

Seed purity as important aspect of risk management

A report on seed purity and risk related aspects was yesterday/ today published by IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements). The authors are Christoph Then at Testbiotech and Matthias Stolze at the FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Switzerland). The study, Economic impacts of labelling thresholds for the adventitious presence of genetically engineered organisms in conventional and organic seed, shows that seed purity is vitally important in ensuring transparency, segregation and freedom of choice for consumers.



The study also explains that risk management as foreseen in the European Union requires a 'zero' tolerance in seeds as being a crucial so that genetically engineered seed can be withdrawn from the market in the event unexpected adverse effects are observed.

Many cases of seed contamination from genetically engineered seeds have been observed in the last few years. Contamination in seeds is a general problem for all steps in food production, since even small amounts of seeds can affect seed, food and feed production on a large scale. Furthermore, seed contamination can be self-perpetuating over many years without being noticed.

As recent history shows, ignoring seed purity can also become expensive for the seed industry. The Bayer company was for example in April 2010 ordered to pay six million dollars to US farmers for damage from contaminated rice seed in 2006. Experts estimate that altogether around one billion dollars' economical damage was caused by this case of rice contamination. Bayer has already been sentenced by several other courts, and some cases are still pending.

Measures to establish seed purity are technically and economically feasible. In many cases seed production is concentrated in certain regions. Thus specific measures to prevent contamination can be implemented much more easily than action taken in the later stages of farm and food production.

Attachment

	Size
 IFOAM-Economic impacts of labelling thresholds.pdf [1]	1.04 MB
 100426-PR-seed-study-PC.doc [2]	52.5 KB

Source URL: <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/news/seed-purity-important-aspect-risk-management>

Links

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