

## EFSA GMO Newsletter December/January/February 2013/14

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on 25 February, 2014 - 10:28

### News

Testbiotech published a statement on an EFSA opinion regarding genetically engineered soybean BPS-CV127-9, which is marketed by BASF Plant Science and tolerant to imidazolinone herbicides (<http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1021> [1]).

Testbiotech published a statement on an EFSA opinion regarding genetically engineered soybean 305423 by Pioneer, which is engineered to be tolerant to ALS inhibitors and has a changed fatty acid profile (<http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1013> [2]).

Testbiotech published two reports on maize 1507. The first report was a meta-analysis of some of the key data on genetically engineered maize 1507 submitted by industry to authorities in the EU, the US, Australia and New Zealand for their approval procedures. The assessment and comparison of the data revealed huge variations in the amounts of Bt toxin in the plants, and further shows that 1507 maize plants are neither sufficiently homogenous nor predictable (<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1017> [3]).

In December, another Testbiotech report revealed that there is no doubt that maize 1507 poses a high level of risk to the environment. These risks were never fully examined by EFSA. First and foremost, there are no peer-reviewed data at all regarding the effects of maize 1507 pollen on any protected European butterfly species (<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/983> [4]).

Together Testbiotech, GeneWatch UK and the Pesticide Action Network (PAN), Europe published a detailed report on the herbicide 2,4-D. There are currently several applications pending for import into the EU of genetically engineered plants resistant to 2,4-D. Some of these plants have been engineered to be resistant to several herbicides at once. Especially in the US these 2,4-D resistant plants are close to being allowed for commercial cultivation. The report shows that risks associated with the use of 2,4-D have been underestimated (<http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1010> [5]).

Testbiotech published a new report on future developments in agro-biotechnology and genetic engineering. It focuses on genetically engineered organisms pending for market authorisation in the EU and those that are in the pipeline and might soon be on the market. Special attention has been given to new genome technologies. Furthermore, it includes a discussion of the potential influence of the planned free trade agreement (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP) on the authorisation of new genetically engineered organisms for use in agriculture and food production (<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1007> [6]).

Testbiotech published a new report on Golden Rice focussing on the persistent gaps in safety assessment (<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1006> [7]).

Testbiotech filed a complaint against the decision of the EU Commission to allow SmartStax in food and feed. Due to a misunderstanding, the legal deadline was missed. However the EU Commission requested EFSA to give its opinion on the complaint. <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1002> [8]

The results of a Testbiotech project on the uncontrolled spread of genetically engineered plants were published in a review article in the international journal Environmental Sciences Europe. The article includes a global overview of regions and plant species that are being contaminated by genetically engineered plants. The authors of the study are calling for the precautionary principle to be strengthened and a ban on the release of genetically engineered organisms that cannot be removed from the environment (<http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/34> [9]).

The European Ombudsman has made a final judgement on the Testbiotech complaint about a

conflict of interest at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The case concerns Mr. Harry Kuiper, who was chair of the GMO Expert Panel from 2003-2012. After inspecting the files at the offices of EFSA in Parma, the Ombudsman says they could not identify any conflict of interest in the period from 2009-2012. However, the most relevant period of time from 2003-2005 was excluded from detailed investigation. At this time, Harry Kuiper was acting as chair of the GMO panel at EFSA, which is the authority carrying out risk assessment of genetically plants. At the same time, he was closely collaborating with a task group at the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) made up of staff members from companies such as Monsanto (<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/991> [10]).

The European Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate (SANCO) has short-listed a director of the biggest EU food industry lobby group FoodDrinkEurope for a position on the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Ms. Beate Kettlitz works in a leading position for the lobby group, which represents all major European food and drink corporations (<http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/976> [11]).

## Votes

On 20 February, the "Standing Committee on genetically modified food and feed & environmental risk" took a vote on market approval for herbicide-tolerant genetically modified cotton T304-40 (<http://www.testbiotech.org/node/867> [12]) for food and feed ([http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/standing\\_committees/sc\\_modif\\_genet/docs/a...](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/standing_committees/sc_modif_genet/docs/a...) [13]).

On 27 February, the Appeal Committee will vote on the renewal of market approval for herbicide tolerant oilseed rape GT73 (<http://www.testbiotech.de/node/773> [14]) produced by Monsanto. In a previous vote taken by the Standing Committee there was no qualified majority for or against approval ([http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/dgs\\_consultations/docs/agenda\\_ge...](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dgs_consultations/docs/agenda_ge...) [15]).

## New Opinions

EFSA has published several opinions and statements:

- On 17 January 2014, an opinion on the safety of soybean for food and feed (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3505.htm> [16]). Soybean BPS-CV127-9 is marketed by BASF Plant Science and is engineered to be tolerant to imidazolinone herbicides.
- On 18 December 2013, EFSA published an opinion on soybean 305423 (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3499.htm> [17]). Soybean 305423 is engineered to be tolerant to ALS inhibitors and has a changed fatty acid profile.
- On 17 December 2013, EFSA also published a complementing statement on soybean MON 87705 oil (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3507.htm> [18]).
- On 13 December 2013, the GMO Panel published an opinion on the Post Market Environmental Monitoring regarding the cultivation of maize MON810 in the EU (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3500.htm> [19]). As in previous years, EFSA stated shortcomings in Monsanto's report, but nonetheless failed to „identify adverse effects on the environment, human and animal health due to maize MON 810 cultivation during the 2011 growing season.“
- On 12 December 2013, EFSA published two external reports relevant for the GMO safety debate (In vitro digestibility tests, <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/529e.htm>; [20] Non-IgE-mediated immune adverse reactions to foods, <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/527e.htm> [21]). The second report shows that such risks are relevant but have so far not been considered by EFSA.

Source URL: <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1022>

## Links

[1] <http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1021> [2] <http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1013> [3] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1017> [4] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/983> [5] <http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1010> [6] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1007> [7] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1006> [8] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1002> [9] <http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/34> [10] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/991> [11] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/976> [12] <http://www.testbiotech.org/node/867> [13] [http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/standing\\_committees/sc\\_modif\\_genet/docs/ag20140220\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/standing_committees/sc_modif_genet/docs/ag20140220_en.pdf) [14] <http://www.testbiotech.de/node/773> [15] [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/dgs\\_consultations/docs/agenda\\_gen\\_mod\\_food\\_feed\\_envi\\_risk\\_20140227\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dgs_consultations/docs/agenda_gen_mod_food_feed_envi_risk_20140227_en.pdf) [16] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3505.htm> [17] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3499.htm> [18] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3507.htm> [19] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3500.htm> [20] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/529e.htm> [21] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/527e.htm>

