

Media release



Testbiotech files legal case against the EU authorisation of 'toxic soybeans' produced by Bayer & Monsanto

Health risks from residues with spraying with herbicides were not assessed

5 May 2017 / Testbiotech has filed a case at the General Court of the EU against authorisation for the import of genetically soybeans produced by Bayer and Monsanto. The soybeans sold under brand names, such as 'Balance GT' or 'Roundup Ready 2 Xtend Soybeans', can be sprayed with the herbicide glyphosate in combination with other herbicides e.g. isoxaflutole and dicamba. The combination of these herbicides and their residues from spraying were not assessed in respect to health risks. At least one of the herbicides, isoxaflutole, is classified as a suspected human carcinogen. The case is registered under case number T-173/17.

In July 2016, the EU Commission gave the go-ahead for the soybeans to be used in food and feed. In September 2016, Testbiotech filed a request to review the decision. This request was rejected at the beginning of 2017. The reason: The residues from spraying only need to be assessed according to pesticide regulations.

“The soybeans are specifically designed to be sprayed with the herbicides. The residues are, therefore, unavoidable constituents of derivative food and feed”, says Christoph Then for Testbiotech. „EU regulation requests that genetically engineered plants can only be allowed on the market if they are shown to be safe as a whole. If these plants are burdened with a combination of potentially toxic residues, they must be assessed before they are allowed for import.”

According to a toxicological dossier commissioned by Testbiotech, the cumulative adverse effects of these residues are likely to be stronger than those of the single compounds. Despite these risks, EFSA has failed to define Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) for isoxaflutole and no assessment has been made of the combinatorial effects.

It is the third court case filed by Testbiotech at the EU Court. There are two further cases pending against authorisations of other genetically engineered soybeans (C-82/17 P and T-33/16). Testbiotech aims to enforce higher standards for the protection for health and the environment,

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Further information:

Technical dossier on the request for re-examination which is also the basis for the legal challenge: www.testbiotech.org/node/1717

The EU Commission response to the Testbiotech request: www.testbiotech.org/node/1955