

Testbiotech assesses opinion of the EFSA on genetically engineered oilseed rape GT73

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Experts at Testbiotech have filed a statement to the EU Commission on an opinion given by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The statement concerns the genetically engineered oilseed rape GT73 produced by the US company Monsanto. This oilseed rape is genetically engineered to tolerate the herbicide glyphosate (also known under its brand name Roundup). The EFSA delivered a favourable opinion to allow further imports for use in the food chain. GT73 was assessed once before by the EFSA in 2004 (for details see: EFSA GMO watch, link).

In their statement, the Testbiotech group calls attention to potential health risks. According to their analyses, the investigations performed by Monsanto and others are not sufficient. Important compounds in the GE oilseed were not determined and the feeding trials were flawed by substantial failures in design and methodology. Possible impacts on the immune system were not investigated despite concerns raised by experts of some member states.

Testbiotech regards the current approach of the EFSA as generally insufficient to carry out risk assessment on genetically engineered plants (see also Testbiotech Report 'risk reloaded'). Recently new doubts about the independence of the authority were raised after it was made public that a leading member of staff had moved from the EFSA directly to a company producing genetically engineered plants. This case revealed by Testbiotech was discussed in the European Parliament last week. Amongst others, Kartika Liotard, the Member of Parliament responsible for contacts with the EFSA called for further consequences.

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Links

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