

# Five reasons for the Commission to continue granting Europe's livestock farmers freedom of choice

## Authorisations of safe GM crops for import – 24 April 2015

### 1. Because there is a Big Demand and the Products are Equally Safe

European livestock farmers should be allowed to use safe animal feed of their choice, grown legally by farmers outside the EU who are granted the choice to do so. At the same time European consumers should have access to biotech products with health benefits, like soya beans enhanced to deliver healthier oils. Farmers and consumers who choose to avoid GMOs are already being guaranteed their freedom of choice. The genetically modified (GM) crops in question are (at least) as safe as conventional crops. Decision makers who cast this into doubt should explain why they trust unfounded scaremongering more than the verdicts of renowned organizations including the European Academies of Science, the European Food Safety Authority, the World Health Organisation, and the European Commission.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. To End a “Suicidal Situation for European Growth”

Europe is highly dependent on imports of GM crops. Without them, the competitiveness and viability of our livestock farming sector will be jeopardised. European farmers' organization Copa-Cogeca, together with food and feed supply chain actors, warned that “any further delays by the EU Commission will result in a suicidal situation for European growth”<sup>2</sup>. Commission (sponsored) studies confirm that trade disruptions “could become more severe, more frequent, and affect more products”. “The total cost to the economy would be € 9.6 billion”. There could be a “sharp increase in the beef meat price”, and poultry production could “drop to 29 % below the baseline”<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. To Promote Innovation, Jobs and Growth

We fully agree with President Juncker that “Jobs, growth and investment will only return to Europe if we create the right regulatory environment and promote a climate of entrepreneurship and job creation. We must not stifle innovation and competitiveness (...)”<sup>4</sup>. We strongly believe that failing to support the EU's own best science by upholding the approval of safe products is the single most damaging element for growth, innovation, investment as well as consumer confidence and safety. The precedent of favouring short term political considerations over scientific evidence represents one of the biggest investment disincentives for high technology sectors.

### 4. To Comply with EU and International Law

Referring to the GM import applications pending at the final stage of the process, the Commission officially recognised that “Articles 7 and 19 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 (...) require the Commission to take a final decision”<sup>5</sup> and causing illegal delays in approvals of safety-assessed GM crops<sup>6</sup>. The EU's authorization system for GMO imports was dysfunctional for one and a half years as it did not result in authorisations of safe products. Trading partners are expected to base any barriers to trade on objective grounds. The last *de facto* moratorium on GM authorisations in the EU (1998 to 2004) was ruled illegal by the WTO in 2006, because it had led to undue delay.

### 5. To Establish Legal Certainty – Also for Conventional Imports

Would you accept if your driving license was withheld, despite having passed your driving test? Legal certainty is as essential for individuals as it is for the economy. The recent Kafkaesque uncertainty regarding approvals affected not just GMOs but much of the food and feed chain for conventional (non-GMO) products too: one hundred per cent purity cannot be technically guaranteed in agriculture, so minute traces of new GMOs legally grown in third countries in shipments entering the EU cannot be completely ruled out. Numerous legal thresholds exist to cater for admixtures and impurities, including for some impurities with hazardous properties<sup>7</sup> – but no threshold is accepted for safe GMOs!

<sup>1</sup> [What people say about GMO safety](#), EuropaBio factsheet; [Green Biotechnology Factsheet: Product Safety](#)

<sup>2</sup> Copa-Cogeca, Coceral, Fediol, Fefac, Uecbv and A.v.e.c (October 2014) [statement](#)

<sup>3</sup> AGRI (2007), [Economic Impact of Unapproved GMOs \(...\)](#); On behalf of AGRI (2010), [Study on the Implications of Asynchronous GMO Approvals](#)

<sup>4</sup> J-C. Juncker (October 2014), “[A New Start for Europe](#) – my Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change”

<sup>5</sup> In reply to MEP question [E-011172/2014](#)

<sup>6</sup> In Reply to MEP question [E-004184/2012](#)

<sup>7</sup> including, for instance, highly carcinogenic mycotoxins and arsenic

# How long did it take to authorise the 17 products?

- **The Commission did not act for 1.5 years** on these 17 products, despite the fact that they were already assessed to be as safe as conventional crops.
- **The EU approval system for GM imports** includes a thorough safety assessment, followed by a lengthy political process involving the European Commission and Member States<sup>8</sup>.
- **Increasing Timelines:** Zero GM products were approved in 2014, and each year since 2010, fewer and fewer GM crops were authorized<sup>9</sup>. Timelines from submission to approval of GM import dossiers have increased substantially from under 4 years to over 6 years<sup>10</sup>.
- These 17 products were pending on **average 6.5 years** from the time of submission until the final authorisation. During the political process, legally prescribed deadlines were routinely exceeded.
- **There are still over 40 GM applications** for import pending in the system.

PRODUCT <sup>11</sup>	TRAIT, Company	EFSA <sup>12</sup>		FIRST VOTE: maximum 3 months for EC to schedule <sup>13</sup> .	SECOND VOTE: maximum 2 months for EC to schedule <sup>14</sup> .	FORMAL ADOPTION average duration of 1 month (before late 2013)
		SUBMISSION	OPINION			
<b>17 safety assessed and voted products pending for formal adoption by the European Commission:</b>						
Cotton MON15985	insect resistance, Monsanto	05/2007	28/07/2014	Voted after 7m 16d (16/03/2015)	Voted after 15d (31/03/2015)	24d
Cotton MON531xMON1445 (renewal)	insect resistance, herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	06/2007	28/03/2012	Voted after 35m 16d (16/03/2015)	Voted after 15d (31/03/2015)	24d
Cotton MON1445 (renewal)	herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	06/2007	16/12/2011	Voted after 39m (16/03/2015)	Voted after 15d (31/03/2015)	24d
Cotton MON531 (renewal)	insect resistance, Monsanto	06/2007	16/09/2011	Voted after 42m (16/03/2015)	Voted after 15d (31/03/2015)	24d
Soybean MON 87769	healthier oil, Monsanto	10/2009	16/05/2014	Voted after 6m 23d (9/12/2014)	Voted after 1m 28d (6/02/2015)	2m 20d
Cotton MON88913	herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	04/2007	13/03/2014	Voted after 7m 11d (24/10/2014)	Voted after 1m 4d (28/11/2014)	4m 28d
Cotton GHB614 × LLCotton25	herbicide tolerance, Bayer CropScience	02/2010	16/05/2014	Voted after 5m 8d (24/10/2014)	Voted after 1m 4d (28/11/2014)	4m 28d
Oilseed Rape MON 88302	herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	09/2011	17/06/2014	Voted after 4m 7d (24/10/2014)	Voted after 1m 4d (28/11/2014)	4m 28d
Maize NK603	herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	08/2005	11/06/2009	Voted after 60m 12d (23/06/2014)	Voted after 17d (10/07/2014)	9m 16d
Maize T25 (renewal)	herbicide tolerance, Bayer CropScience	06/2007	03/10/2013	Voted after 6 m 20 d (24/04/2014)	Voted after 1m 17d (10/06/2014)	10m 16d
Soybean MON87708	herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	02/2011	03/10/2013	Voted after 6 m 20 d (24/04/2014)	Voted after 1m 17d (10/06/2014)	10m 16d
Soybean MON87705	herbicide tolerance, healthier oil, Monsanto	02/2010	30/10/2012	Voted after 18 m 23 d (23/05/2014)	Voted after 18d (10/06/2014)	10m 16d
Soybean 305423	herbicide tolerance, healthier oil, Pioneer Duro	06/2007	18/12/2013	Voted after 5 m 5 d (23/05/2014)	Voted after 18d (10/06/2014)	10m 16d
Soybean BPS-CV127-9	herbicide tolerance, BASF	01/2009	17/01/2014	Voted after 4 m 6 d (23/05/2014)	Voted after 18d (10/06/2014)	10m 16d
Cotton T304-40	insect resistance, herbicide tolerance, Bayer CropScience	04/2011	20/06/2013	Voted after 8 m (20/02/2014)	Voted after 1m 7d (27/03/2014)	12m 29d
Oilseed Rape GT73 (renewal, extend scope)	herbicide tolerance, Monsanto	08/2010	12/02/2013	Voted after 11 m 22 d (21/01/2014)	Voted after 1m 6d (27/02/2014)	13m 29d
Maize MON87460	drought tolerance, Monsanto	05/2009	15/11/2012	Voted after 9 m 29 d (13/9/2013)	Voted after 1m 8d (21/10/2013)	18m 05d
<b>AVERAGE TIME for processing a product file</b>				<b>16m 13d</b>	<b>1m</b>	<b>7m 15d</b>
<b>AVERAGE time from submission to 24/04/2015 (incl. safety-assessment)</b>			<b>78 months = 6.5 years</b>			

<sup>8</sup> Overview of the process: [EuropaBio infographic](#)

<sup>9</sup> 11 approvals in 2010, 7 in 2012, 6 in 2012, 5 in 2013, 0 in 2014

<sup>10</sup> 45 months on average for products authorized 2004-2011, 48 months on average for dossiers authorized 2011-13. The 18 pending safety assessed products listed in the table were submitted, on average, 80 months ago.

<sup>11</sup> This list does not include products which have been put on hold following an agreement between the applicant and the European Commission.

<sup>12</sup> Where the application date is before EFSA creation (2002), it refers to the date of application to Member State authorities.

<sup>13</sup> Standing Committee, Article 7(1) of Regulation 1829/2003; months (m) and days (d) waiting for the vote since delivery of the EFSA opinion

<sup>14</sup> Appeal Committee; months (m) and days (d) waiting for the vote since the vote in the Standing Committee