

## EU Commission gives green light for approval of seven new genetically engineered plants

Outgoing EU Commission approves controversial applications for import before handing over

1 August 2019 / The EU Commission has given market approval to seven new genetically engineered (GE) plants. These include approvals for the import of GE maize, cotton and soybeans that are herbicide-resistant and produce insecticidal toxins. In March 2019, Testbiotech, together with around 40 organisations, called on the EU Commission to halt the approval processes because health risks from consuming products derived from the plants were not sufficiently assessed.

"The EU-Commission can no longer ignore scientifically-based concerns about the approval of GE plants. We are calling on the new President of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to make it clear that the protection of health and the environment is more important than the interests of big corporations and the US economy," Christoph Then says for Testbiotech

The plants that have been approved include Bayer/Monsanto soybeans (MON87751), which produce insecticidal toxins and are thought to trigger or enhance allergic reactions. Soybeans are particularly problematic in this regard since they can frequently trigger allergic reactions, even if they are not genetically engineered.

Another of the genetically engineered plants allowed for import is maize MON 87411, which produces a so-called double strand RNA (dsRNA). These biologically active molecules are taken up into the intestines of insects feeding on the plants, from where they can interfere with gene regulation and cell metabolism. This is intended to kill the insects feeding on the plants. However, the safety of these plants in regard to humans and the environment cannot be demonstrated since the underlying biological mechanisms are highly complex.

More than 70 genetically engineered plants are currently allowed for import and usage for food and feed in the EU. There are no studies on long-term or combinatorial health effects arising from diets containing a mixture of these plants. In recent years, the EU Parliament has repeatedly voted against further EU market approvals. However, these votes were completely ignored by the EU Commission. There are further decisions pending on approvals of genetically engineered maize for cultivation that could also be decided by the outgoing EU Commission.

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The seven new genetically engineered plants:

- Cotton GHB614 x LLCotton25 x MON15985
- Maize 5307
- Maize MON87403
- Maize 4114
- Maize MON87411
- Maize Bt11 x MIR162 x 1507 x GA21
- Soybean MON87751

**Further information:** [EU Commission media release](#) [2]  
[Joint letter from about 40 organisations](#) [3]

[Information on voting in the EU Parliament](#) [4]

[Database on EU authorisations with Testbiotech opinions on the new genetically engineered plants](#)

[5]

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### Links

[1] <mailto:info@testbiotech.org>

[2] [https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEX-19-4770\\_en.htm](https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-19-4770_en.htm)

[3] <http://www.testbiotech.org/node/2370>

[4] <http://www.greens-efa.eu/files/doc/docs/e491b1b487e5c6b48f553e1ef027bccf.pdf>

[5] <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/database>

