Appeal to EU Commissioner Tonio Borg: Please withdraw market authorisation for SmartStax!

SmartStax is a joint Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences genetically engineered maize that produces six insecticidal proteins (Bt toxins) and is tolerant to two herbicides (glyphosate and glufosinate). One of the insecticidal proteins is derived from synthetic DNA that does not have a natural variant.

! Please help us to get market authorisation of SmartStax withdrawn. Please send an e-mail to this effect to Commissioner Tonio Borg [1] before 5 March 2014.

! Please also sign up if you would like to contribute to the costs of a court case [1] or if you are interested in receiving further information from Testbiotech [1].

In November 2013, the EU Commission allowed this maize to be used in food and feed in the EU, after assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Testbiotech filed its complaint in January 2014. By filing a complaint, Testbiotech wants the EU Commission to withdraw market authorisation for SmartStax. According to EU regulations, the EU Commission has two months to respond. After due process of the complaint, it might be possible to forward the case to Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Testbiotech is now looking for financial support if the lawsuit is started.

SmartStax combines several genetically engineered plants into one plant, and thereby inevitably result in pyramiding risks and uncertainties. Nevertheless, there was hardly any investigation into the combinatorial effects. No feeding study was performed with the stacked maize to investigate potential effects on health and no investigation was carried out to examine the impact of long-term exposure.

SmartStax has a much higher Bt content than any other genetically engineered plant to date. Health risks associated with Bt toxins are of concern because of potential toxicity as well as its impact on the immune system. For example, there are studies showing that consumption of these plants can provoke or enhance the risk of inflammatory diseases of the intestine. This risk was not assessed by EFSA.

A further matter of concern is the quality of the data, which were provided for risk assessment: The investigations used in the risk assessment were conducted by and/or commissioned and paid for by industry. No independent laboratories were involved, data were not published in peer-reviewed magazines and the wording of some reports even indicates manipulation of the data.

Many thanks for your support!

Further information: Short briefing on the complaint [2]
The text of the complaint [3]

Links
[1] http://www.testbiotech.org/en/smartstax
[2] http://www.testbiotech.org/sites/default/files/Briefing _Testbiotech_Complaint_SmartStax.pdf
[3] http://www.testbiotech.org/sites/default/files/Testbiotech_Complaint_SmartStax_a.pdf