research Centre for German and European Food Law
4. „Official seed monitoring as an effective tool for detecting GMO contaminations at the beginning of the food chain.“
Dr. Hans-Georg Starck, Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Areas of the State Schleswig-Holstein
5. "Monitoring of GMO in Food and Feed in North Rhine-Westphalia"
Jörg Schulte-Domhof, Ministry of Climate Protection, Environment, Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia
6. "Monitoring of seed potatoes for genetically modified ingredients and coexistence measures in the cultivation of genetically modified potatoes"
Dr. Bernd Broschewitz, Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection of the State Mecklenburg-West Pomerania

TOP 2: Aspects of GMO cultivation and coexistence

1. "Development of a quick Monitoring index as a tool to assess Environmental impacts of Transgenic crops: the Life+ DEMETRA project. Delineation of an analysis method as an opportunity for the Regional Government."
Carla Lazzarotto and Dr. Francesca Donnarumma, Tuscany Region
2. "Out of Control - Risks of Genetic Engineering"
Anja Sobczak, Umweltinstitut München e.V.
3. "COST Action FP0905: Biosafety of forest transgenic trees. Description of a GM trees data base"
Dr. Francesca Donnarumma, Postdoc, National Research Council, Plant Genetics Institute, Division of Florence
4. "The expensive impossibility of coexistence"
Peter Röhrig, Deputy Manager, Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW)

TOP 3: Non GMO-Labeling in the European Union

1. "The politics of Upper Austria in the GMO labeling"
Max Hiegelsberger (ÖVP) Land council for agriculture, forest, veterinary and food inspection of the State Upper Austria
2. "EU wide non-GM labeling – learning from national regulations"
Alexander Hissting, Office Manager of the Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik e.V.
3. "Market development of products marked with "GMO-free" at tegut"
Sven Euen, Quality Manager, tegut
4. "The experiences of the NEULAND quality meat program with the „Without GM“-label."
Jochen Dettmer, Manager, NEULAND e.V.



NO TO GMO: A CHOICE THAT IS BENEFICIAL FOR THE PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS AND THE GROWTH OF OUR ECONOMY.

Rosario Trefiletti

President of National Consumers' association, Italy

1. GMOs: RISKS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The issue of GMOs is widely debated in the scientific and socio-economic scope and becomes more important in reference to the current season of our country involvement - like the rest of Europe - in the revival of its economy and restoration of trust and new prospects of well-being to its citizens.

To date, the negative experiences with GM crops have shown that genetic modification is a technology that is more oriented to the manufacturer than to the consumer, which poses serious problems of environmental and food safety

and does not represent an opportunity for economic growth of our country.

There is an authoritative scientific literature that expresses its opposition to the introduction of GMOs in the food and feed chain, because the social and economic costs are unpredictable in the event that the transgenic product creates damage.

It is therefore necessary to adopt the *precautionary principle and the responsibility* which means having a duty to inform and prevent the concealment of data and research on potential risks that may have been caused by transgenic products, both for the health and for the environment

Therefore, opposition to GMOs is not derived from anti-scientific ideology as a pretext claims alleged by those who are in favour of GM, but it is a position assumed on the assumption that only scientific knowledge and technologies should be favoured that could make a contribution to the society, without destabilizing the ecological systems, economic and social.

In any case, if the opinion of scientists is important when dealing with the theme of innovation, it is the application of new tools to the advantage of the society. The discussion must necessarily be extended to other subjects, not only within the field, from the moment entering into value-added dealings and common interests.

It is necessary to shed light on the socio-economic impacts of GMOs to verify that these new foods are not in accordance with the objectives of food policy and, above all, are not able to meet the consumers' needs.

In fact, GMOs require homologation of the food, as thereupon the same environmental conditions are released and, in fact, it leads to *delocalization* and the loss of any bond with the territory. Therefore, the competitiveness of our country and the

brand "Made in Italy" are threatened because the supremacy of our production is based on tradition and quality linked to the territory. This is completely opposite to homologation and biotechnology.

It cannot be allowed that the majority of an inherited identity of the world is homologated and polluted, for the benefit of false progress that meets more the corporate interests than the consumers' interests.

The effects related to the use of GMOs would be devastating for the food industry that is based on the policy of promoting Made in Italy, since for the consumer the geographical location and territorial identity of the products are very crucial.

It is not a coincidence that supporters of transgenic food have hampered the proposals that now have become European rules, intended to introduce a compulsory labelling system, which enables consumers to identify the territorial origin of the products in order to make consciously and informed purchasing choices. So that it is a real challenge for the Italian agriculture to prove the origin and the traceability respecting the identity and quality of production.

It should be considered that, in addition to all the questions raised by science about the dangers of GMOs and their negative effects on our economy, the consumer does not get any benefit from them; as for nutritional purposes, there is no advantage when compared with GMO-free products. Indeed, the loss of variability leads to a qualitative change and standardization in consumer tastes, which may no longer be able to distinguish the traditional flavours from the technological ones.

Therefore, consumers offer strong resistance to buying GM products, which is justified by the growing doubts about the health and environmental impacts. They want to eat healthy, territorial and quality products that GM cannot offer.

2. GMO AND PATENTS.

The market has already rejected GMOs judging them as the product of an unreliable technology, dangerous for the environment and human health as well as uneconomic, except for those who hold the patents.

In this regard, I would like to remind you that one of the most serious aspects related to the modified seed is the protection by patent granted to well-known multinational companies while the public research is of minor importance.

It would be appropriate to revise the rules on the patentability of transgenic products which have allowed these multinational companies to acquire a monopoly on certain products.

In the last twenty years, the combination of genetically modified product and patent - whose industrial property rights have to be paid in each production cycle or sowing - was a financial success for biotech companies but not for the farmers and citizens, the instrument of a new form of *colonization*.

This explains why those who have an interest to insist on imposing GM food:

- even if hitherto, GMOs have neglected all the promises of productivity, sustainability and ability to "feed the world";
- even if GMOs have proved to be harmful to the environment, health, food sovereignty, freedom of choice and the protection of human rights;
- even if GMOs are catastrophic for the economy of poor countries;
- even if GMOs are a threat to countries like Italy, aiming for quality products.

3. GENETICALLY MODIFIED CONTAMINATIONS: AN UNSOLVED PROBLEM.

This sector needs more serious controls beyond new rules.

We must defend the quality products liberating their supply chains from transgenic contamination; otherwise there will be risk of compromising the image of the entire Italian food chain - as predicted - traditionally binds its products to the territory, and thus the origin.

The other important aspect of the issue of GMOs is, in fact, the problem of contamination of traditional crops, which obstacles to freedom of decision for the majority of farmers and the citizens to have their territories free from genetically modified crops.

The spread of genetic pollution caused by GM crops due to the transport of pollen to other varieties of the crop is a serious problem that is not possible to be solved.

Therefore, the impossible coexistence between GM and GM-free involves irreversible damage to conventional and organic farming and to quality systems (PDO, PGI, etc..) with a considerable increase in cost for those farmers or breeders who want to keep a food chain which is free from GMOs. Therefore, the impossibility to take coexistence measures is one of the reasons that led the European Commission to draw up new guidelines for the cultivation of GM crops with the proposal to amend the current legislation.

4. NEW COMMUNITY GUIDELINES RELATING TO GMOs.

The new guidelines of the EU Commission on GMOs seek to change the authorization rules in order to give the Member States the opportunity to prohibit or restrict the cultivation of GMO on their land.

Then, the freedom of Member States to exclude the cultivation of GM crops must be considered for health and environmental reasons and food sovereignty as society's right to healthy food, produced in a culturally appropriate, sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

The cultivation of GMOs must be forbidden due to environmental policy, taking into account factors related to the use and planning of the territory and in the light of socio-economic peculiarities of a country like ours, whose agro ecosystems have a cultural tradition and where a model of development exists that is in no way compatible with the introduction of transgenic crops.

After the Member States can freely decide on the ban of the cultivation of GMOs additional corrective actions should follow referring the European regulations regarding the labelling of products derived from the use of GMOs. This is seriously missing, because information for the consumers on breeding of animals with transgenic feeding does not exist.



GENETIC ENGINEERING AND FOOD – WHAT CONSUMERS WANT TO KNOW

Dr. Ralph Walther

Managing Director, Consumers' Association of Thuringia

Summary:

The lecture deals with the situation and the handling of consumers related to genetic engineering of food.

At first it is shown that consumers don't accept agricultural genetic engineering. On the strength of past and present experience of the Consumer protection organizations consumer don't see any benefits and that's why they try to avoid the risks related to agricultural genetic engineering.

The speech deals the positions of the Consumer organizations related to genetic engineering and shows the situation in food trade. The genetic engineered food

products which are to be found in food trade are named. The speech also deals with the problems of labeling. One main focus of attention lies on the gaps of labeling.

The lecture closes showing where and in which way genetic engineering of food can be excluded.



DO GERMAN NEGATIVE LABELING PROVISIONS FOR GMO DECEIT CONSUMERS?

Stephan Schäfer

*Scientific Assistant, University Bayreuth, Research Centre for German and
European Food Law*

Pursuant to the current legal provisions the labeling of foodstuffs containing or produced from genetically modified organisms (GMO), i.e. positive labeling, as well as the labeling referring to the non-use of GMO, i.e. negative labeling, do not provide the necessary information for the consumer to enable him to take well informed transactional decisions. The negative labeling is even possible if, e.g., an animal feedstuff contains an amount of GMO that does not exceed a certain threshold. Since these provisions do not comply with the expectation of the average consumer they have to be amended. A possible legal option would consist in informing consumers about any contact with GMO at any stage of the production process (absolute positive labeling). Negative labeling would only be allowed for products which did not have any contact with GMO during the whole production process.



OFFICIAL SEED MONITORING AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR DETECTING GMO CONTAMINATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FOOD CHAIN.

Hans-Georg Starck

*Ministry for Energy, Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Areas of the State
Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel, Germany*

Abstract: There are clear obligations for the genetic engineering authorities in the member states to enforce inspections and - in case of an unapproved deliberate release or placing on the market - to take counteractions. Legal basis is article 4, paragraph 5 of the directive 2001/18/EC. In 2000 Europe got a whole clutch of GMO findings in maize, oil seed rape and cotton seeds. Since that time some (but not all) member states has started with a more or less continuously analysis of seeds to detect GMO contaminations. Data of the last years in

Germany but also from other member states show a clear background emission of genetically modified plants (GMP) in seeds, especially in maize seed from countries with a high proportion of cultivation of GMP currently or in the past. Thus a target and risk orientated official seed monitoring is a strong approach to keep seeds GMO-free, a crucial basis to keep your region GMO-free.



MONITORING OF GMO IN FOOD AND FEED IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

Jörg Schulte-Domhof

Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection, Agriculture, Nature and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Düsseldorf

The State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), with its 18 million inhabitants, is the most populous German State. The local authorities of the 53 districts and cities in NRW are in charge of monitoring provisions on food hygiene and labelling. They are also competent for monitoring the regulations of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in food and feed.

In NRW, monitoring of feed is centralized at the State Agency for Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection (LANUV), except for the farms placed under the control of the district and city authorities. GMOs analyses are

exclusively conducted by the four diagnostic laboratories in the cities of Krefeld, Münster, Detmold and Arnsberg.

Results of GMO Monitoring in 2011

In 2011, a total of 914 food samples were analysed. Those samples are collected from production and trading companies and contain the following cereals respectively fruit: soybean (209), rice (207), corn (189), different cereals/fruit/vegetables (191, i. a. canola, papaya, pepper, tomato, lentil, pea, beans, radicchio, chicory, potato, mung bean) and flax seed (54). The food samples were analysed on authorised and unauthorised GMOs. Following a decision by the European Court of Justice, 64 further samples of honey of domestic and foreign origin were examined for the presence of genetically modified pollen.

As a result, no genetic modification or only traces of authorised GMOs were detected in 97.5 % of the samples. In 1.8% of the samples, the GMOs proportion was between 0.1% and 0.9%, i.e. below the labelling level. The products concerned contained soy with genetically modified Roundup Ready soy and some traces of soybean line MON 89788. In 8 food samples (included 2 samples of honey), contamination by GMOs as not authorized in the EU was detected. In these cases the business operators withdraw those products from the market.

In 2011, further 187 feed samples were analysed. There were mainly samples from products with soybean, corn, canola, rice and sugar beet components where the genetic modification was not labelled. Given the evidence of unauthorized flax seed in 2009, 13 feed samples with flax components were analysed. In addition, some feed containing genetically modified corn and soybeans were sampled. These samples were mainly analysed on unauthorized GMOs or the labelling of these feedstuffs was controlled.

A total of 77.5% of the 160 not labelled feed samples contained no genetic modification or only traces under 0.1%. In 27 samples (17.5%), the proportion of GM ingredients was above 0.1%, but under 0.9%. Five soy-containing feed were contaminated with genetically modified Roundup Ready soy. Undeclared soy shares and Roundup Ready soy were detected in 19 not labelled samples. This is probably due to technology-induced spreading in the feed production or to extraneous matter. Feed products with unauthorised GMOs were withdraw from the market by the feed business operators.

The 2011 figures are comparable with the results of the previous years. The inspections show that the food sector largely complies with the GM labelling requirements. In most food samples, no GMOs or only traces of GM material were detectable. Most industrially produced feed contains authorized GM materials and is accordingly labelled. Some samples contained GM soy material above the threshold of 0.9%. In these cases, the necessary labelling was missing. The results of the monitoring of genetic requirements for food, feed and seed are published in "GMO report North Rhine-Westphalia" on the website of the Ministry (www.umwelt.nrw.de).



MONITORING OF SEED POTATOES FOR GENETICALLY MODIFIED INGREDIENTS AND COEXISTENCE MEASURES IN THE CULTIVATION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED POTATOES

Dr. Bernd Broschewitz

Ministry of agriculture, environment and consumer protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

The authorities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern have a comprehensive control system for monitoring of seeds and seedlings, deliberate releases and the cultivation of GM crops. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has a good co-operation between and within the authorities involved.

The regulatory measures and methods for seed potatoes are suitable for the early detection of unwanted impurities with genetically modified organisms in seeds and harvested crops in order to reveal and avoid them. Monitoring is based on existing procedures of breeding and plant quarantine. The legal basis is laid down in European and national law as well as agency-specific instructions.

The national register, installed and maintained by the Federal Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety, in combination with an internal GEO-information system are essential tools to be applied to the monitoring of releases and cultivation of genetically modified potatoes and of other genetically modified plants as well.

The monitoring is done on the basis of georeferenced data and checklists containing all relevant details. Each release will be monitored regularly during sowing, harvesting and if necessary as well as after the release in accordance with the permit. Minimum of 10% of area with GM crops are being controlled following the coexistence requirements concerning the particular crop.

All monitoring results will be published promptly.

The potential risk of genetic engineering is not based on the technology, but in each case of the cultivated genetically modified crop and the genetically modified property. Potatoes and corn are considered coexistence enabled crops.

Effective coexistence measures for the prevention of unwanted impurities are:

- maximum responsibility for the cultivation of GM-crops and acceptance of GMO-free business practices,
- communication, cooperation and information with the neighbors
- distance between the areas planted with GM and non-genetically modified plants of the same plant species,
- consequent control of genetically modified plant after cultivation,
- consequent cleaning of machinery and equipment and
- consequent separation of product flows and during storage.

Links:

Final report of an audit carried out in Germany from 20 to 29 September 2011 in order to assess the official controls of genetically modified organisms including their deliberate release into the environment:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_inspection_ref=2011-8981

Monitoring results from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern:

<http://www.regierung->

[mv.de/cms2/Regierungsportal_prod/Regierungsportal/de/lm/_Service/Publikationen/index.jsp?&publikid=3549](http://www.regierung-mv.de/cms2/Regierungsportal_prod/Regierungsportal/de/lm/_Service/Publikationen/index.jsp?&publikid=3549)

<http://www.lallf.de/GVO-Kontrolle.583.0.html>

<http://www.transgen.de/lebensmittel/ueberwachung/677.doku.html>

Consumer Information – Labelling

<http://www.regierung->

[mv.de/cms2/Regierungsportal_prod/Regierungsportal/de/lm/Themen/Verbraucherschutz/Verbraucherinformationen/index.jsp](http://www.regierung-mv.de/cms2/Regierungsportal_prod/Regierungsportal/de/lm/Themen/Verbraucherschutz/Verbraucherinformationen/index.jsp)



DEVELOPMENT OF A QUICK MONITORING INDEX AS A TOOL TO ASSESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TRANSGENIC CROPS: THE LIFE+ DEMETRA PROJECT. DELINEATION OF AN ANALYSIS METHOD AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.

Lazzarotto C.¹, Donnarumma F.², Paffetti D.³, Travaglini D.³, Chelazzi L.⁴, Bartalucci L.¹, Perfetti A.⁵, Balducci E.², Bottalico F.³, Vettori C.¹

¹ *Coordination Area "Rural development" - Regional Government of Tuscany, Via di Novoli 26, 50127 Florence, Italy*

² *Plant Genetics Institute – CNR, Division of Florence, Via Madonna del Piano 10, 50019 Sesto Fiorentino, Italy*

³ *Department of Agricultural and Forest Economics, Engineering, Sciences and Technologies, University of Florence, Italy*

⁴ *Institute of Ecosystem Study - CNR, Division of Florence, Via Madonna del*

Piano 10, 50019 Sesto Fiorentino Italy

⁵ *Regional Park of Migliarino San Rossore Massaciuccoli, Loc. Cascine Vecchie, 56122 Pisa, Italy*

The Region of Tuscany has always maintained the caution on the use of GMOs in agriculture considering that there aren't scientific studies demonstrating the compatibility of these productions with traditional regional food systems.

The most important reasons for this position are:

1. the opposition of the majority of citizens and farmers on GM crops; 2. the strategy of rural development policy (the regional government has focused its activities in the promotion of products related to land and protection of biodiversity); 3. the socio-economic and geographical characteristics of the agriculture of this Region that is characterized by small farms and by a particular morphology of the territory above the hills and mountains, with a high percentage of land allocated to protected areas; 4. the increased costs for production and processing and the economic unsustainability of coexistence.

In order to adopt the best strategy to protect its productions and its environment, the Region of Tuscany decided to study and understand the issue in all its aspects. Simultaneously it wants to support the ongoing debate with science-based data, contributing to build a shared basis at Community level for the monitoring of GMOs into the environment, whether they are directly cultivated for commercial purposes, whether they are employed in a given location for research purposes.

The LIFE+ DEMETRA project aims at the development of a tool to address general surveillance (GS) of genetically modified plants (GMPs). It is a 3 years project (2010-2012) co-funded by the LIFE+ programme of the European Commission with a 1,8M € budget. The project is carried on in Tuscany, Italy, within the Regional Park of Migliarino San Rossore Massaciuccoli, an area with abundant agricultural surface both inside and outside the Park. The study is based on a theoretical approach as GMOs are not allowed in the selected study area. However, this situation is particularly indicated for the purposes of the project as it allows the definition of a baseline environmental situation prior to the introduction of GMPs.

The principle aim of this work is the development of a method to assess the environmental risk generated by four transgenic plants: maize, sunflower, oilseed rape, and poplar.

To this end, the effects of GM plants on target/non target species, biodiversity, gene flow, and the evolution of resistance were considered. The proposed method integrates the quantitative approach developed by de Jesus et al. (2006) with the guidelines on ERA provided by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA, 2010).

The potential hazards caused by selected GM plants in the following areas of concern were identified: persistence and invasiveness of GM plants, interaction of GM plants with microorganisms, interaction of GM plants with target and non target organisms. An index of risk and a index of significance were computed for each potential hazard using data from literature. The indexes were combined using a matrix in order to assess the risk for the environment and the measures required to prevent adverse effects of GM plants.



OUT OF CONTROL - RISKS OF GENETIC ENGINEERING

Anja Sobczak

Umweltinstitut München e.V., Tel: 089/307749-14, Email: as@umweltinstitut.org

The first genetic manipulation of microorganisms was performed in 1973. Today, nearly 40 years later, transgenic soya beans, corn, rape and cotton are grown on a large scale in the USA, Brazil, Argentina and Canada. Promises like the elimination of the world hunger or the prevention of disease, serve as justification for radical interventions in elementary life processes. Only a few "inventors", mostly multi-national chemical companies, can benefit from the economic advantages while, at the same time, more and more people are starving in the world – despite of genetically modified food.

Since the beginning of time, food is used to gain a political advantage. Today, the threat that the whole agricultural production gets into the hands of only a few major corporations is very real. Their control starts with the first and most important part: the seeds. Food sovereignty and self-determination are highly endangered. The thousands of years of old farming tradition, i.e. to sow a part of the harvest again or to exchange seeds has been made into a criminal act due to patents on plants. Farmers are forced to newly buy their seeds every year. The definitive end, however, for the small farms is the terminator plant that is manipulated in a way that it does not develop germinable seeds anymore. For years, major problems have already been known that are caused by the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) plants. Wind-blown pollen or seeds cannot be collected again in a kind of "return action" when hazardous effects agricultural genetic engineering occur later. Already today, contamination is threatening the existence of GMO-free farmers.

Contamination through transgenic constructs has become a reality worldwide. Contamination is not only caused by wind pollination but also by insect pollination, declaration errors, contaminated machines, unintended exchange of seeds, transport and last but not least by "food aid" in the countries of the south. From experiences, one can only conclude the following: "Coexistence" is not feasible. Even in countries where no GM plants are cultivated, contamination can occur. Agricultural genetic engineering is long out of control.

Since the beginning of agriculture, plants have systematically been cultivated. Several cultivars have been adapted to different climatic or geographic conditions or to resist to certain harmful organisms and disease. This diversity is the basis for agriculture in the future. Due to the concentration on only a few GM cultivars, the genetic pool of the useful plants declines faster and faster, local cultivars adapted to the location are replaced. The cultivation of GM plants is increasingly turning into a catastrophe. For instance, the toxin of insect resistant plants does not only impact the harmful organisms but also the useful insects. The continuous generation of toxin in each cell can cause the harmful insects to become resistant against the toxin. The wide-spread application of pesticides with herbicide-tolerant GM plants leads to the formation of resistant weeds and to the increased use of pesticides. With this, glyphosate, the most used herbicide worldwide, is especially criticised. Other extremely toxic herbicides are used alternately with glyphosate. GM plants are made for the industrialized agriculture and monocultures. For instance the Rain Forest in South America is sacrificed for the cultivation of GM-soy. This causes an increased extinction of species and impacts the climate.

Genetic engineering is a young science. Many processes have not been understood, are not controllable and are left to chance. However, if genetic material is manipulated, fundamental control processes of life will be changed. Laboratory constructs are formed that never can exist in nature. The consequences for human and animal health are unforeseeable. Despite of the thesis that GM food is harmless there is no data that proves that GM plants are harmless.

In animal experiments, scientists found particles of the genetic material of GM corn and soy in the blood and in several organs of pigs and goats. Changes of cell cores of liver cells were detected; test animal suffered from strong allergic reactions. Disorders of enzyme functions and the immune system, tissue damage, changes of growth, kidney and liver function as well as of blood count are the consequences of the feeding with GM plants. Incorporated antibiotic-resistant genes can cause antibiotics to become ineffective faster.

Also the consumer's freedom of choice is threatened. Most European consumers are opposed to the genetic engineering of food. They do not want agriculture that works against instead of with nature and makes the farmers dependent on the agricultural trusts. Because of this, the comprehensive cultivation of GM plants has been prevented in Europe for now.



COST ACTION FP0905: BIOSAFETY OF FOREST TRANSGENIC TREES. DESCRIPTION OF A GM TREES DATA BASE

Donnarumma F.¹, Fladung M.², Pilate G.³, Häggman H.⁴, Gallardo F.⁵, Ionita L.⁶,
Ruohonen-Lehto M.⁷, Glandorf B.⁸, Harfouche A.⁹, Bircolli S.¹⁰, Paffetti D.¹¹,
Kazana V.¹², Sijacic-Nikolic M.¹³, Tsourgiannis L.¹⁴, Migliacci, F.¹⁵, Minol,
K.¹⁶, Vettori C.¹

¹ *Plant Genetics Institute CNR, Sesto Fiorentino (FI), Italy*

² *Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute (vTI), Institute for Forest Genetics, Grosshansdorf, Germany*

³ *INRA, UR0588 Amélioration, Génétique, et Physiologie Forestières, Orléans, France*

⁴ *Department of Biology, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland*

⁵ *Universidad de Málaga Departamento de Biología Molecular y Bioquímica, Facultad de Ciencias e Instituto Andaluz de Biotecnología, Spain*

⁶ *Forest Research and Management Institute, Bucarest, Romania*

⁷ *The Finnish Environment Institute, Mechelininkatu 34a, FI-00260 Helsinki, Finland*

⁸ *RIVM/SEC/GMO Office, PO Box 1, 3720 BA Bilthoven, The Netherlands*

⁹ *Department for Innovation in Biological, Agro-food and Forest Systems, University of Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy*

¹⁰ *Department of Plant, Soil and Environmental Sciences, University of Florence, Firenze, Italy*

¹¹ *Department of Agricultural and Forest Economics, Engineering, Sciences and Technologies, University of Florence, Florence, Italy*

¹² *Department of Forestry & Natural Environment Management, Drama, Greece*

¹³ *Faculty of Forestry, University of Belgrade, Serbia*

¹⁴ *Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Greece*

¹⁵ *Organo Metallic Chemistry Compound Institute, CNR, Sesto Fiorentino (FI), Italy*

¹⁶ *Genius GmbH, Robert-Bosch-Str. 7, 64293 Darmstadt, Germany*

The European Union (EU) COST (Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action FP0905 aims at evaluating the scientific knowledge of genetically modified trees (GMTs) related to biosafety protocols and coordinating existing and new information from various European countries. To provide a basis for future EU policy and regulation recommendations regarding the use of GM forest trees, there's a need to create a unique platform of knowledge particular to the European environment.

To support this aim, the Action workplans of four Working Groups (WGs) focus on i) biological characterization of GMTs (WG1); ii) assessment of possible environmental impacts and monitoring of GMTs in the whole production chain from plantation to final products (WG2); iii) socio-economic implications and public acceptance and concerns of potential use of GM forest trees and R&D investments in the framework of Cost-Benefit Analysis (WG3) and iv) increasing public awareness and understanding of GM forest plantations by providing science-based information through management of the www.cost-action-fp0905.eu dynamic website (WG4).

The knowledge gained will ultimately be used to guide the safe use and management of GMTs in forest tree plantations and to protect natural forest ecosystems. To support this goal, the WGs are launching different kinds of surveys e.g. to evaluate the environmental impacts of the GMTs already developed, to assess the efficiency of existing transgene containment strategies or to define a set of environmental and socio-economic indicators to be included in Cost-Benefit-Analyses. A Knowledge Attitude Perception (KAP) survey to explore public attitude towards adoption of transgenic forest trees will be also performed.

In addition, the website provides an open discussion forum on transgenic forest biotechnology and biosafety, as well as on the potential impact of transgenic tree plantations on the current established forestry practices, and the database of genetically modified trees to be freely available in the web site will be presented.



THE EXPENSIVE IMPOSSIBILITY OF COEXISTENCE

Peter Röhrig

Bund Ökologischer Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW-German league for organic food production)

The essential conditions for the permanent protection of agriculture without genetic technology do not exist. It is not enough to keep it at a distance.

Organic food is made without GMO. This is based on statutory regulations, the consumers' expectations and the self-image of the entrepreneurs and farmers. The producers of organic food share their aim to produce without genetic technology with the majority of their conventional colleagues. For all of them, the expansion of genetic technology will become an increasing challenge of protecting their products from contamination. The statutory conditions have not been suitable yet for the protection of food production without genetic technology.

The costs of the genetic technology or the so-called coexistence can be divided into two areas A) operating costs and B) costs in the event of damage.

Operating costs are unpredictable expenses required to fulfil certain duties, e.g. for cleaning, documentation and the obligation to report, for investments, e.g. the construction of quarantine storages or the development and establishment of quality assurance systems, and for the reorganization of the procurement of goods. Further running costs arise, for instance, from GMO-analyses and the training of employees. The companies that avoid genetic technology in their facility report costs of 8-10 % of the sales value of corn. According to the current legal opinion, these costs cannot be legally recouped from the polluter.

The costs of damage events cannot be calculated in advance. Past damage events show however, that the costs can be immense. Damages add up to a total of several billion euros. They often occur when GMO constructs are found in products for which they do not have permission. For this reason, the products lose their marketability and must be recalled and destroyed.

In total, the available data for the assessment of costs and the benefit of the agricultural genetic technology are not sufficient. A putative aggregate benefit is not documented. In the best case, the aggregate costs and damages caused by the agricultural genetic technology are compensated with a disputed low benefit in the agricultural area. For consumers, retailers and the processing industry, there will not be any advantages. The clear profiteers of this technology will only be the seed providers that have gained an instrument for market control, price creation and market adjustment by using the genetic technology. Until now, the costs of environmental and health problems caused by the cultivation systems that use GM-technologies are not known.

If the users of the GOM had to bear the subsequent costs of this technology, they would not be able to survive in the market. This technology is only able to establish itself because the subsequent costs are passed on to the other market participants and to the account of the common properties.

Peter Röhrig

Dipl.-Ing. agr.

Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW-German league for organic food production)

Marienstraße 19-20, D-10117 Berlin

Tel.: +49/30/28482306

E-Mail: roehrig@boelw.de



EU WIDE NON-GM LABELING – LEARNING FROM NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Alexander Hissting

Association Food without Genetic Engineering, Contact:
info@ohnegentechnik.org; Tel.: +49 30 788 90 682

After demands from national governments, the EU Commission showed interest in an EU wide non-GM labeling regulation. Currently DG SANCO is conducting a study of non-GM labeling schemes in the EU and an assessment of the need for harmonisation. Results are expected end of 2012. The VLOG is supporting a harmonization process to enhance trade of non-GM products within the EU.

Currently non-GM labeling schemes exist in three EU member states, Austria, France, Germany and the region of South Tyrol. Especially in Austria and Germany a lot of experience has been made regarding the consumer acceptance and the application by food industry. Regulations there exist since 1998 (Germany) and 2007 (Austria). Both have undergone partly major changes over the years. It would be wise to built upon these experiences when drafting an EU-regulation or further national legislation.

Feed criteria should be in accordance with EU-labeling regulation (EC) No. 1829/2003 or 1830/2003. Non-GM feed should be mandatory from birth on where feasible. A onetime conversion period should be allowed where necessary. The production “by GMO” should be forbidden for food ingredients. External controls by accredited control bodies should be implemented. Avoid criteria above the organic standard in regulation (EC) 834/2003.

Any functioning system has to keep the balance between the high consumer expectations regarding the avoidance of GM technology in the manufacturing system and the feasibility for agriculture and industry.

The VLOG represents food manufacturers and retailers as well as sectors upstream and downstream to food production. It advocates food production without GMOs, engages in consumer education and awards licences for the standardized seal “Ohne GenTechnik” to be used on food products manufactured accordingly. The Association currently represents 150 members and licensees that stand for total annual sales of 56 billion Euros. "Non-GMO" labelling within the EU-regions



„NON GMO-LABELLING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION“

Max Hiegelsberger

(ÖVP), Land council for agriculture, forest, veterinary and food inspection of the State Upper Austria

Ladies and Gentlemen!

As the most of the attendees here know, the state of Upper Austria has been fighting the release of genetically modified organisms (GMO) onto the local fields for more than 10 years. At first, the Parliament of Upper Austria with unanimous vote tried to issue a ban on genetic engineering for the state of Upper Austria and further followed it up to the appellate court of the European Court of Justice. In 2003, together with Tuscany, Upper Austria was a founding member of this European GMO-free Regions Network that now welcomes the state of Schleswig-Holstein as its 56th region.

We have achieved a lot within these 10 years, which culminated in the proposal of the European Commission on 13 July 2010 to change the directive on deliberate release in regard to the right of self-determination of the member states in terms of restriction and prohibition of the deliberate release of GMO. Despite the efforts by several Presidents of the Council, five big member states are unfortunately still blocking the approval of this right of self-determination for various reasons. First, I would like to take the opportunity to make an appeal to these Member States to reconsider their position and also make an appeal to the regions from these Member States that are represented here, to do educational work and lobbying to come up with a solution that does not impede the sceptical Member States and grants the GMO-critical Member States a right of self-determination.

As you can see, Upper Austria has tried repeatedly to lead the way when it comes to the topic of GMO-free regions. For the last 10 years, we have certainly searched for reasons not to be forced to release genetically modified organisms in the fields or not to be forced to allow the release and we have searched for alternate solutions. The coexistence between organic, conventional and GMO agriculture was not an option due to the small structures of the agriculture in Upper Austria, as well as due to the unanimous rejection of the Green Genetic Technology by the consumers and the producers in Upper Austria as well as in Austria.

In Austria, in addition to the EC regulation 1829/2003, concerning the GMO-marking, a very strong food law is in effect, the so-called Food Codex which, in contrast to the EC directive on GMO-marking, stipulates that, if marked as "GMO-free", there is no tolerance threshold for contamination. The "gentechnikfrei" (GMO-free) label has been in existence in Austria since the autumn of 1997. In the meantime, milk and eggs as well as beef (about a third) are produced with GMO-free feed to be "gentechnikfrei". There are even initiatives for pork, for example the so-called IBO pig (Ich bin aus Oberösterreich) (I am from Upper Austria) that is explicitly produced and marketed without GMO. All these initiatives and also existing quality labels, for example the AMA BIO quality seal, had to be and must be established, supported and further developed and prove itself in the market.

Because Austria has one of the smallest structures in the EU, the increase in quality or the strategy of differentiation is the only chance for the Upper Austrian agriculture. This strategy has already been successful because Austria has higher milk prices for producers than in Germany. GMO-free feed is a plausible differentiation and is also accepted in trade. Therefore, we, in Upper Austria, have decided to introduce an offensive strategy to change over the local agriculture to GMO-free feed within the next 3 - 5 years.

This offensive strategy which will not happen at the expense of the producers as it often did in the past, shall guarantee certain framework conditions:

- Reduction of the protein gap with animal feed and with this, the dependence from imports.
- Securing the supply of sufficient GMO-free feed from overseas
- Strong efforts in the area of research and development, because a sustainable increase of the production will also be required.

A very important aspect of the mentioned framework conditions is the availability and the price of GMO-free soy.

- The import of GMO-free soy from overseas is connected to logistics risks (for instance strikes, ..) and appropriate precautionary measures, e.g. storage space or alternative sources of supply cause additional costs.
- Due to the expansion of the areas under cultivation with GMO-soy and the variation of the crop yield due to weather conditions, significant fluctuations in the availability of GMO-free soy can occur. These variations as well as the competition through the expansion of the areas for corn cultivation due to the increasing demand of ethanol for biofuels lead to massive price fluctuations for soy.

- Apart from the technical and economical factors, imported soy from overseas has a bad climate balance which plays an increasing role for the consumers due to the negative consequences for the ecology and biodiversity in the big cultivation countries (rain forests, etc.).

Because Europe already depends considerably on imported feed, especially from soy, and the demand on soy is also increasing due to the changing habits of consumption by the European food industry, I personally support a new project, the so-called "Donausoja" (Danube soy). The current GMO-free cultivation of soy in Europe mainly supplies the food industry. However, there are still a lot of areas or fallow lands available in Central and East Europe (especially in the countries along the Danube). As a medium and long-term option, it is planned to create long-term alternatives (in an estimated period of 10 years) and to build a long-term supply initiative through a common investment in a new extraction plant (1 million ha of cultivation area will be required). With this, I do not want to insinuate that the medium-term self-supply with GMO-free soy would be possible in Europe. However, I think that it is very important and necessary to reduce dependency on import and to create production alternatives. For this, I refer to the Soy Conference that is organized concurrently in Vienna at which additional options for actions will be developed further.

In summary, I want to declare that the consumer's freedom of choice must be ensured by establishing labels like "gentechnikfrei" (GMO-free). However, this is based on the right of self-determination for the Member States, to restrict or to forbid the deliberate release of GMOs in their areas. Otherwise, the producers' freedom of choice cannot be possible in Austria because of the nonexistent possibility for coexistence. Currently, it can be assumed that the trade of GMO-free products pays more and the GMO-free production is therefore a suitable strategy for quality and differentiation for the producers. In Austria, more and more operations have been changed over to GMO-free feed (milk and eggs, feed for cattle 1/3). To keep this development further, it is, however, necessary to reduce the import dependence or to increase the own production or own supply (Danube soy). I am sure that the following speakers will also report on positive experiences and developments in the area of the "GMO-free" labelling and here, I hope for a fruitful and inspiring development in the EU-regions or for a pan-European development in the field of labelling.



MARKET DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTS MARKED WITH "GMO-FREE" AT TEGUT

Sven Euen
tegut... Gutberlet Stiftung & Co.

With the introduction of the national legislation on the implementation of GMO-technology (EGGenTDurchfG) in May 2008, tegut has founded the work group for the implementation of the "GMO-free"-label on animal-derived foods within the same year.

It was the aim to work out a concept together with interested companies, associations, NGOs and commercial enterprises that provides legal certainty with labelling in consideration of the new EGGenTDurchfG.

The work group met regularly during the course of one year to finally work out the so-called "5-point-paper". This "brief" paper of rules was agreed on and adopted with the BMELV (Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection in Germany) in Berlin and the work group. The "Five-Point-Paper" details the framework for the conditions of a beneficial claim. Among others, it describes which safety measure is required for which system to label the product according to the new legislation. There are essential differences for the intensity of controls to be performed when securing/validating systems.

From the consumers' point of view, the freedom of choice is decisive. That means, in case of animal derived food, e.g. eggs, meat and milk, they can recognize if they were fed with GMO or not.

The BMELV under leadership of the Secretary of State, Ms. Aigner, suggested to the work-group that a unique logo be used for the consistent labelling of products similar to the Bio-sign. However, this logo should be managed commercially. With this authorization, the work group founded the VLOG (Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik - Association of Food without Genetic Technology) in 2010.

In 2000, tegut..., as commercial enterprise, already started to implement a programme with the label "Land Primus" (pork programme). This is a programme with GMO-free feed and very good experience could be gathered with the implementation of tenderable goods. It was not possible to label the product under the conditions of the old "Seehofer ordinance" of 1998 because the requirements in the conventional area could not be met.

The procurement of GMO-free animal feed and components is not a problem but the price difference which is significant in the sales price compared to products that are not labelled to be GMO-free. This is more and more a problem for farmers, processing companies and retailers if they want to market a competitive meat product (at the current market conditions). At this time, an additional price for GMO-free products cannot be explained to the customers and therefore, it cannot be implemented to the required extent. The customers cannot understand why they should pay more for the product they expect which is the product without the genetic technology.

However, the total assortment other than the meat products is developing noticeably well at tegut. More and more, the customer is taking notice of the possibility to choose between products produced with or without GMO in many product groups. An important contribution is also made by the unique logo of the Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik (VLOG).



(SPEECH FAILED SHORTLY)

THE EXPERIENCES OF THE NEULAND QUALITY MEAT PROGRAM WITH THE „WITHOUT GM“-LABEL.

Jochen Dettmer

Federal secretary of NEULAND e.V.

1. As an innovative quality meat program, which is orientated on the protection of animals and the environment and which is supported by important NGOs like the German Association for the Protection of Animals (Deutscher Tierschutzbund), Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND) and the Working Group on Peasant Agriculture (AbL), the renunciation of genetically modified fodder has been a regular feature of the NEULAND guidelines since 1989, which fulfils the expectations of the consumers.
2. As the EU regulation about labelling 1829/2003 does not stipulate to label animal products which were fed with genetically modified fodder, a Non-GMO labelling could only be carried out in Germany with the „New Novel Food Regulation“ of 1998. This regulation was so strict that NEULAND did not feel able to put the labeling regulations fully into practice.
3. With the EC Law on the Execution of Genetic Engineering in 2008 the then grand coalition (CDU/SPD) put forward clear regulations about the labelling, which enabled NEULAND and other producers to carry out a „Without GM“ label.
4. Subsequently NEULAND became part of the working group „Without GM“ of industry, commerce and NGOs. NEULAND was one of the founders of the „Association food without GM“ (VLOG) in march 2010. Since august 2010 VLOG is fully active. At first NEULAND used an own logo and than went over to the logo which was published by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection.
5. NEULAND uses its own documentation system to meet the requirements of the EC Law on the Execution of Genetic Engineering. As NEULAND does not use import soybeans, a major risk factor does not apply to the carrying out of the documentation.
6. With own mixtures of the fodder, the documentation is unproblematic. Ready feed mixtures are also available in adequate quality. Only for grinding and mixing systems of corporate use a special care is needed in order to avoid cross contaminations.
7. The availability of GMO free native protein sources is still not satisfactory. It is still lacking variety and growing experience.
8. Regarding the recognition of the GMO free logo, more PR must take place and it is necessary to convince the "blockers" on the side of the organization that the GMO free label is a necessary instrument to ensure the electoral freedom of the consumers.
9. NEULAND hopes that with an amendment of the EC Law on the Execution of Genetic Engineering the feeding periods, as already practiced in the NEULAND program, would expand.

Contact: NEULAND e.V.
Federal Secretary
An der Eiche 6
39356 Belsdorf

Tel: (039055) 92914
Fax: (039055) 99431
Mail: jochen.dettmer@neuland-fleisch.de

ORGANIZATIONAL ADVICES

Headsets of the translation system

You can keep the headsets on both days of the conference. Please give it back again latest when leaving the parliament after the conference on Sep. 6th in the foyer. Thank you very much!

Shared dinner

It is possible to have a dinner in a medieval cellar at Wirtshaus Christoffel at Sep 5th from 7pm. You will find the menu in English attached. To avoid a long waiting time until the dishes will be served, we'll ask you, to tell us your choice from the menu with the registration for the conference at Thuringia Parliament in the morning Sep 5th. Thank you very much!

Other restaurants

Wirtshaus Christoffel

Michaelisstraße 41
99084 Erfurt

Only a few meters away from the Krämerbrücke the Wirtshaus Christoffel provides the opportunity to get a feeling of the Middle Ages and its unimagined idyll – adventure gastronomy in a special way is guaranteed. As our guest you can enjoy a variety of events, attractions and secrets around the Middle Ages. Experience typical medieval meals and drinks, minstrels, juggler and knights!

Daily opened from 11 a.m. to 12 at midnight

Directions (how to reach the destination):

- Tramway 1, station Landtag/IHK
- at the station Anger transfer to the tramlines 3 (Europaplatz) or 6 (Rieth) and go by tram to the next station Fischmarkt/ Rathaus/ Touristinformation
- pass the townhall to reach the Wenigenmarkt (next to the Krämerbrücke)
- turn left to achieve the Wirtshaus Christoffel

Augustiner near the Krämerbrücke

Hornstraße 3/4
99084 Erfurt

The **Augustiner near the Krämerbrücke** is situated in the middle of the historical and even medieval city core of Erfurt. The quarter around the Krämerbrücke is considered as the origin of the city and could be termed as the most attractive one. From there every objects of interest are achievable within walking distance. To emphasize the exclusivity you have a grandstand view to some of them while having a substantial meal or drinking a typical Bavarian beer at the beer garden.

The **Augustiner** wants to transfer the atmosphere and the typical culture of Bavarian beer gardens to Erfurt. In one of the most beautiful beer gardens of the provincial capital our guests will be indulged at our terrace contiguous to the riverside of the Gera. There you can enjoy several menus and different kinds of typical beer – for example freshly drawn out of a wooden barrel.

Directions (how to reach the destination):

- Tramway 1, station Landtag/IHK
- at the station Anger transfer to the tramlines 3 (Europaplatz) or 6 (Rieth) and go by tram to the next station Fischmarkt/ Rathaus/ Touristinformation
- pass the townhall to reach the Krämerbrücke
- at the middle of the bridge, turn left into a narrow alley to achieve the Augustiner in about 100 meters

Juice factory tour of „Fahner Frucht GmbH“

For the tour at Sep 6th to visit the "Fahner Frucht GmbH" in Gierstaedt the meeting point is at the entrance of the Parliament. Departure is at 2pm and arrival is planned for 6pm. The cost sharing of 15 € will be charged at the registration desk when you arrive at the Thuringia Parliament.

If you have any further questions please contact Mrs. Dr. Manuela Simon or a staff member of the service team.

Thuringia Ministry of Social, Family and Health affairs

Werner-Seelenbinder-Straße 6

D-99096 Erfurt

phone: +49 (0)361 37 98 501

fax: +49 (0)361 37 98 850

e-mail: gmo-free_conference@tmsfg.thuringen.de