Gene Drives, Risks & Tipping Points

International conference in Bremen on 19 / 20 June 2018

17 May Date / Currently, attempts are being made on several fronts to release genetically engineered organisms into the environment – the aim is to introduce artificial genetic information into native populations. The main focus is on insects carrying a so-called “gene drive”. In natural populations, gene drives are inherited at a higher frequency than is the case in classic patterns of inheritance. Target species under discussion include mosquitos, flies, rats and various plant species. According to EU regulation, the precautionary principle must be applied if genetically engineered organisms are to be released into the environment. Therefore, causes for concern, potential hazards and exposure potential associated with the release of such organisms all need to be identified. At the conference „Self-Propagation of Artificial Genetic Elements: Gene Drives, Risks & Tipping Points“ special focus will be placed on potential tipping points within affected systems. The phrase 'tipping point' is used to describe processes in which, beyond a certain point, the rate of an ongoing process increases dramatically or changes direction. Tipping points are considered to be inevitable, but not predictable. In the context of the project, we will address developments such as the propagation of populations in an unbalanced ecosystem.

At the conference we will discuss the following questions:
- How powerful and reliable are the technologies?
- How vulnerable are affected systems and how can relevant tipping points be identified by prospective risk assessment?
- How can these technologies be regulated with regard to the precautionary principle?
- Can risks associated with self-enforcing dynamic processes (tipping points) be identified?

The conference is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF); Testbiotech is involved in its organisation: www.genetip.de [1]

You can register here: https://www.genetip.de/en/public-conference/ [2]

Contact / questions: post@genetip.de [3]

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