

## Media release



### EU to vote on 'toxic mix maize' SmartStax in July

Ten new variants of genetically engineered maize on the agenda for 11 July

**Munich/ Brussels 1 July 2013. On 11 July, the EU Commission and representatives from EU Member States will meet again to vote on the market authorisation of the genetically engineered maize *SmartStax* for use in food and feed. *SmartStax* is a joint Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences crop plant that produces six insecticidal proteins and is tolerant to two herbicides. Together with *SmartStax*, another nine new variants of genetically engineered maize will be on the agenda in July, all of them produce insecticidal toxins and are resistant to herbicides. One is sold under the brand name *Powercore*. Furthermore, pollen from genetically engineered maize MON810 is about to receive an authorisation for usage in food such as honey.**

“This case shows that decisions made by the Commission on permitting genetically engineered plants in food and feed are not sufficiently based on science but on economic pressure. Just because US companies want unrestricted import of these types of maize into Europe, the EU Commission is continuing the authorisation process and refusing to acknowledge the actual risks”, says Christoph Then for Testbiotech. “This is a serious threat to consumers and the protection of health and the environment.”

Market authorisation for *SmartStax* and *Powercore* was viewed favourably by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2010 despite dossiers from the industry being substantially flawed. Combinatorial effects between the insecticidal toxins and the residues from spraying were, for example, never investigated. In December 2012, Testbiotech raised the alarm warning that the maize might have already entered the market illegally. Instead of stopping imports, the Commission is now pressing ahead with the procedure to allow *SmartStax* for use in food and feed.

Very recently, Testbiotech wrote a letter to the EU Commission about new findings from feeding trials with pigs using similar maize variants showing health impacts such as severe inflammation. If there is new information on the relevant risks, EU regulation prescribes precaution, which in turn should stop genetically engineered plants from being placed on the market until more evidence is made available.

*SmartStax* and *Powercore* combine various insecticidal toxins that were originally found only in soil bacteria. These maize events are grown in the US and Brazil because pest insects are increasingly adapting to genetically engineered plants that produce just one single toxin. One of the toxins produced in the maize (Cry1A105), is artificially synthesised from several bacterial proteins and does not have a true homology in nature. In addition, the plants are resistant to glyphosate herbicides (brands such as Roundup) and glufosinate (brands such as Liberty). The risks of this stacked maize have never been fully investigated. There was, for example, one trial where poultry was fed with the kernels for just 42 days in order to observe weight gain. In the case of *Powercore* the results from these feeding trials were even rejected by EFSA as unreliable. EFSA, however, still gave a favourable opinion without asking for any further studies.

Testbiotech is demanding a new and comprehensive risk assessment of these genetically engineered

plants, the authorisation procedure to be suspended and efficient measures implemented to stop its import into the EU. In an email action several thousand people have already lobbied the EU Commission to prevent it from allowing *SmartStax* to be sold in the EU.

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**Agenda of the meeting of the EU Commission with Member States:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/dgs\\_consultations/docs/appeal\\_committee\\_agenda\\_11072013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dgs_consultations/docs/appeal_committee_agenda_11072013_en.pdf)

**More background on risk assessment of SmartStax:** [www.testbiotech.de/en/node/515](http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/515)

**Correspondence with EU Commission about new findings of health risks being published:**

[http://www.testbiotech.de/sites/default/files/Letter%20Testbiotech\\_SmartStax\\_June\\_2013\\_1.pdf](http://www.testbiotech.de/sites/default/files/Letter%20Testbiotech_SmartStax_June_2013_1.pdf)

**Briefing on risk assessment of pollen from GE maize MON810:**

<http://www.testbiotech.org/node/766>

**e-mail alert to prevent the EU Commission from allowing SmartStax to be sold in the EU:**

<http://www.testbiotech.de/en/smartstax>