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Advisory Forum

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ANNOUNCEMENT

EFSA COLLOQUIUM 8

Environmental Risk Assessment of Genetically Modified Plants – Challenges and Approaches

20 -21 June 2007, Tabiano, Italy

Background

According to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 on genetically modified food and feed and Directive 2001/18/EC on deliberate release of genetically modified organisms (GMO) into the environment, a risk assessment of the potential effects that a genetically modified organism might have on human or animal health and the environment, has to be carried out prior putting the genetically modified product on the European market. The EFSA Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO Panel) issued a guidance document¹ for the risk assessment of genetically modified plants and derived food and feed, describing an overall risk assessment strategy as well as the issues to be considered when carrying out a comprehensive risk characterization. In this guidance document it was pointed out that risk assessment is an evolving science and that approaches to risk assessment need to be continually challenged and reviewed. Therefore approaches and methods of conducting environmental risk assessments must also evolve in response to these changes and to scientific developments and knowledge.

Objectives of the Colloquium

The objectives of the colloquium are to consider approaches to environmental risk assessment in the light of current scientific thinking. Issues, such as environmental fitness, impacts on non-target organisms, long-term effects, impacts of large scale production, impacts on life cycles of production systems, broader environmental considerations and risks versus benefits can be assessed, will be discussed. The outcomes of the colloquium will be considered by the GMO Panel in the continuous process of reviewing the current Environmental Risk Assessment methodology.

¹ Guidance Document of the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms for the risk assessment of genetically modified plants and derived food and feed
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/etc/medialib/efsa/press_room/publications/scientific/1497.Par.0005.File.dat/gmo_guidance%20gm%20plants_en.pdf

Structure of the meeting

The colloquium will be organised in a way that provides for interactive exchange of expert views. The meeting will be informal to allow for debates but, at the same time, will be structured and managed to enable the participants to reach conclusions and make recommendations.

There will be some plenary presentations by invited speakers to introduce the key topics. Then discussion groups will be formed to review specific aspects in more detail. The discussion groups will focus on the testing of non-target organisms, the impacts of upscaling areas of genetically modified cropping, the long-term effects and risk-benefit analysis of genetically modified organisms in the environment.

The final plenary session on the second day will be reserved to discuss the outcomes of the discussion groups and to arrive at conclusions and recommendations.

A report will be prepared of the main outcomes of the colloquium.

Who should attend?

This programme will be relevant for experts in the area of risk assessment of genetically modified organisms and particularly for experts in environmental impact of genetically modified plants.

For logistical reasons, participation will be limited to 100 experts, including the members of the GMO Panel, EFSA staff and plenary speakers.

Interested experts are requested to register and to indicate their area(s) of expertise (see the registration form) in order to be considered. Participants will be selected to ensure a sufficient representation of the various fields of expertise, and to have a good geographical balance. The registration form can be found at: <http://www3.efsa.europa.eu/cf/meetingsub.cfm?meetingid=10>

Please note that registration will be closed once the maximum number of participants will be reached or at the latest on May 21st, 2007.

Documentation

Relevant background documents and briefing notes for working groups will be made available on the EFSA website in time for participants to prepare for the discussions.

Travel and accommodation

Participants are asked to make their own travel arrangements. Concerning accommodation, EFSA has made a block-booking for nights of 19 and 20 June. Participants will be requested to make your own reservation when participations are confirmed.

Dates and Venue

The colloquium will be held on **20-21 June 2007 in Tabiano, Emilia-Romagna, Italy**. The meeting will start at 09:00 on the first day and will end at 14:30 on the second day.

Official language

English will be the official language of the colloquium. No simultaneous translations will be provided.

Website

The latest information about the colloquium is available at:
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/colloquium_series.html

The conclusions and recommendation of the meeting will be published on the EFSA website and as a glossy publication in the EFSA Series on Scientific Colloquium Reports.

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