

Coexistence of GM and non GM maize is a success in Spain

Coexistence is a success in Spain

"We have no evidence of cases of contamination" . Francisco Mombiela, Director General, Ministry of Agriculture, Spain, April 2006.

No complaint or notice was received in 2005 with regard to the adventitious presence of genetically modified grain in non-GM crops according to The Director General of the Catalanian Government's Agriculture Office, Salvador Puig in April 2006.

- **An extensive number of hectares of genetically modified (GM) crops have been grown in coexistence** with conventional and organic types of cultivation. In 2005, approximately 52,000 hectares of genetically modified (GM) maize varieties were cultivated in Spain. Cumulatively, 250,000 hectares of genetically modified maize (*Bt* maize) have been cultivated since 1998. In Catalonia, more than 40% of the total maize crop was GM maize in 2005.
- Co-existence of GM and non-GM maize **is a success in Spain**. A flexible, farm-level system and seed company stewardship assure accurate traceability and labelling of GM products.
- In all the studies carried out in Spain by independent, scientific and public bodies, none has ever shown **any evidence of adventitious mixing of GMOs higher than the EU legal requirement**.
- The EU regulation which is applicable in all EU Member States establishes a threshold for the labelling of products containing authorised GMOs at a level of 0.9%. This means that there is no obligation for a product to be labelled with GM if it contains less than 0.9% of GMOs adventitiously present. Such purity thresholds exist because it is widely recognised and understood that absolute purity in the production of food and seed is not possible.

Reliable evidence that co-existence works in practice in Spain

- The Director General from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Francisco Mombiela, recently declared that the Ministry *"has no evidence of cases of contamination"* caused by GM crops, and he assured that *"each and every case are being and will be investigated"*.
- The Director General of the Catalanian Government's Agricultura Office, Salvador Puig, also stated that no complaint or notice was received in 2005 with regard to the adventitious presence of genetically modified grain in non-GM crops.
- Reliable scientific evidence from coexistence studies by public and independent institutions shows that **coexistence is a success in Spain**:

1) In Aragón, where GM maize cultivated by farmers reaches 28.9% of the total maize in the area, the **Spanish Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA)**¹ carried out in 2005 a specific study on organic maize which was at the greatest risk from cross-pollination and adventitious mixing with GM material. In this worse case scenario, the analyses of the fields showed that there were no cases of GMO presence above the 0.9%

¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/events/vienna2006/index_en.htm



threshold.

- 2) **The Ministry of Agriculture**² in 2004, analysed maize destined for human consumption in the Community of Extremadura, the main area where maize is produced for human consumption. In 192 maize batches analysed, no single sample exceeded the GMO labelling threshold of 0.9%, while the average presence of GMO was 0.015 %.
- 3) **The Institute for Agrifood Research and Technology (IRTA)**³, from the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, concluded that an isolation distance of 20 meters is sufficient to ensure coexistence, on the basis of extensive field studies carried out in Girona and Lleida. Seed companies have been making the same recommendations to GM maize farmers as well as other farm level practical measures for ensuring coexistence and both studies and practical experience have shown these measures to work.

Contact

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² http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/events/vienna2006/index_en.htm

³ The study has been published by www.ruralcat.net