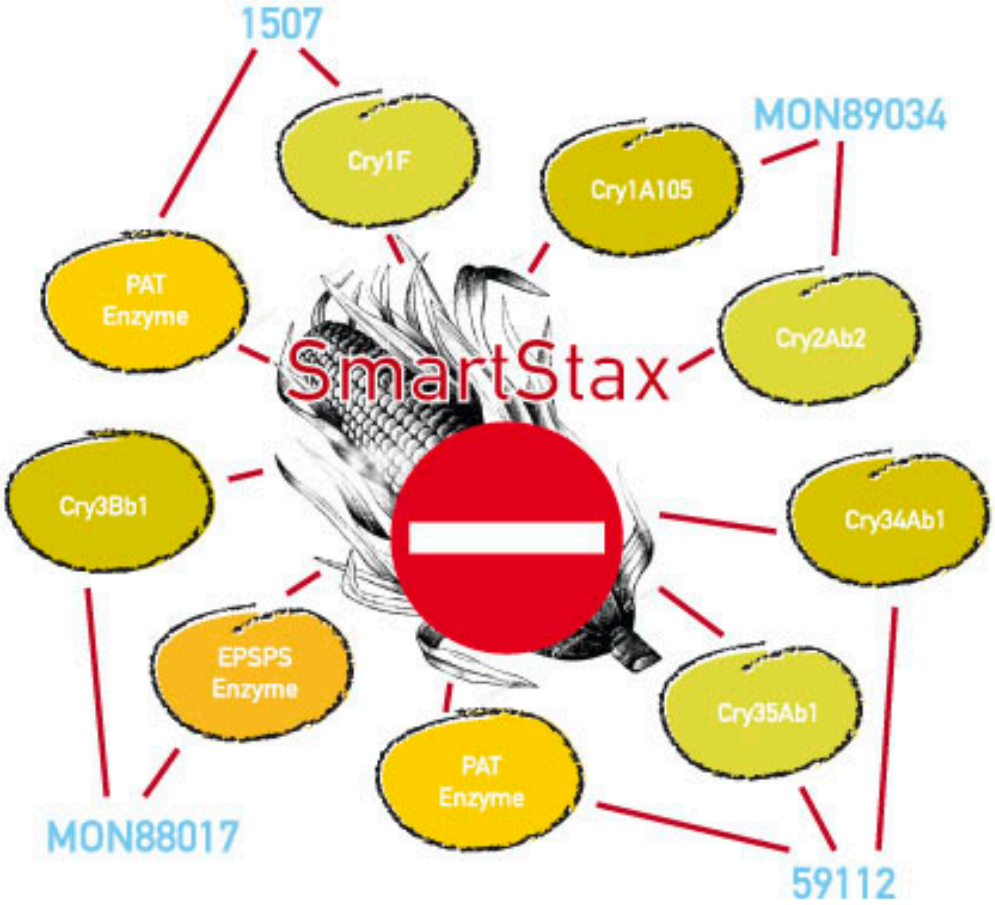
EU Commission is not taking SmartStax safety concerns seriously

Genetically engineered maize likely to be authorised



Munich/ Brussels 17 July 2013. Tonio Borg is unlikely to stop the authorisation of the genetically engineered maize SmartStax for usage in food and feed. This is the conclusion from a letter received by Testbiotech last week from the EU Commission. In its letter, the Commission claims that any scientific concerns have already been dealt with. There is only one feeding study with pigs still to be assessed by European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Testbiotech believes that the letter from the EU Commission shows that it is simply window-dressing the issue and not addressing the serious concerns regarding the safety of SmartStax. This maize produces six insecticidal toxins and is resistant to two herbicides. There has been no testing for combinatorial effects from the toxins and the spray residues contained in the plants. Additionally, there has been no testing carried out to assess the impact of the foreign proteins produced by the plants on the immune system, even though several publications indicate a higher risk of inflammation. In its answer to the Commission, Testbiotech will again emphasise the flaws in the risk assessment of SmartStax. Testbiotech is also very critical of a preliminary assessment of the pig feeding study presented by German authorities. According to the study, pigs fed with a genetically engineered maize similar to SmartStax, showed signs of severe stomach inflammation (Carman et al., 2013). In their assessment, the German authorities were critical of the fact that the study was conducted under practical conditions. However, as Testbiotech points out, there have so far hardly been any detailed studies investigating the impact of genetically engineered feed on the health of livestock in the real conditions of

commercial farming. Such conditions are very often more stressful for animals than scientifically standardised conditions. As a new study shows, toxins produced by SmartStax should actually be looked upon as additional stress factors (Bondzio etl al., 2013). Testbiotech is urging the EU Commission to make sure that a high level of protection of health and the environment is prioritised above the economic interests of companies such as Monsanto. An e-mail action requesting the EU Commission to stop the authorisation of Smartstax has already gained the support of around 5000 people.

Further information: Letter from the Commission of 12 July 2013 [1]
Answer from Testbiotech of 17 July 2013 [2]
BVL & BFR (2013), Preliminary assessment of Carman et al. 2013 (in German) [3]
Carman J.A., Vlieger, H.R., Ver Steeg, L.J., Sneller, V.E., Robinson, G.W., Clinch-Jones, C.A., Haynes, J.I., Edwards, J.W. (2013) A long-term toxicology study on pigs fed a combined genetically modified (GM) soy and GM maize diet. [4]
Bondzio, A., Lodemann, U., Weise, C., Einspanier, R. (2013) Cry1Ab Treatment Has No Effects on Viability of Cultured Porcine Intestinal Cells, but Triggers Hsp70 Expression. [5]

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