

## Media release



### **Signs of food toxicity in genetically engineered eggplant (Brinjal)** Commercial planting in India currently barred

**Munich, New Delhi, 14. January 2011. Plans for India's first genetically engineered crop for human consumption have triggered a safety report that reveals signs of food toxicity. According to this study prepared independently from industry, there are serious indications that the consumption of this genetically engineered (Bt) eggplant (also called brinjal in India) can cause inflammation, reproductive disorders and liver damage.**

The Monsanto subsidiary, Mahyco, applied for GE eggplant to be commercially grown in India and the Philippines. Eggplant is genetically engineered to produce insecticidal proteins (called Bt toxins) that target certain pests. Brinjal is one of India's most important vegetable crops. The report was requested by Aruna Rodrigues of 'Sunray Harvesters' to inform both India's Government and Supreme Court. In February 2010 India's Minister for Environment & Forests had revoked the approval for genetically engineered eggplant and imposed a moratorium citing the need for independent risk studies. The report evaluates data from feeding studies on rats commissioned by Mahyco to demonstrate the safety of the genetically engineered eggplant

Lou Gallagher, the epidemiologist from New Zealand who prepared the report says that "The safety claims made for these plants are not supported by existing data. On the contrary, there are alarming signs that the consumption of food derived from these plants could result in adverse health effects. In addition the feedings studies show major deficiencies in the protocol used for the feeding trial and do not meet international standards." Dr. Gallagher concludes that on the basis of the existing data genetically engineered eggplant cannot be recommended for human consumption.

Testbiotech supported the evaluation of the data in cooperation with the GEKKO Foundation. "This independent expert assessment provides a critical counter to the Monsanto-sourced analyses, which deny any health safety risks: It exposes deficiencies in the risk assessment that was presented to the Indian government. We must ensure that safety standards are not sacrificed to satisfy commercial interests." says Christoph Then, on behalf of Testbiotech.

#### **More information and contacts:**

Study of Dr. Gallagher: <http://www.testbiotech.de/node/444>

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Data from Mahyco at: [http://www.envfor.nic.in/divisions/csurv/geac/bt\\_brinjal.html](http://www.envfor.nic.in/divisions/csurv/geac/bt_brinjal.html)