



PRESS RELEASE

Claims on GM safety should be held up to the same level of scientific scrutiny as biotech product approvals

Brussels, 19 September 2012

Today, a study entitled 'Long term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize' was published in the 'Food and Chemical Toxicology' review. The plant biotechnology industry is committed to the highest standards of testing and safety for its products. It takes all health concerns regarding biotech food and feed seriously.

- Specialists will carefully study the research before commenting further on the scientific value of its content. The study was received at 2 pm on Wednesday 19 September.
- Many studies have confirmed the long-term health effects of GMOs. Such studies have been carried-out using rodents but also other animals by scientific researchers from all parts of the world. No toxic effect has been reported, according to international, European and national food safety agencies.
- Biotech crops are rigorously tested for safety prior to commercialization. Approved GM products all go through a rigorous safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in Europe, as well as the national agencies in other national constituencies outside the EU.
- European Commission funded-research from 130 projects involving 500 independent research groups over 25 years concluded that "*There is, as of today, no scientific evidence associating GMOs with higher risks for the environment or for food and feed safety than conventional plants and organisms.*"
- In Europe and around the world, tens of millions of farm animals, including chicken, pigs and cows are fed with GM maize and soybeans. Since 1996, over 2 trillion meals containing GM ingredients have been eaten around the world without a single substantiated case of ill-health to humans or animals. The World Health Organisation has said that: "*No effects on human health have been shown as a result of the consumption of such foods by the general population in the countries where they have been approved*".

Media should be aware of the track record of the papers' authors

- Media reporting this story should be aware that some of the researchers behind the study are closely associated with anti-GM campaigning groups. Reuters today stated that "*the lead researcher's past record as a critic of the industry may make other experts wary of drawing hasty conclusions*" and wrote that "*In an unusual move, the research group did not allow reporters to seek outside comment on their paper before its*

publication.....". The funding of the research should be carefully considered, as should the commercial motivations of parties involved and the motivations of political figures associated with the study.

- Media reports quote Cambridge University experts saying: "*The authors of the paper do not suggest that the effects are caused by genetic modification*" and there "*There is good evidence that introducing genes in to crops using GM techniques results in fewer changes to the crops than introducing them using conventional breeding.*" A Professor from the University of Edinburgh spoke of "*predetermined bias of the experimenters and the funding groups*".
- The main author of the study has previously published data on an animal feeding study that was openly refuted by the public and scientific community. In a press release dated June 2007, EFSA stated that: "*Following a detailed statistical review and analysis by an EFSA Task Force, EFSA's GMO Panel has concluded that this re-analysis of the data does not raise any new safety concerns.*" EFSA noted that "*The statistical analysis made by the authors of the paper did not take into account certain important statistical considerations. The assumptions underlying the statistical methodology employed by the authors led to misleading results. EFSA considers that the paper does not present a sound scientific justification in order to question the safety of (the) maize.*"

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/gmo070628.htm>

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