Stop the “toxic soybean”

Call to stop EU authorisation of genetically engineered soybeans containing a mix of chemical residues that might be carcinogenic
Donnerstag, 23. July 2015
Munich

Testbiotech is warning that EU market authorisation might be given to a new genetically engineered soybean produced by Monsanto. Soybean MON 87708 × MON 89788 was made resistant to two pesticides, glyphosate and dicamba. Spraying soybean crops with these herbicides leaves residues in the plants which might be carcinogenic. Glyphosate was recently classified as “probably carcinogenic” by an international expert group. Dicamba degrades to compounds such as formaldehyde, which has already been classified as carcinogenic for several years. It follows that the harvested soybeans will regularly contain a combination of residues from these herbicides. If they are imported, the food and feed chain could be permanently exposed to this specific mixture.

This is the first time that this combination of herbicides will be used to spray soybeans. The plants will be cultivated as “Roundup Ready® Xtend Crop System” in regions such as the US, which are known to have major problems with herbicide resistant weeds. The intent is to import the harvested soybeans into the EU for usage in food and feed. Each year, 30 to 40 million tons of soybean are imported into the EU, mostly for use in animal feed.

“Large-scale cultivation of genetically engineered plants is part of a process of 'arming up' in the fields. We are already seeing applications for market authorisations of genetically engineered plants that are resistant to the spraying of up to four different herbicides all at once”, says Christoph Then for Testbiotech, “Consequently, the environment and the food and feed chain will be increasingly exposed to a mix of toxic compounds.”

The European Food Safety Authority, EFSA, assessed the risks of these particular soybeans, but it did not assess the specific mixture of residues from spraying with herbicides and their potential health impact. EFSA is following the principle that pesticides used on herbicide resistant plants only have to be assessed under pesticide regulation. However, pesticide regulation does not require assessment of specific combinations of residues in the plants. Furthermore, no feeding studies were conducted with this stacked soybean. This means that the real health risks remain largely unknown.

Testbiotech has started a public call to the EU Commission not to issue market authorisation for these plants, but instead to define new implementation regulations for herbicide resistant plants and their accumulated, combinatorial effects.

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Weitere Informationen: The call [2]
The opinion of EFSA [3]
Short version of Testbiotech assessment of the EFSA opinion [4]

Anhang	Größe
PR_toxic_syobean.pdf [5]	63.73 KB

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