

Media release



New methods of genetic engineering have to be regulated

Joint appeal against the cultivation of genetically engineered Cibus oilseed rape

24 April 2015 / Nearly 30 organisations from Germany have published a joint appeal against the cultivation of oilseed rape produced by the US company, Cibus. The appeal is in response to a decision made by the German Minister of Agriculture. He believes that these plants, which have a genome engineered to be resistant to herbicides, do not have to be regulated in the same way as other genetically engineered organisms.

If this opinion prevails, plants engineered with the so-called RTDS technology can in future be cultivated without having undergone mandatory risk assessment, labelling and registration. The signatories of the appeal are demanding that the release of these plants is stopped. They are warning of the uncontrolled spread of the plants in the environment and the weakening of EU GMO regulation.

RTDS or Rapid Trait Development System involves inserting small sequences of synthetic DNA (oligonucleotids) into plant cells. The underlying mechanisms are not fully understood in detail. Up until now there has been no systematic risk research into plants produced by this method. According to the EU Directive 2001/18, “techniques involving the direct introduction into an organism of heritable material prepared outside the organism” have to be considered as methods of genetic engineering that need to be regulated.

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Further information:

The petition for download (in German):

www.testbiotech.org/sites/default/files/Aufruf_Gentechnik_bleibt_Gentechnik_final150415_c.pdf

Online signatures supporting the appeal (in German): www.testbiotech.org/node/1203

A joint letter to the EU Commission: www.testbiotech.org/node/1142

A Testbiotech Backgrounder on the new methods of genetic engineering:

www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1140

Testbiotech report: Genetically engineered oil seed rape out of control - a global perspective:

<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/891>