

GMO-FREE EUROPE 2015 – JOINT DAY

PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

The end of the 'zero tolerance' policy in the EU? The impact of low level presence of unauthorised GMOs for the food industry and public authorities

Summary of the workshop, 8 May 2015, Berlin

9:00 – 11:00 North Rhine-Westphalia Representation (NRW representation)

Speakers:

Beate Thiessen – Taifun

Heike Moldenhauer - FoEE Germany

Josef Hoppichler - Federal Institute for Less-Favoured and Mountainous Areas (Austria)

Joachim Weckmann - CEO and partner of Märkisches Landbrot GmbH in Berlin

NOTES

During the different presentations, the speakers highlighted the difficulties to have a 100% GM-free seed supply for food and feed. The increasing costs of analysis and controls that an introduction of LLP in the supply chain would generate was also showed with figures that demonstrate once again, that the prevention of contamination is burdened by the GM-free sector.

One of the critical points of contamination that escapes from the control of food and feed processors is the presence of non-authorized GMOs particles included in the dust that mingles with seeds especially during transportation or storage. In order to prevent sources of contamination due to this fact, the idea that was discussed is to require exporters to test their product in their home country, both without and with cleaning. And if they can prove that, after cleaning, non-authorized GMOs are in the product, then it could be shipped to the EU (even if the non-cleaned product contains traces/dust of unauthorized events). The requirement to test the uncleaned product in the EU would of course be kept; but it would no longer be illegal to import it, if, after cleaning, it is really clean.

Another issue that came up was how to certify that all labs in different member states fulfil the requirements. Some sources of information shows that in EU less developed countries (e.g Bulgaria, Greece) the techniques used are not as developed as the other countries and this creates a problem. The costs for the sector and the member states for such techniques should be thoroughly assessed to support those countries with less capacity to develop proper analysis. The controls in exporters and the traders liability on testing and controls was, once again, raised as the key issue to improve if we want to secure the ZT principle.