

No new approvals for genetically engineered soybeans sprayed with glyphosate!

Safety loopholes in the approval process and imports

25 October 2017 / After the vote on glyphosate was postponed once again, Testbiotech is demanding that all approvals for genetically engineered soybeans sprayed with glyphosate are stopped. The reason: The residues in the soybean harvest are from herbicide mixtures that are even more toxic than glyphosate alone, and none of these have ever been properly investigated. According to a European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report published in April 2017, the national authorities in the EU have not tested even one soybean for such residues, even though the soybeans were sprayed with massive amounts of glyphosate mixtures. At the same time, the companies are glossing over the data they submit for the approval process.

“Each year about 30 to 40 million tons of soybeans are imported from countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, and the USA. These are for the most part genetically engineered and have been massively sprayed with herbicide mixtures that contain glyphosate. The imported harvests routinely contain residues. Even the EFSA has expressly stated that the data submitted are insufficient to assess the risks to health. Appropriate action finally needs to be taken. No further new import approvals should be issued!” says Christoph Then for Testbiotech.

The national authorities are responsible for the lack of assessment data on the imports. The EFSA has repeatedly complained that a lot more data are needed in order to assess the risks associated with the residues in the soybean harvest. According to current available data, only 8 soybean samples were investigated in Germany during 2015. The samples were taken from soybeans cultivated in China, France, Germany and Austria - all of which are countries where genetically engineered soybeans are not grown.

Moreover, the companies submitted data that were obviously glossed over and insufficient. In agricultural practice, farmers spray the genetically engineered plants multiple times with glyphosate, even shortly before the harvest. Increasing problems with weeds are leading to ever higher amounts of herbicide mixtures being used. According to Monsanto, farmers can spray up to 8 kg / hectare of glyphosate onto the fields. However, in the field trials for the approval process, the companies only used about ca. 1 kg per hectare and sprayed the plants only once at the beginning of cultivation.

The amount of residues in the harvest can vary depending on the amount of herbicide used and the number of applications. In addition, there are also changes in plant constituents. This can, for instance, enhance the effect of allergens or phytoestrogens. The data submitted by the companies is therefore not acceptable for risk assessment.

The loopholes in risk assessment are currently very apparent in the approval process for new genetically engineered soybeans that were developed by Bayer and Dow AgroSciences to be resistant to three different groups of herbicides. Bayer treated its soybeans just once with only

around 1 kilo of glyphosate/hectare. In addition, not all of the relevant substances were tested on the plants, and combinatorial effects were completely ignored.

Testbiotech is demanding that approvals for these genetically engineered plants are stopped, even though the use of glyphosate in the EU has not yet been banned.

Contact:

Christoph Then, Tel 0049 (0) 151 54638040, info@testbiotech.org

Further information:

Checking the facts, updated version: Genetically engineered soybeans from Bayer and Dow with triple resistance to herbicides: www.testbiotech.org/node/2065

Video clip on risks of genetically engineered soybeans: www.testbiotech.org/en/limits-to-biotech/toxic-soy

EFSA report on pesticide residues in food: www.efsa.europa.eu/de/efsajournal/pub/4791