

Urgent - JIGMOD scientists' letter

Wednesday, 21 December 2005 18:08

From: "Dominique Beroule" Dominique.Beroule@limsi.fr
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Cc: alter.campagne@laposte.net
Subject: Urgent: JIGMOD scientists' letter
Date: Wed, 21 Dec 2005

Bonjour from France,

You recently broadcasted a letter in connection with the Joint International GMO Opposition Day. Thank you very much for this, although the person who passed on the message to you did it too early. The problem is that the introduction of this letter was just a preliminary one.

Here is the correct introduction. Thank you for considering it as the only valid presentation of the Scientists' Letter.

Best regards,

Dominique B roule,
Member of the JIGMOD Coordinating Committee

Dear friends and colleagues,

The attached 1-page letter summarizes many of the risks and problems of genetically engineered organisms. It will be read out during the international video-conference of the Joint International GMO Opposition Day (JIGMOD) on 8 April, 2006, and at related demonstrations (e.g. 9 April in Chicago, 20 April in Brussels).

The letter, written by a team of scientists and others, is primarily aimed at parliamentarians. It therefore emphasizes health risks - a particularly sensitive topic for law makers. The letter may also be used to highlight risks for shareholders of biotech companies.

Please help us circulate the letter to gather supporting signatures: from scientists, as well as members of farmer-, consumer-, and political-organizations. (You are welcome to sign as a member, even if you are not signing on behalf of your organization.)

To become a signer, simply send an email to alter.campagne@laposte.net. Include your name, profession, country, and whether you are signing as a scientist or as a member or officer of an organization. The final list of signatories will be posted on the <http://altercampagne.free.fr/> website.

Thank you for helping us protect the health of our population and environment.

With our best regards,

Dr Dominique Béroule, on behalf of the JIGMOD Coordinating Committee.

P.S.: Could you please pass on this message to your circle. Thank you in advance.

MEMORANDUM

The current generation of genetically modified (GM) crops unnecessarily risks the health of the population and the environment. Present knowledge is not sufficient to safely and predictably modify the plant genome, and the risks of serious side-effects far outweigh the benefits. We urge you to stop feeding the products of this infant science to our population and ban the release of these crops into the environment where they can never be recalled.

The current technology was rushed to market long before the science was worked out. Its introduction was accompanied with rigged research, bribes,¹ gagged scientists,² cover-ups³ and regulatory agencies stacked with industry representatives.⁴ With mounting evidence of serious health and environmental problems, we must act quickly to end the charade and this dangerous abuse of public trust.

Current safety assessments are inadequate to catch most of the harmful effects. When a foreign gene is artificially inserted into a living organism such as a GM crop, the preexisting natural gene of the organism can unintentionally be deleted, switched off, permanently switched on, mutated or fragmented. Hundreds of natural genes may change the way they generate their proteins (basic molecules that form living cells), and even the newly introduced protein may differ from what was intended.

- Key assumptions used as the basis for safety claims have been overturned and several adverse findings suggest that GM foods are unsafe. GM-fed animals had problems with their growth, organ development and immune responsiveness, blood⁵ and liver cell⁶ formation, as well as damaged organs (bleeding stomachs,⁷ excessive cell growth,⁸ inflammation in lung tissue⁹), sterility problems¹⁰ and increased death rates,¹¹ including among the offspring.¹²

- Risks are increased by the fact that the genes inserted into GM food not only survive digestion, but transfer into body organs and circulation. Transgenes have been found in the blood, liver, spleen and kidneys.¹³ DNA can even travel via the placenta into the unborn.¹⁴ The only human clinical trial showed that transgenes from soy transfer into intestinal bacteria.¹⁵

- Claims that no one has gotten hurt from GM foods are misleading, since no one monitors human health impacts. We do know that soya allergies skyrocketed by 50 percent after GM soybeans were imported to the UK,¹⁶ and a GM food supplement killed about 100 Americans and caused 5,000- 10,000 to fall sick.¹⁷

- Some GM crops create their own pesticide called Bt. Their approval relied on the assumption that Bt toxin is not bioactive in mammals. But Bt-toxin caused powerful immune responses and abnormal and excessive cell growth in mice. Filipinos living next to Bt cornfields developed mysterious symptoms during the time of pollination - three seasons in a row - and blood tests showed an immune response to Bt.¹⁸ A November 2005 report from India claims that Bt cotton also creates allergic responses.¹⁹ What if Bt genes transfer to gut bacteria like soya genes do? They could turn our internal flora into living pesticide factories.

Despite the Public Relation spin, GM crops increase the use of herbicides²⁰, lower average yield, and endanger food security. They are detrimental to sustainable and organic farming, and trap farmers in a cycle of indebtedness and dependence. They endanger biodiversity²¹, harm beneficial insects²², damage soil bacteria²³, contaminate non-GM varieties²⁴ and may persist in the environment for generations.²⁵

Insurance companies do not want to cover the risks inherent in GMOs.²⁶ Consumers do not want them.²⁷

Please act today to protect our health, our environment, and future generations.

1 Monsanto fined \$1.5m for bribery (7 January, 2005) BBC News(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4153635.stm>)

2 Delborne, J.A. (August 27, 2004) Transforming Scientific Dissent into Dissidence: Analysis of "The Pulse of Scientific Freedom in the Age of the Biotech Industry", Annual Conference of the Society for the Social Studies of Science, Ecole des Mines, Paris. (http://www.csi.ensmp.fr/WebCSI/4S/download_paper/download_paper.php?paper=delborne.pdf)

3 GMO: French authorities wish confidentiality on sanitary studies: "OGM : les autorités françaises veulent la confidentialité sur les études sanitaires" (2005) (<http://www.novethic.fr/novethic/site/article/index.jsp?id=95406>)

4 Among many other cases, (May 2004) 'Independent and objective consultants servicing the agricultural, agricultural supply trade, rural and food industries' (<http://www.gmwatch.org/profile1.asp?PrId=308&page=P>)

5 French experts very disturbed by health effects of Monsanto GM corn (March 24 2004), (<http://www.lobbywatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3308>), Translation of Le Monde article (June 2005) "L'expertise confidentielle sur un inquiétant maïs transgénique," Confidential report on a worrying GM corn. Also see Spilling the Beans, (<http://www.seedsofdeception.com/Public/New>)

sletter/June05GMCornHealthDangerExposed/index.cfm

)
by Herve Kempf, 22.04.04,(<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3226,36-362061,0.html>)

6 Malatesta M, Caporaloni C, Gavaudan S, et al (2002) "Ultrastructural Morphometrical and Immunocytochemical Analyses of Hepatocyte Nuclei from Mice Fed on Genetically Modified Soybean". Cell Structure and Function Vol. 27, No. 4 pp.173-18.
(<http://www.lobbywatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3622>)

7 Pusztai, A. et al. (2003) Genetically Modified Foods: Potential Human Health Effects. In: Food Safety: Contaminants and Toxins (ed. JPF D'Mello) pp.347-372. CAB International, Wallingford Oxon, UK

8 Ewen, SWB & Pusztai, A. (1999) Effects of diets containing genetically modified potatoes expressing Galanthus nivalis lectin on rat small intestine. Lancet 354, 1727-1728.

9 Prescott V.E., Campbell P.M., Moore A., Mattes J., Rothenberg M. E., Foster P.S., Higgins T.J.V., and Hogan S.P. (November 16, 2005) Transgenic Expression of Bean-Amylase Inhibitor in Peas Results in Altered Structure and Immunogenicity, Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, Volume 53, Issue 23, , pp. 9023 – 9030(<http://www.csiro.au/csiro/content/standard/pssp,,.html>)

10 - Bt Corn Linked to Hog Breeding Problems (May 20, 2002), in http://www.gmfreecymru.org.uk/crops_bt.htm

- Sterility indirectly favoured by round-up ready GM crops : Richard S., Moslemi S., Sipahutar H., Benachour N., and Seralini G.-E. (2005) Differential Effects of Gly phosate and Roundup on Human Placental Cells and Aromatase Environmental Health Perspectives Volume 113, Number 6, June 2005. (<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/members/2005/7728/7728.pdf>)

11 Report for the Chardon LL Hearing, Non-Suitability of Genetically Engineered Feed for Animals, Dr. Eva Novotny, Scientists for Global Responsibility (May 2002).

(http://www.sgr.org.uk/GenEng/animalfeel_all.pdf)

12 The study was presented at several conferences starting on October 10, 2005, but has not been published or subjected to peer-review. The results must be considered preliminary and unverified, but medical organizations and others are calling for the immediate repetition of the study, given the disturbing findings. See www.seedsofdeception.com/Public/Newsletter/Oct05RatsDieWhenMothersEatGMSoy/index.cfm

13 Pusztai, A. and Bardocz, S. (2005) GMO in animal nutrition: potential benefits and risks. In "Biology of Nutrition in Growing Animals", R. Mosenthin, J. Zentek and T. Zebrowska (Eds.), Elsevier Limited, pp. 513-540.

14 Doerfler W; Schubert R (1994) "Uptake of foreign DNA from the environment: the gastrointestinal tract and the placenta as portals of entry," Journal of molecular genetics and genetics Vol 242: 495-504.

15 Netherwood, et al (2 February 2004) Assessing the survival of transgenic plant DNA in the human gastrointestinal tract, Nature Biotechnology, Vol 22 Number.

16 Townsend M. (March 12, 1999) "Why Soya is a hidden destroyer," Daily Express.

17 Smith J. (2003), Seeds of Deception, Chapter 4 Deadly Epidemic, Yes! Books 2003. See also www.seedsofdeception.com, L-tryptophan section.

18 Preliminary evidence presented at a conference by the Norwegian Institute for Gene Ecology, for delegates to the 2004 UN Biosafety Protocol Conference. See <http://www.seedsofdeception.com/utility/showArticle/?objectID=36> as well as several newspaper reports.

19 "Bt cotton causing allergic reaction; cattle dead" (November 23, 2005)
(<http://news.webindia123.com/news/showdetails.asp?id=170692&cat=Health>)

20 Benbrook CM (November 2003) Impacts of Genetically Engineered Crops on Pesticide Use in the United States: The First Eight Years, BioTech InfoNet, Technical Paper No 6.

21 Independent Scientific Steering Committee (21 March 2005) Managing GM crops with herbicides: Effects on farmland wildlife
(<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/fse/results/fse-summary-05.pdf>)

22 Koechlin, F (March 1999) "Bt Crops and Their Impacts on Insects and Food Webs" (<http://www.biotech-info.net/insects2.html>)

23 Damage to soil bacteria, notably through horizontal transfer: Heinemann J.A, Traavik T. (2004) Problems in monitoring horizontal gene transfer in field trials of transgenic plants. Nat. Biotechnol. 22, pp 1105-1109.

24 Daniels R., Boffey C., Mogg R., Bond J. & Clarke R. (March 2004) The Potential for dispersal of herbicide tolerance genes from genetically modified, herbicide-tolerant oilseed rape crops to wild relatives, Final report to DEFRA, contract ref: EPG 1/5/151.
(http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/pdf/epg_1-5-151.pdf)

25 Jager, M.J. & Tappeser, B. (April 10, 1995). Risk Assessment and Scientific Knowledge. Current data relating to the survival of GMOs and the persistence of their nucleic acids: Is a new debate on safeguards in genetic engineering required? - considerations from an ecological point of view. TWN-Workshop on Biosafety, New York.
<http://psrast.org/wanho.htm>

26 "Survey reveals: insurance companies say no to GMO" (October 9, 2003) (<http://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/836>)

27 Warwick H., Meziani, G. (September 2002) Seeds of Doubt, UK Soil Association, based on

an estimate by Charles Benbrook, former executive director of the US National Academy of Sciences' Board on Agriculture.