



Low Level GM Presence & Why Animal Feed Prices Are on the Rise

What EuropaBio is asking for

- The EU must move away from its untenable zero-tolerance approach, to a low-level tolerance in imported agricultural commodities of GMOs, which have been approved elsewhere in the world but not have not yet been EU-authorized.
- There must be an immediate and effective acceleration of the EU approval process by freeing it from politically motivated delays.
- Timelines for EFSA scientific assessment, Commission processing and Member State voting must be respected. This is the only viable way to address the backlog of GM crops and for the EU to catch up with international developments.

Purpose of this meeting

To raise awareness among policy makers of the urgency of the issue of Low Level GMO Presence in feed and its potential to dramatically worsen in 2008/2009 when the EU will suffer severe feed shortages leading to feed, meat and animal-derived product price increases. EU politicians must act now to prevent this doom scenario by making the GM approval system work.

Introduction

Animal feed prices in the EU are rising fast, and this is causing higher consumer prices for meat and animal-derived products. Without rapid political action, feed prices will take a further quantum leap in late 2008/2009. The most significant factor for these price increases is the devastating impact of the EU's dysfunctional approval system for GMOs (genetically modified organisms) on maize, and as of 2009, soy bean imports into the EU. In 2007 there was a "*squeeze on feed*" resulting in price increases and serious problems for livestock farmers.

The problem is that the EU GM plant approval process is not working as it was designed to resulting in long delays. Based on recent cases, EU approvals take 33 months or longer, whereas in the U.S. it takes about 15 months. But the EU cannot import these, nor any of the same crops because there is "zero tolerance" for any trace of a product until the approval process is complete. The effect is that Europe is progressively cutting itself off from key sources of feed imports. The major sources of animal feed protein are soybeans and maize. Currently, the EU has to import around 75% of its animal feed, of which soybean products make up 61% .

Recommendations

The only viable, practical and long-term solution is a combination of two approaches. First, the EU must move away from its untenable zero-tolerance approach to a low-level tolerance in imported agricultural commodities of GMOs, which have been approved elsewhere in the world but not have not yet been EU-authorized. The specific details of this can be worked out quickly and this may temporarily alleviate the short-term challenges in 2008 and 2009. There is a precedent for this approach: it was used as an emergency measure in relation to plant protection products and medicinal substances in imported feed and foodstuffs. Second, there must be an immediate and effective acceleration of the EU approval process by freeing it from politically motivated delays. In each of its stages: EFSA scientific assessment, Commission processing and Member State voting, timelines must be respected. This is the only viable way to address the backlog of GM crops and for the EU to catch up with international developments. In the longer term, the EU should seek international harmonisation of approval systems with mutual recognition of data for approvals.

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