

Monsanto's genetically engineered soybeans in margarine - healthy?

Recent EFSA opinions on genetically engineered plants under fire

23 June 2014 Testbiotech has heavily criticised the standards applied in the risk assessment of genetically engineered plants carried out by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). One reason for this is an application made by Monsanto for a new variety of genetically engineered soybeans. The US company is trying to get EU market authorisation for its new genetically engineered soybean MON87769, which it claims has a positive effect on health because of omega-3 fatty acids contained in the oil. Some years ago, Monsanto applied for patents on food products such as baked goods and margarine with added oil derived from the soybeans. Further patent applications were filed on animal feed and meat products derived from animals fed with these products, which are supposed to have an altered composition in body tissue. So far, EFSA has not assessed the claims made by Monsanto about benefits to health, or any other long-term effects from the consumption of these food products.

Whether the consumption of food enriched with omega-3 fatty acids has any health benefits or not has been controversially debated for several years. Recent epidemiological studies were unable to prove that these products had any beneficial effect on health. There are some concerns that higher dosages might foster the development of prostate cancer if consumed over longer periods of time. Yet EFSA has still not assessed any potential long-term effects or potential beneficial effects on health, nor any food derived from animals fed with the soybeans. Testbiotech is therefore urging the EU Commission to reject the EFSA risk assessment and not authorise the genetically engineered soybeans.

Testbiotech is also making the same demand in the case of another genetically engineered crop. The compositional analysis of a genetically engineered cotton produced by Bayer has shown a significantly higher content in highly toxic compounds (gossypol). Even so, EFSA still does not have any concerns over the use of the proteins and oil from the cotton plants in food and feed.

Further information: [Testbiotech comment on SDA soybean MON87769](#) [1]

[Testbiotech comment on stacked cotton GHB614 x LLCotton25](#) [2]

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