
Genetically engineered salmon marketed in Canada with no labelling

Salmon being used to explore marketing potential of other genetically engineered fish/animal products

8 August 2017/ According to information provided by AquaBounty, a subsidiary of the US company Intrexon, 4.5 tonnes of their genetically engineered salmon have already been sold on the Canadian food market. The distribution channels, however, remain unclear since no information was provided and labelling of the salmon was not required. Testbiotech is warning that the free trade agreement CETA could pave the way not only for genetically engineered salmon, but also for meat from the offspring of cloned bulls.

“The situation is becoming increasingly unclear. Given the total lack of transparency concerning the sale of the fish in Canada, who can be sure that none of the fish have entered the EU? And, in future, what about other genetically engineered animals produced with methods of genetic engineering that are no longer so easy to prove? This could easily lead to loss of control and choice in the EU,” warns Christoph Then for Testbiotech. “We can see that the question of legally required labelling has still not been resolved for the CETA agreement. As things stand, meat from cloned bulls and their offspring could even now be sold unnoticed in the EU.”

The fish have been engineered with additional growth hormones and can grow at least twice as fast as natural salmon; allowing the company, according to their own statements, to save about 10% on feed costs. Authorities in the USA have already approved the marketing of food products made with the genetically engineered salmon – these products have, however, not yet reached the supermarket shelves in the US.

The fish produce additional growth hormones and can inherit further unintended effects. There are no reliable methods to exclude any health risks associated with eating these kinds of genetically engineered fish. The risk to the environment is substantial: If the genetically engineered salmon escape, they can spread into native populations and endanger ecosystems. Because the salmon grow faster, more can be produced per year. More intensive salmon farming will increase the burden on the regional environment.

In future, genetically engineered cattle and pigs shall be also used in farming. And it appears likely that the free trade agreement CETA will accelerate such developments since the rules set out in the agreement are insufficient to secure current EU standards.

AquaBounty, the company which produces the salmon, is based in Canada and was bought by the US company, Intrexon. Intrexon shares are owned by investors who appear to be mostly interested in making a financial profit in near future. The founder of Intrexon is the investor Randal J. Kirk. The company has applied for patents covering genetically engineered mice, rats, cats, dogs, cattle, pigs, horses, sheep and chimpanzees as its invention. Intrexon also produces genetically engineered insects, apples and cloned bulls. Furthermore, Intrexon is working together with the FuturaGene Group to develop genetically engineered trees. Aggressively introducing its genetically engineered organisms on to the markets is an integral part of company policy.

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Further information: [Article in NATURE journal](#) [2]

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