

Media release



Toxic effects from spraying genetically engineered soybeans with a combination of herbicides

New toxicology dossier assesses health risks of glyphosate sprayed in combination with other herbicides

4 January 2015 / A toxicology dossier published today assessing herbicides sprayed onto genetically engineered soybeans has revealed some alarming results. Residues originating from a combination of glyphosate with dicamba or isoxaflutole show a higher risk of serious detrimental health effects such as genotoxicity, liver toxicity and tumours than each of the single substances. Combinations of these herbicides are regularly applied to new genetically engineered soybean varieties produced by Monsanto and Bayer. Consumers and farm animals can be exposed to a combination of these substances that can be expected to be found as residues in the harvest of the crops.

The EU Commission wants to allow import of these genetically engineered soybeans and their usage in food and feed, claiming that health risks have been investigated. But the dossier provides evidence that EU authorities, in fact, never assessed the combined toxicity of these herbicides.

“The Commission sent us several letters claiming that the herbicides sprayed on the soybeans had been assessed for all relevant risks. We are not only very concerned about the outcomes revealed in the toxicology dossier, but also shocked by the way the EU Commission is dealing with these health risks. It appears that the statements made by the Commission are deliberately intended to be misleading and as disinformation,” says Christoph Then for Testbiotech, the institution which commissioned the toxicology dossier. “The authorisation of these soybeans has to be stopped.”

The Commission wants the experts from Member States to vote on the import of the genetically engineered soybeans on 11 January. An initial vote was taken in November 2015, but no qualified majorities were reached. If this outcome is now repeated, the Commission will be free to allow the import.

Criticism of the decision-making process at the Commission is increasing: In December 2015, the EU Parliament adopted a resolution rejecting further authorisation for the import of genetically engineered plants because the current system does not function properly. Currently, the Environmental Committee of the EU Parliament is planning to have a debate on the authorisation of the new genetically engineered soybeans just one day after the vote of the EU Member States.

Contacts / further information

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The toxicology dossier: www.testbiotech.org/node/1485

Previous letter to the Commission: www.testbiotech.org/node/1439

Previous technical Background: www.testbiotech.org/node/1440

Agenda of the meeting of the experts of Member States in Brussels: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_food-safety/dgs_consultations/gm_food_feed_env_risks_en.htm

The EU Parliament resolution: www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bMOTION%2bB8-2015-1365%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN