

Dr. Barry O'Reilly, Secretary
Dept. of Agriculture
National Crop Variety Testing Centre
Backweston, Leixlip, Co. Kildare

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Barry, a chara

We are a practical environmental education group based in Tralee Co. Kerry. We are working with 5-8 projects which involve creating organic gardens. Most of these projects involve children & adults growing & eating organically grown food.

We are very concerned about the serious implications of the release of genetically modified crops & plants & animal feeds on to the Irish market & into Irish soil. We do not believe that the co-existence of GM crops & non-GM crops is possible, without cross-contamination occurring.

Please find attached a submission on behalf of our project, outlining the reasons we believe that there are too many unknowns in releasing seeds to be grown in a scientific 'co-existence' manner. We believe that this is a serious risk that will be taken, with unknown consequences to humans, our food & wild flora & fauna.

Sinne le meas

Niamh Ní Dhúill (project co-ordinator)

Ian McGrigor (project secretary)

Colin Shanahan (project worker)

Eileen Carroll (resident artist)

The G.M. Debate- 10 Points of Concern

According to David Byrne (outgoing EU Health & Consumer Affairs) 'any member state may object to the marketing on their territory of any such GM variety if they consider there is a risk for human health, the environment or agronomic reasons.

Points:

1. The technology is unsafe & consequences unknown, as there is the real possibility of unstable horizontal gene transfer between species
2. It is controlled by multinational corporations - it is well known that the beneficiaries of this technology are the bio-technology companies, who also make the pesticide sprays for the crops, etc.
3. It reduces independence of family farms
 - Loss of right to save & plant own seed
 - Organic licences & certification will be lost
4. It runs counter to Agro-ecological farming
 - Contamination of organic & conventional crops & animal feeds alike
 - Permanent damage as we cannot recall GM genes that pass into the wild
5. It will mean Bio diversity loss
 - This loss will be irreversible
 - Loss of heritage seeds & plants
6. It presents a Wild life threat; cross pollination and super weeds will result.
7. No farmers want it
 - Reduces value of food exports
 - IFA, Irish Cattle & Sheep Farmers Assoc are amongst those opposed to release of GM seeds
8. No consumers want it
 - Strong opposition in Europe - 80% consumers are demanding GM free food & meat

- What about consumer choice? - labelling is not satisfactory as there can be hidden *GM* ingredients below the threshold of mandatory labelling
9. Chefs do not want to use *GM* food in their restaurants - a large number of prominent chefs have opposed the introduction of *GM* crops, the slow food movement, etc.
 10. It is not sustainable and is fertiliser dependant - this cycle is very damaging to the environment & human health
 11. Labelling
 - Is not sufficient
 - Can be confusing to consumers
 12. Lack of insurance
 - Refusal by insurance companies to cover disaster risks
 13. Tourism implications
 - Ireland's 'clean green image' will be lost permanently
 - Ireland could make a great selling point abroad that it is a *GM* free zone
 14. Education
 - Lack of awareness & educational campaign to show both sides of the argument
 15. Public not consulted - no referenda
 - Loss of right to choose *GM* free food
 - No guarantee that other conventional & organic food is *GM* free

Please consider these enormous facts & the enormous implications of releasing any more *GM* seeds, plants or animal feeds on to the Irish market. More time is needed to consider the massive environmental, human, health, agricultural & economic issues directly related to this urgent issue.

Sinne le meas