

Media release



Time to stop the cultivation of genetically engineered maize MON810

New documents show Monsanto does not comply with EU regulations

30 April 2015 / As several documents from Monsanto, the EU Commission and European Food Safety Authority EFSA show, cultivation of genetically engineered maize MON810 does not comply with EU regulations. The main problem is the legally required monitoring of potentially adverse environmental effects. There is also new evidence that the environmental risk assessment for MON810 carried out by EFSA was based on flawed assumptions. Maize MON810 is the only genetically engineered crop authorised for cultivation in the EU. In a letter to the EU Commission, Testbiotech is now requesting that the cultivation of MON810 is stopped in 2015.

EU regulation 2001/18 requires that the holder of the EU authorisation provides monitoring reports on potentially adverse effects for each year the crop is grown. However, according to EFSA, Monsanto's latest report for the year 2013 is of such poor quality that EFSA experts have said they "*cannot conclude on potential unanticipated adverse effects due to the cultivation of maize MON 810*". In a letter to the Commission dated November 2014, Monsanto states they will not be able to monitor the cultivation of MON810 at all in future, because the patent on MON810 has expired and other companies might now start to sell the crop.

"It appears that the company has simply failed to establish networks that would allow the monitoring of MON810 cultivation after the patent expired", says Christoph Then for Testbiotech. "But Monsanto, as the holder of the EU authorisation, has to provide the legally required information. If no reliable monitoring information can be made available, cultivation of MON810 has to be stopped."

Failing to comply with monitoring obligations is not the only problem for Monsanto. A recent publication has raised doubts about the genetic stability of the plants when grown under stressful conditions such as climate change. In addition, one of the crucial assumptions in the risk assessment of MON810 seems to be flawed: As a publication from 2014 shows, the exposure of protected butterflies to insecticidal toxins produced in the pollen of the plants is higher than assumed by EFSA.

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Further information:

- Testbiotech letter to the EU Commission: www.testbiotech.org/node/1223
- Correspondence between EU Commission / Monsanto / EFSA regarding monitoring of MON810 maize: www.testbiotech.org/node/1222
- EFSA Scientific Opinion on 2013 Monsanto PMEM report on GM maize MON 810: www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4039.htm
- Publication on maize pollen deposition: www.enveurope.com/content/26/1/24
- Publication on MON810 maize and environmental stress: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0123011>