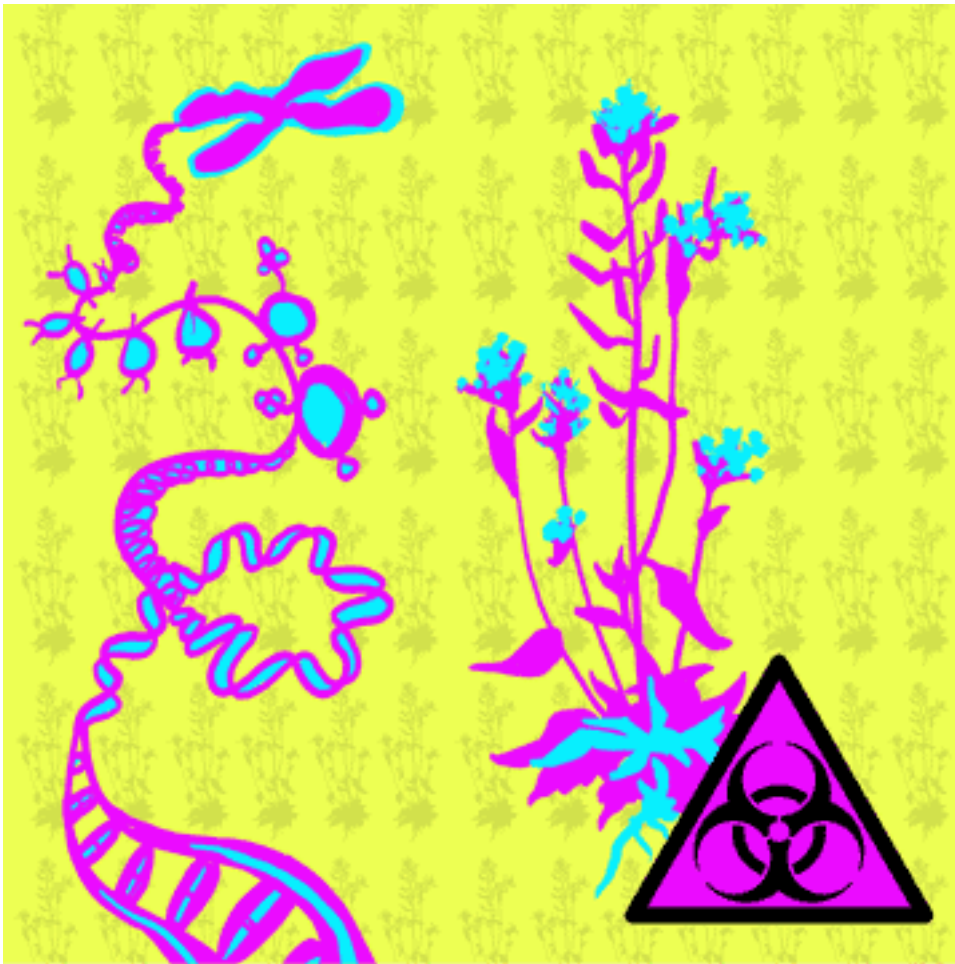


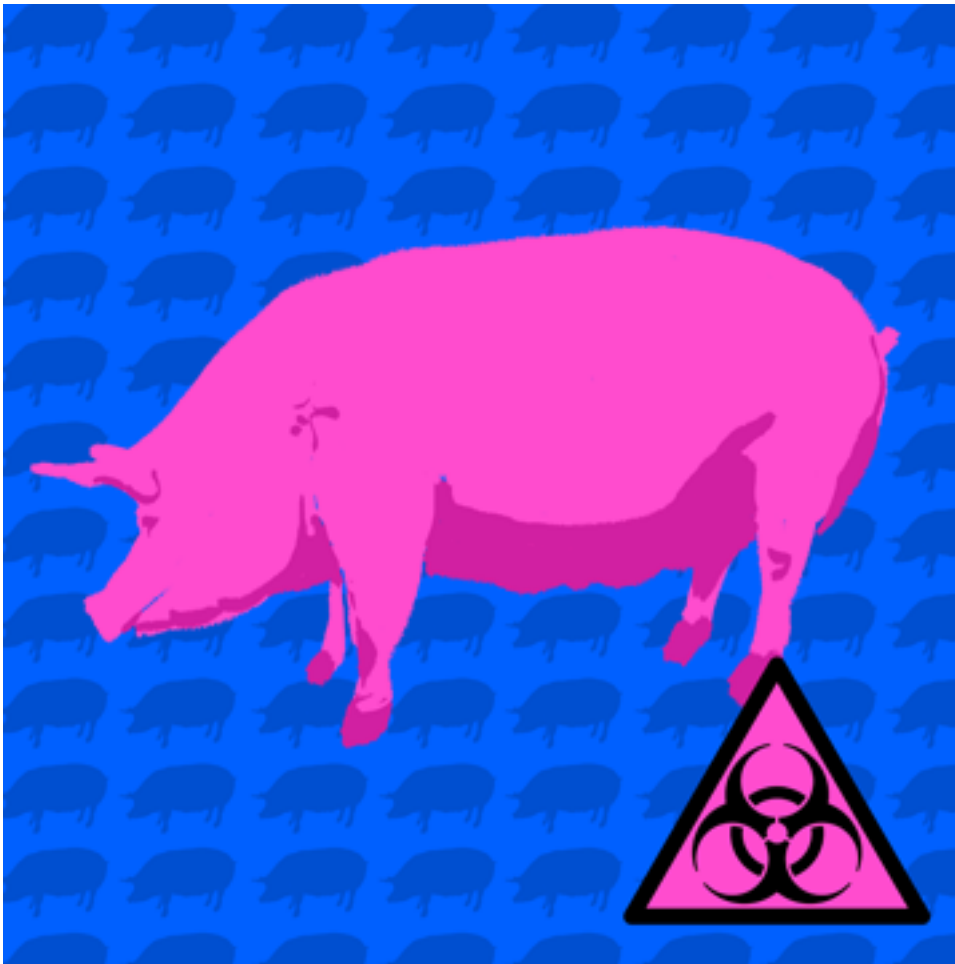
Join-in activity: More precaution and protection of humans, animals and the environment

Join-in activity: EU-Election 2019 [Version IV, updated at 07.05.2019]

More precaution and protection of humans, animals and the environment







The biotech industry and interested parties claim that there are no risks attached to the new methods of genetic engineering (genome editing). They want the new genetically engineered organisms to be marketed without going through an approval process, without detailed risk assessment and with no labelling.

Please help to remind politicians of their responsibilities and send the following letter to Manfred Weber, the lead candidate for the European People's Party (EPP) in the European elections.

Background

Risks of genetic engineering: more precaution and protection for people, animals and the environment!

Currently, we are entering a new era in genetic engineering, particularly with the discovery and development of new methods known as genome editing. The possibilities and risks of these new procedures go far beyond what was previously possible in the field of genetic engineering. Even if no additional genes are inserted into the genome and "only" individual genes are shut down, this can have a significant impact on organisms. In order to assess these risks, the respective plants and animals should be regulated and subjected to an approval process and detailed risk assessment. more...

In the EU, all genetically engineered organisms must undergo a mandatory risk assessment. However, interested parties and the biotech industry want to market their products as quickly as possible. Their goal: for plants and animals developed with new methods of genetic engineering to be released without going through an approval process and with no product labelling. If this were to be the case, market forces would inevitably lead to more and more risks being accepted: the new methods of genetic engineering no longer require the long experience gained from conventional

breeding that has developed over many years. This means that more and more organisms, some with completely new properties, could be created and released into the environment in ever shorter timescales.

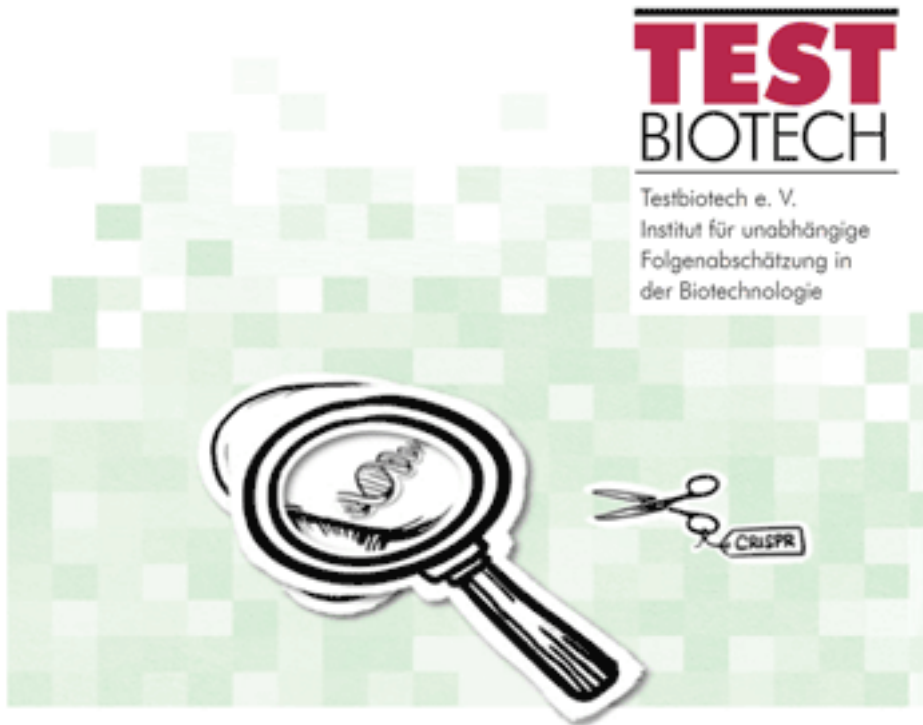
If the new plants are marketed without regulation or having to go through an approval process, no farmer or market gardener would know what they were actually growing. Moreover, the plants could be cross-bred and combined with each other without potential combinatorial effects being examined in detail. Consumers would lose all choice: no-one would be able to tell whether the plants were genetically engineered or not. Not even the authorities would know from which country the plants were imported, or what to look for if there were actual cases of harm to people or the environment.

Even more worrying is the fact that it is not just arable crops that are being targeted: in future natural populations of wild plants, insects and rodents could all become targets of genetic engineering. In this context, the application of so-called gene drives is highly relevant since they can be used to replace natural populations with genetically engineered organisms, or to eradicate certain species. This also means that any reliable predictions of long-term consequences will be impossible if genetically modified organisms are allowed to spread and multiply uncontrolled in the environment.

At the present time, there are still many risks associated with genetically engineered organisms that have not been sufficiently investigated. Overall, safety standards must be significantly improved and should not be completely eroded by exempting organisms from EU Regulation which are genetically engineered by the methods of 'genome editing'.

The scientific feasibility of applications in the field of genetic engineering combined with the pursuit of financial gain is increasingly leading to ethical boundaries being crossed, and the neglect of protection for people and the environment. The case of the CRISPR twins in China is just one extreme, but not the only example. EU policy must therefore set effective limits to genetic engineering. The protection of people, animals and the environment as well as the ethical boundaries must be strengthened and the freedom of choice for consumers must be assured.

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