THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL APPROACH TO COEXISTENCE

UNTIL NOW IS MORATORIUM

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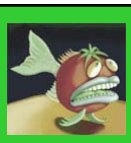
PRINCIPLE

The production of GM crops is not in the interest of Hungary, neither from environmental and human health nor from economic points of view.



WHY?
Because among others:

- we are convinced that the human health and environmental risks of these products have not been assessed adequately;

- if GMOs are released into the natural environment, it will be impossible to withdraw them;
- the problems which the first generation GMOs intend to tackle could be solved by traditional agricultural methods in Hungary;
- the GMO free status of Hungary is an economic benefit in the European market rejecting GMOs;

AND

- **Although the Hungarian Parlament brought a law on coexistence last year BUT WE BELIEVE THAT CO-EXISTENCE AS A LONG-TERM STATUS IS NOT FEASIBLE.**

MORATORIUM

The importation of inbred lines and hybrids originating from the MON 810 maize line was banned into the territory of the Republic of Hungary on 20 January 2005.

Basis of the Hungarian moratorium

New scientific evidence suggests that environmental impacts different from those submitted in the original notification by Monsanto may indeed emerge in the Pannonian biogeographical region as a result of the release into the environment of maize line MON810.

Why is the Pannon ecoregion important?

- Biogeographical regions are the fundamental categories of the European Community, delimiting geographical areas of distinct ecological, climatic, soil etc. features.
- The Pannonian region is the seventh great ecoregion of EU with very special and different ecological and geographical features, and no ecological impact assessments were carried out for it before 2005.

Scientific work in Hungary

In 2005 the Hungarian Government commissioned independent scientific research institutions to carry out a comprehensive testing of MON810 in the Pannonian biogeographical region.

RESULTS OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. **Extremely high production of ~Cry1A-toxin per hectare:** ~Cry1A-*toxin was 1500-2000 times higher (!) than the threshold* for the treatment of one hectare crop with DIPEL
2. **Very slow decomposition of ~Cry1A-toxin in stubble residues:** *detectable quantity after 11-month-period*
3. **Decreased activity of organisms living in soil containing Bt-stubble residues**
4. **High mortality of hatchings of protected butterflies exposed to MON810 pollen:** *may kill approx. 20 % of the Peacock Butterfly (Inachis io) hatchings*

Legal arguments

The Community's legal regime concerning GMOs is based on the strict application of the precautionary principle.

In view of this, the Directive does not only allow but also requires Member States to ensure that no GMOs are released as long as their potential impacts on the receiving environment have been adequately tested.

Legal arguments

The Directive foresees a case-by-case environmental risk assessment that takes into account the different environments where GMOs are intended to be released.

This requirement, together with the Community's nature conservation legislation, leads to a conclusion that as a precondition of authorisation, adequate environmental risk assessment should take place at least at every distinct ecological unit of the European Union, *i.e.* every biogeographical region where the GMO at issue is to be used.

Opinion of the EFSA and the Commission

Until now no bans have been considered as scientifically well-based by the EFSA.

According to their opinion our results do not contain new scientific information.

Based on the EFSA's opinion the Commission proposed to lift our moratorium.

Activities in Hungary

A decision was made with the agreement of all parties of the Hungarian Parlament to maintain our GMO free status - 53/2006 (XI. 29.) OGY decision and made a new law on coexistence

20 February 2007
a historic day for us

The maintanance of our moratorium got the majority

at the Environment Council.

Thanks a lot to Member States!!!

HUNGARY'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

- Finishing the environmental impact assessment for MON810;
- Starting new investigations for other GMOs which are planned to be authorised for cultivation in the EC, e.g. MON 88017 (problem: we have not received seeds for the tests);
- Developing a detailed protocol how to carry out environmental impact studies for the Pannonian biogeographical region.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED IN EU LEVEL

More effective enforcement of the opinion of Member States in the EFSA decision-making process;

Developing protocols for human health and enviromental impact studies to be used by biotech companies when applying for a consent.

WHAT SHOULD BE IMPROVED IN THE EU PROCESS?

EFSA requires Member States to carry out detailed environmental impact assessments and to publish them in scientific journals when they intend to ban GM products.

However, EFSA accepts notifications of GM products without requiring such a detailed impact assessment.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

It is practically impossible to carry out independent environmental impact assessments even if a Goverment orders and finances it because:

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

- If a Member State intend to carry out an independent research on the environmental impact of a GMO, which is planned to be authorised in EU, it needs at least two-three years.
- Even if a Goverment is ready to finance it, it seems to be extremely difficult to get seeds from the biotech companies because of the patents.
- It has to be solved urgently.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

- There is no common, official European protocol for environmental impact studies and for toxicological testing, similar to the the authorisation procedure of medicins or pesticides.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

- **In 2006 EFSA promised to involve Member States in a more systematic manner when developing its opinion.**

BUT: no real progress has been made.

Hungary would like to be very proactive in solving these problems in the Community

We offer our help, dedication, expertise and fresh thinking as a recently accessed country.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

The picture was taken in Peru where the Inkas used to have more than 2000 types of maize and at present they still have some hundreds.