



MEDIA RELEASE

Complaints filed against EU authorisations for the import of genetically engineered plants

Complaints concern herbicide resistant oilseed rape and soybeans with changed oil composition

1 July 2015 / Several organisations filed requests for the EU Commission to review market authorisations for the import of genetically engineered plants for usage in food and feed in the EU issued end of March. The complaints concern a genetically engineered oilseed rape produced by Monsanto made resistant to the herbicide glyphosate (MON88302), as well as three soybeans produced by Monsanto and Pioneer, in which the composition of the oil they contain has been changed (MON87769, MON87705 and DP305423). The complaints were filed according to EU regulation 1367/2006. The EU Commission has 12 weeks to respond to the complaints. After that the cases may be filed at the European Court of Justice.

The complainants are arguing that the risks of an uncontrolled spread of the oilseed rape into the environment were not assessed as required by EU regulations. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which is responsible for risk assessment, itself admits that the plants might grow in the wild if any spillage of the kernels were to occur, but says the risk of further spread is low. However, as shown in the documents included in the complaint, several publications show the exact the opposite to be true. In fact, there is concrete evidence that oilseed rape spreads after spillage along transport routes into fields and native populations.

As far as the genetically engineered soybeans with a changed oil composition and nutritional effects are concerned, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) did not assess the real impact on health that their consumption might have. EFSA internal documents show that there was a plan to draw up specific guidance for the risk the assessment of such nutritionally altered plants, but this guidance was never actually issued. As a result, there was no investigation into the real effects on health despite existing evidence of possible health risks, contrary to the claims of industry.

The requests for the review of market authorisation for the oilseed rape MON88302 were filed by nine organisations, most of them based in Germany, amongst them are Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND). Furthermore, this complaint is supported by the grassroots foundation. The complaint against the import of genetically engineered soybeans was filed by GeneWatch UK and Testbiotech.

A similar case regarding the import of genetically engineered plants has been pending at the European Court of Justice since 2013. The European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER), the German NGO Sambucus and Testbiotech filed a joint court case against the EU Commission and market authorisation for the genetically engineered soybean, Intacta, which produces an insecticidal protein. In this court case, the EU Commission has the support of the UK government, EFSA and Monsanto.

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Further informations:

Technical dossier on herbicide resistant oilseed rape: www.testbiotech.org/node/1283

Technical dossier on soybeans with altered oil composition: www.testbiotech.org/node/1284

Pending court case against soybean Intacta: www.testbiotech.org/node/772