

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

62nd Meeting of ACAF on 9 October 2013

Information Paper

GM UPDATE

Secretariat: September 2013

GM Update

Purpose

1. This paper summaries issues discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (GM Section) held on 13 September 2013.

Authorisation of GM Maize MON87460

2. There was an inconclusive vote on the proposal to authorise GM maize MON87460. The Commission will refer the proposals to the Appeal Committee and will propose that it is handled by written procedure. Therefore, formal authorisation is unlikely to be given until later this year.

Detection of GM glyphosate-resistant wheat in Oregon, USA

3. The Commission provided a short update stating there was no evidence that this GM rice was present in commercial rice seed or in harvested rice, and the identification of GM rice plants among volunteers was an unexplained and isolated finding. The Commission reported that the US authorities had confirmed in August 2013 that there was no further news to report.
4. The Joint Research Centre confirmed that the GM rice can be detected by applying a series of widely available screening tests for common GM elements and for a gene that is present in all Roundup Ready crops, followed by additional testing to rule out false positives (e.g. low level presence of Roundup Ready soya, maize and cotton). The LOD¹ for this procedure was 0.03%. The event-specific test provided by Monsanto is less sensitive (LOD 0.5%) and was not recommended. JRC is currently examining a revised method from Monsanto.

Proposal to replace the Official Control Regulation (882/2004)

5. At the June 2013 meeting, a number of Member States had sought clarification of the scope of the proposal. DG SANCO Unit E5 gave a brief explanation of the proposal, which is currently being considered by the Council and by the European Parliament. The proposal extends the scope of Regulation 882/2004 to include enforcement of harmonised EU controls on plant health, plant reproductive material, animal by-products, veterinary residues, etc. It is firmly based on the principle of 'risk based controls', backed up where necessary by sector-specific rules that define the minimum frequency of controls, etc. The relevant Council Working Group is working its way through the Articles and the European Parliament's Environment Committee hopes to complete its report by the end of January 2014.
6. The discussion on 13 September focused on the scope of the proposal regarding GMOs. The Commission confirmed that this included the contained use of GM microorganisms (GMM) and the environmental release of crops including crops

¹ Limit of detection

for non-food uses (e.g. forestry). Comments made by Member States included concern that the scope was too wide for GMOs, as it included uses that are unrelated to food and feed, such as the contained use of GMM in research and in enzyme production for non-food uses (e.g. for use in washing powders, medicine, and insect control). The Commission did not offer a view on these concerns but advised Member States that they should raise these points in the Council Working Group.

GM-free labelling

7. Several Member States (including the UK) asked for an update on the Commission's long overdue report on "GM-free" labelling. The Commission attributed delays to 'fine tuning and administrative procedures', but they hoped to circulate the consultants' report for discussion in October or November 2013. The Commission stressed that the report will be a snapshot of the current situation across the EU and it will not make recommendations about the need for EU harmonisation.

Outstanding authorisations

8. In response to a UK request for a report on outstanding authorisations for GM food and feed, the Commission provided the following information:

Update on outstanding GM food and feed authorisations

GM crop	EFSA opinion	Status
Pioneer 98140	April 2013, inconclusive.	The application has been withdrawn.
Monsanto 87705 high oleic acid soya	October 2012, inconclusive.	Following discussion with the Commission, Monsanto provided the missing data. Now awaiting an additional opinion from EFSA.
GT73 rapeseed	Jan 2013, unable to advise on one of the proposed end products (a protein extract).	The applicant has excluded this specific product and the Commission is drafting a Decision covering all other products.
Syngenta 3272 maize for bioethanol	June 2013, inconclusive.	The applicant is in discussion with the Commission re: submitting additional data.
T304-40 cotton	June 2013, positive.	EFSA will present its opinion to the Committee in October 2013. A vote may also be taken at the same meeting.

88913 cotton	29 July 2013, inconclusive.	The applicant is expected to provide additional bioinformatics data in October 2013.
Monsanto 87708 soya (tolerant to the herbicide dicamba).	Awaiting publication (adopted in September 2013).	
Various existing crops that contain ARM genes (cotton varieties; MON863 maize).		The Commission is considering the need for renewal decisions, or withdrawal.

9. The Commission also confirmed that Pioneer's Plenish soya is still being evaluated by EFSA. This crop has an altered composition and this has required extended nutritional assessment.

Low Level Presence (LLP)

10. The Commission responded to a number of linked questions about LLP of unauthorised GM material, raised by the UK and other Member States (MSs):
- MSs were invited to provide results of GM testing of feed imports by the end of the year, including the number of results below the 0.1% threshold, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this measure;
 - DG SANCO is required by its Secretary General to produce a roadmap for LLP in food. They aim to launch a tender for an external review this year, claiming that this work has been delayed by the need to respond to various court cases, requests for information, etc.
 - the Commission was invited to send an observer to the 3rd meeting of the Global LLP Initiative, which took place in Durban, South Africa on 19-20 September. The Commission's local trade attaché attended.
 - the Commission hopes to upload details of all 56 EU authorisations to the FAO's GMO Food Platform by the end of the year; and
 - the FAO has previously announced its intention to hold a high level conference on LLP, and this was originally scheduled for October 2013. However, the Commission reported that the FAO says that this needs to be sanctioned by its Steering Committee and will now not take place until sometime in 2014.

**ACAF Secretariat
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