



GM Observer

News about farming and GM in the United Kingdom

Welcome to the GM Observer – the newsletter of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council (abc).
abc is the umbrella group of the agricultural biotechnology industry in the UK. Our goal is to provide factual information about the agricultural use of GM technology in the UK

Regulatory hurdles on EU GMO approvals could undermine food security, according to DG Agri

A report published by the European Commission has concluded that if the situation for GMO approvals is not improved imports of essential GM derived feed and food products may slow down considerably or come to a halt. In the middle term, this would dramatically impair the ability of EU livestock producers to feed their animals, potentially resulting in a dramatic reduction of the livestock population in the EU. The EU livestock industry is responsible for 40 per cent of European farm income - such a reduction could only result in high food prices for consumers and job losses in the food chain.

The report highlights how the EU's zero tolerance policy on the presence of unapproved GMOs in feed imports could have a detrimental impact on food security and prices. It currently takes a lot longer to authorise in the EU compared with other producing/exporting countries - it takes a minimum of 2.5 years and often much longer to complete new biotech trait authorisations in the EU, compared to an average of 15 months in the US.

The report in full can be found at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir/gmo/economic_impactGMOs_en.pdf

You and Yours biofuels debate

Speaking on Radio 4's You and Yours programme on "The role of GM in meeting biofuels targets" Colin Merritt, Director of North East Biofuels and a member of abc, spoke about the role for biofuels and the contribution GM can play.

He said there are good examples of the use of GM such as reducing the need for nitrogen fertiliser - one of the largest elements of agriculture's carbon footprint. He also said it is a question of choices and mixes. His message is that we need to "produce the best of food and fuel, most productively" and GM should be part of that mix.



EFSA: English breakfast unaffected by GM feed

A new report from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has concluded that there is no evidence that GM animal feed has any impact on meat, milk or eggs. On Friday July 20th, EFSA published an assessment on a wide ranging survey that looked into the fate of DNA and proteins associated with genetic modification following the feeding of GM crops to farm livestock. EFSA concluded from its survey of numerous feeding studies, that to date, no DNA sequences inserted into GM crops have been detected in milk, meat and eggs or any organ or tissue sample taken from animals fed with genetically modified plants. This means that they are safe to eat.

The main conclusions of the study were:

- Biologically active genes and proteins are common components of foods and feed in varying amounts. After eating, a rapid degradation into short DNA or peptide fragments is observed in the gastrointestinal tract of animals and humans.
- To date, a large number of experimental studies with livestock have shown that inserted DNA fragments or proteins derived from GM plants have not been detected in tissues, fluids or edible products of farm animals like cattle or pigs.

The EFSA research followed a call from the European Commission.

The full statement can be found at:

www.efsa.europa.eu/etc/medialib/efsa/science/gmo/statements.Par.0002.File.dat/EFSA_statement_DNA_proteins_gastroint.pdf