

14.05.09 - Planet Diversity

Workshop: GMOs in Europe

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Aim: How can we make Europe GMO free.

- Presentation by Clare Oxborrow FoE UK

Q. 170 regions declared, what is the size of regions?

A: very different sizes GMO free regions

Q: 0.9% contamination in organic food?

A: It is for accidental contamination, the EU is wrong.

Q: Co-ex laws? 0.1%? Or?

A: Co-ex is about contamination. FoE supports no contamination, threshold incorrect. Seeds should be completely gmo free, should not be any threshold. We will discuss in the afternoon.

Comments: (Holland, IFOAM), not allowed to use GMOs in organic. If it has to be labelled as GMO, then the product cannot be sold as organic.

- Presentation by Marco Contiero

Q: 5 official bans do not include Rumania. Italy? NO GMOs in Italy?

A: Rumania presentation will follow. Italy nothing happen, it is possible to cultivate in Italy, but no GMOs farmed. 0.119% GMO cultivation in EU only. Organic 4% in EU.

- Presentation by Guy Kassler Confederation Paysanne France:

10 years of opposition activity in France. 2008 mon810 is banned but not selling of seeds. No new authorization. The result of scientific study by the government is interesting. Scientific finding showed health and environment risk. One study on contamination on maize, but in France no relative plants. Only the dangers on environment. Economical risk if open the door to gmos for small agriculture at stake. Co-ex law is delayed at least another month. Co-ex guarantee with and/ or without GMOs. Because of cultivation have respect the non-GMO cultivation. Zero is the juridical definition on GMO free in France. Amendment is not on the agenda at the moment. Same thing for Mon810, and sending back the discussion to EU. Majority is 0.9% few countries have lower than 0.9% July to Dec presidency in France. Agenda of the presidency not importation, in favour of accelerate procedure of import; look back against for

cultivation authorisation procedure. Look again threshold for Non-gmo seed. Fight for Zero % [...] Reform of the procedure system. Minister of agri position is ban for EFSA, France never said USA position. Scientific evidences, no ban is based on scientific evidences in EU. All refused by EFSA scientific evidences. Bans are political decision, against scientific evidences. USA there is only scientific, not political discussion. Germany position is EFSA should evaluate not others. Oct Sarkozy is behind it. Not against GMO, USA is behind the commercialization of GMOs, Sarkozy said, Monsanto 810 is based environmental argumentation, preventing but allowing GMOs in EU. At the moment there are 2 new technologies of GMOs, such as transgene is not present in the final products. They present them as no transgenic therefore no label needed to Limagrain and Bayer is already working on these. French gov is protecting European bio companies.

A: Following the French development to GMOs out of the countries. Any possible economic motive behind?

A: Where can we find the new sorts mutation transgenic?

Comments. 0.9% labelling is not the whole story, 0.9% and adventitious. 0.0 is scientifically impossible.

Q: French activist position is zero %. Bit luck of info on mutant plants. Useful info dossier on web. ETC group, research project in EU. Sarkozy is not green president. Al gore is making money on environmental issue.

- Presentation by Gabi Pawn Greenpeace Romania

Q: Soy ban was not because of Romania joined EU ?

A: Yes. However, campaigning managed to secure a soya ban before joining EU and tackle industry that wanted to promote gm soya in EU via Romania.

- Presentation by Victoria Kopeykina, Eremurus Club Russia

Q Who certifies the label?

A. Food 0,9% label it is a voluntary system – in Moscow. According to legislation they cannot label it that contains gmos as it contradicts the federal law. But they have a positive law

Q Public opinion in Russia

A. more than 80% do not want gmos and want to label – school biosafety programmes!! By the city government in moscow

- Spain statement:

70000 has sown with bt maize – this year drought no figures- ministers merged agric + environment + ARAGON+ 70% less organic because of contamination!!! catalunya all organic farmers will grow organic maize + movement LEGAL ACTIONS against companies: DAs – catalunya popular legislative initiatives for gm free zones to parliament!!! MOVIE Spanish!!!!

WORKSHOPS

1. Spain & Portugal gm free

- Good power analysis needed (as more forces seem to be against us)
- Ideas of planting organic seeds
- Organise big Conference with anti- gm scientists/ Monsanto movie/ D.A. in all Europe targeting Spain /scandal minister from outside Spain
- market campaign
- legal cases
- solutions

2. make Eu gm free: what has worked well and what not- next steps ideas

How do we achieve a GMO free Europe (brainstorm + discussion)

- What works and what doesn't work in the campaign ??
- Where are the gaps ??
- What are the tools we can work on together ??

- We need an alternative: Organic is the alternative. But it is too small alone. Going with the trend: go with sustainability that retailers are now implementing. Organic alone is not enough.

- issue is evolving from being food safety to food sovereignty. We need to work for local, small scale agriculture. We say: better to buy all local food. If you want to avoid GMO's

- FOE: Worked for GM free Wales campaign.

We started in Wales with clean, green vision of agriculture. After that politicians understood that GMO does not fit in that picture

- Germany: We have to make people aware of the importance of non-hybrid seeds.
- All alternatives cannot exist if GMO's are present. We have to keep thinking of a balance.
- GMO campaigner in Portugal: there were many groups active, but only low profile. Nevertheless currently 10 % of Portuguese territory has been declared GMO free thanks to local actions and consistent, persistent opposition. After the action: first we were condemned. After that a more serious debate started. But the group is also getting criminalized by Europol, that classifies the action as "ecoterrorism", whereas it is more accepted in France..
- Individual cases need a lot of attention .Diversity of strategies works very well.
- Catalonia, Spain: we focus also on the alternative. Many organic consumer cooperations are started. We are focusing on that. In Spain problem is an awareness problem. People don't seem to care. The issue is about linking the city and the countryside. We also do direct actions. We stayed one week in trees. This was in the time when coexistence decree was about to be approved.

Spain is used as example of "positive experience" of coexistence.

- Last strategy: sewing the state or the company. Reason would be: the state is allowing that organic farming is disappearing.
- Food scandals work well.
- Clare: the problem is that politicians react with legalizing contamination.
- Albania: important to create strong lobby for a GMO free framework on local, national and international level.
- very effective in the UK has been targeting retailers. But we are worried that –because the GM issue is dropping of the media agenda-

People start to forget about and GM industry is raising the issue

- Strong drive in Germany that companies go GM free. It has repercussions among suppliers. When this happens it would be very helpful to encourage local companies in other countries to use it. German retailers have the intention to communicate label to the public, but they still do not have their supply chain 100 % secured.
- Most EU countries don't have a law stipulating how a GM free label can be done.

Show the retailer the benefit is key here.

- Sometimes in Germany farmers say: we have a GMO free region, so we don't have to worry anymore.
- Are there laws governing security of the labs ?
- What is the labelling status of restaurant food. In Portugal: big chefs claim that their restaurant is GM free. This works.
- UK govt: says that restaurants have to apply same EU rules as food in supermarkets.
- Macedonia: We would like to see key documents from Germany translated and circulated.
- There is a governance crisis in Europe with regard to GMO's (see recent EU Commission). This is opening a new field.

IAASTD report is also opening a new field for us.

- Fighting to create legal basis for GM free regions.
- Question of liability
- WTO: last line of defence for member states. We have to question the WTO's power to take any decisions regarding the environment.

France: We are against the result of a process (GMO's) not against the causes. GMO problem is not restricted to the scientific field. We struggle with this when we address EFSA etc.

We should mobilize scientists to lag that "narrow"science is not good enough.

The issue is forced in very narrow debate about "sound science". We need to break through that and raise the ethical, social and economic aspects.

- If we manage to get precautionary principle enshrined in the WTO, we make a big step forward.

Gaps:

- sharing information better
- organise - skill sharing
- wto political !!!!!