

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**On behalf of the GM-free Ireland Network**  
**[www.gmfreeireland.org](http://www.gmfreeireland.org)**

## **FIRST LIVE GMO ANIMAL FEED LEGALISED IN THE EU**

**Dick Roche's EU vote abstention allows GMO contamination of Irish farms**  
**Call for immediate government ban on Monsanto's live GMO animal feed**  
**Farmers and food producers furious at undemocratic EC approval**

**EC loophole allows importation of live GMO seeds not approved for cultivation**  
**Irish Government can no longer be trusted on food security**

The European Commission on Wednesday approved the import of the first animal feed in history to consist of living genetically modified organisms (GMOs) [1].

Monsanto's patented GT73 oilseed rape is very different from other genetically modified (GM) animal feedstuffs now widely used by Irish farmers [2], because it consists of living GMO seeds which proliferate rapidly and can contaminate related crops miles away by seed dispersal, transportation, and pollen blowing in the wind [3]. Unless the Government uses its legal right to ban these seeds before the first shipment arrives in Ireland, the decision will result in widespread irreversible contamination of the landscape, loss of market share for Irish farmers, and a fatal blow to the organic sector. Moreover, this GM rapeseed is engineered to be immune to (and will increase the use of) Monsanto's Roundup weedkiller which is now considered far more toxic than previously thought [4].

The decision came despite opposition from a majority of EU Member States in a December 2004 vote [5] in which Environment Minister Dick Roche abstained, thus resulting in failure to reach the so-called Qualified Majority Vote needed to prevent the legalisation of GT73. This failure enabled the EC College of Commissioners to approve the controversial seeds against the wishes of the majority on Wednesday. The majority voted against the application because of unanswered food and feed safety questions. These include the likelihood of seed spills into the environment and the discovery of Monsanto documents which revealed potentially adverse effects including a significant increase in liver weight in rats [6]. Monsanto still refuses to make the original data of these studies available for public scrutiny [7].

GM-free Ireland spokesman Michael O'Callaghan said "Thanks to Dick Roche, Ireland now stands on the brink of irreversible GM pollution. This will contaminate our conventional farms and put many organic farmers out of business. Consumers will lose the right to choose safe food, forever."

He accuses Dick Roche of ignoring a Dáil debate [8] and an extensive dossier on the risks of legalising live GMO seeds [9] given to his office last November. "Dick Roche ignored the evidence and failed to vote against the proposed EC legalisation of GT73 last December; he thus shares responsibility for Wednesday's catastrophic decision. Ireland's only recourse now is to effect an immediate ban on allowing this GMO to be released here under the so-called "Safeguard Clause" of Directive 2001/18/EC [10]."

However, making such a ban permanent may be difficult or impossible to enforce under the EU law without widespread support from other EU member states, as the Commission has already dismissed the scientific evidence of the risks involved. Michael O'Callaghan said "It is a disgrace that the EC and our Government can no longer be trusted to protect Ireland's food security and farming future. And it boggles the mind that the IFA is still asleep at the wheel on this issue."

Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and farming groups across Europe have called for Wednesday's decision to be revoked and for EC authorisation of GM crops to be overhauled. "Approval for this controversial rapeseed against the will of the member states says everything about the undemocratic way the Commission is trying to force GMOs on the European public," said Greenpeace International spokesperson Geert Ritsema. "Allowing imports of this Monsanto rapeseed into Europe poses a substantial risk to the environment."

Monsanto's patented GMO rapeseed has been the subject of particular controversy, since the EU first issued an authorisation by mistake in June but then withdrew it after a bureaucratic error. Part of the reason for the hasty withdrawal was that the Commission had not tightened up wording over liability for inadvertent seed spills during transportation, storage, general handling and processing of GT73 seeds. It has now included a set of non-binding guidelines for Monsanto to follow. This was required after the discovery of cross-contamination of wild rapeseed and its GE counterpart in the UK in July. In Japan, authorities investigating GE imports found modified rapeseed has contaminated wide areas around the harbours and the mills. Of 10 harbours investigated, eight were contaminated. Transport routes as far as 30 kilometres from the port were affected. [11]

However, the Commission ignored these concerns and pushed the approval through on the basis of an opinion by the European Food Safety Authority which has been severely criticised by Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (12). The EU Commission has acknowledged the risks of uncontrolled spillage and unanticipated adverse effects of the GE rapeseed. But it failed to specify safeguard measures to deal with spillage, providing Monsanto with only a non-binding recommendation which the company is free to disregard [13].

Friends of the Earth spokeswoman Helen Holder said: "Not only has the Commission ignored the opinion of 19 Environment Ministers and recent scientific findings, but it is also allowing Monsanto to decide whether our environment is contaminated. Member States are left with no choice but to take matters into their own hands and impose national bans on this GM seed."

There is growing concern among experts that GM rapeseed should never be cultivated in Europe because of the danger of pollination and dissemination. The European Environment Agency has classified oilseed rape as a "high-risk crop for contamination" (14). Biotech company Bayer withdrew its EU application to grow GM rapeseed after EU member states raised concerns.

Greenpeace spokesperson Geert Ritsema said: "If the EU Commission admits that modified rapeseed is likely to escape into the environment, it should be using that evidence to reject market approval of GE seeds. The alternative seeking voluntary agreements for control and monitoring systems - is unworkable. The decision should be revoked immediately, and the standards of EU risk assessment and the EU authorisation procedure reorganised."

### **Loophole enables living GMO seeds to be imported as animal feed even though they will produce a crop**

Farming groups and consumer organisations across Europe are extremely concerned about the authorisation of Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape because it allows patented living GMO rape seeds to be imported for use as animal feed, even though the spilled seeds inevitably produce a crop.

This means that millions of the GMO seeds can now be legally unloaded in Irish and Northern Irish harbours, and transported by trains or lorries to animal feed processing centres North and South of the border. The accidental spillage of the tiny seeds that will inevitably result along the way will result in the *de facto* release of a GM crop into the Irish environment, without the EC and government authorisations that are legally required for its cultivation, or the consent of the affected farmers and consumers.

Any spilled seeds will result in widespread GM contamination of conventional and organic varieties of oilseed rape. Spilled seeds are also very likely to contaminate both related Brassica crops (including broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mustard and turnip) and unrelated species, via wind-borne pollen and a process known as horizontal gene transfer. No insurance company will provide cover against GM contamination.

The UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) reported in September 2003 that wind-borne pollen from GM oilseed rape can contaminate crops 26 km from its source [15]. 26km dispersal from a single GMO oilseed rape seed spilled at dockside during unloading from a ship in Foynes in one generation could lead to the GMO genes being found from coast to coast all the way from West Cork to Donegal and from Galway to Dublin in four or five years. With more and more of GMO plants surviving from generation to generation, the number would increase exponentially. Small-scale field and lab studies cannot predict this. But if the contamination spreads as it has done in Canada, the vast majority of Irish farmers, producers and consumers will lose their right to choose safe GM-free food - forever.

CONTINUES >

## **Irish farmers to lose market share, pay royalties, and face a plague of superweeds and patent infringement lawsuits**

Produce from contaminated Irish farmers will have to carry a GM label. GM-labelled food is refused by the largest food brands and food retailers in the EU [16]. A Friends of the Earth Europe survey shows that 94.6% of EU citizens want the right to choose GM-free food, and 70.9% simply refuse GM food.

Contaminated farmers will also have to pay annual royalties to Monsanto or face patent infringement lawsuits like hundreds of farmers in the USA and Canada [17]. This is part of Monsanto's strategy to control the world's food supply (earlier this year the company applied for a worldwide patent on the pig) [18].

In recent years Canada lost all its oilseed rape (canola) market - worth an estimated 300 million dollars - to Europe because of GMO contamination. Maize exports from the USA to Europe collapsed from 3.3 million tonnes in 1995 to just 25 thousand tonnes in 2002 due to European rejection of GMOs. India, Angola, Zambia and other countries refused USA Food Aid containing GMOs into their countries, for fear of losing EU export market share.

GM contamination will also destroy Irish organic farmers, who will lose their constitutional right to maintain their livelihood, since organic certification prohibits GM crops and GM ingredients.

Food industry observers expect the global demand for GM-free seeds, animal feed and food will soon outstrip supply due to growing GM contamination of farmland in the USA, Canada, Argentina and other countries. This gives Ireland an opportunity to leverage our clean green image and corner our share of the growing market for the safe GM-free food which EU consumers now demand.

Wednesday's EC decision to legalise Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape will also create an epidemic of Roundup-resistant Superweeds and increase the use of toxic weedkillers (see footnote 4 below). Earlier this year, results from the world's biggest open-air GM crop experiments held in the UK confirmed that growing GM oilseed rape, which has been modified to make it resistant to a weedkiller, reduced the level of wildlife in the field [19]. New research by the UK Government, revealed on 25 July this year, shows that modified genes from the GM oilseed rape crop experiment have transferred into a common weed (Charlock), creating a form of herbicide-resistant "superweed" [20].

At an Irish Parliamentary Debate on 24 November 2004, the GM-free Ireland Network, the Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association (ICSA) and Friends of the Earth Ireland asked the Government to vote against the legalisation of GT73 animal feed due for a Council of Ministers decision in Brussels on 20 December [21]. But Environment Minister Dick Roche ignored this recommendation and abstained from voting, thus contributing to the lack of a Qualified Majority Vote and enabling yesterday's undemocratic decision by the EC College of Commissioners.

The GM-free Ireland Network has condemned the decision and has issued an urgent call on the Government to impose a national ban on the GM seed. EU member states have a clear legal right to ban specific GM crops under the so-called "safeguard clause" of Directive 2001/18/EC.

## **Growing support for national GM crop bans**

In a related move on 24 June, 22 of 25 EU member states' Environment Ministers (including Dick Roche) voted to reject proposals by the European Commission to revoke the bans on specific GM oilseed rape and maize crops put in place by Austria, Luxembourg, France, Greece and Germany since 1997. This was the first time that Ireland changed its usual policy of voting in favour of GM crops, or abstaining from voting. The policy shift resulted from a parliamentary debate in Leinster House on 15 June 2005, when both the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Local Government gave unanimous cross-party support for the sovereign right of member states to ban specific GM products when there are questions over their safety, and urged Roche to support the existing bans [22].

Many Senators and TD's now support the call for Ireland to remain GMO-free. At the June 24 Dáil debate, Fianna Fáil deputy Michael Mulcahy said Ireland was in danger of "sullyng its reputation" as a green, natural food producer if it allowed GM material in food production. "I have yet to meet a consumer who wants to eat GM food. They don't exist." John Heney, rural development chairman of the Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association said Irish farmers have a moral obligation to provide consumers with safe GM-free food. Chairman of the Joint Committee on Rural Affairs John Deasy said it was no "pretty clear" that committee members support the right of member states to invoke GM bans.

In view of these statements, the GM free Ireland Network has made an urgent call for the Government to invoke the safeguard clause (Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC) and ban the importation of Monsanto's GT73 living GMO rape seed as soon as possible.

## Background

The EU's member states have ended meetings in deadlock 14 times in a row - either as ministers or as national experts - on whether to approve new GMO products, usually for use in industrial processing or as animal feed. The last time they agreed on a new GMO approval was in 1998. Wednesday's legalisation of Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape is the fourth time the EU Commission has allowed the import of GE crops after a five year moratorium that ended under the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2003. The other crops are herbicide resistant maize (NK603), sweet maize containing insecticidal toxin (Bt11) and maize meant for animal feed (MON863).

As national governments remain stuck in the undemocratic EC decision-making system, Europe's regional governments have taken the lead in protecting their farmers and consumers from the risks of GMO crops. 162 regional governments and over 4,500 sub-regional authorities now prohibit GM crops in 22 member states whether Brussels likes it or not [23].

One thousand GMO-Free Zones were declared throughout the island of Ireland on 22 April 2005, by farmers, food producers, hotels, restaurants, markets, pubs, retailers, and homes North and South of the border, as part of the world-wide Earth Day 2005 celebration. The GMO-free Ireland map (available at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map>) specifically shows there is not enough space on the island of Ireland to grow GMO rapeseed without danger of contamination.

The Assembly of European Regions, Friends of the Earth Europe and a wide coalition of NGOs have launched a campaign to ensure that a forthcoming EC Directive on the "Co-existence" of GM crops with conventional and organic farming will legally empower regions (including Irish Counties) to protect themselves from GMO contamination. County Councils and local authorities are invited to sign an EU-wide petition to guarantee their democratic right to ban or restrict GMO crops in their area, should they choose to do so [24].

Next Friday 9 September, Consumers International and the Government of the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna will host a one day international conference in Bologna, Italy entitled *Co-existence, contamination and GM-free zones - Jeopardising consumer choice?* The challenges posed by the 'co-existence' of GM crops with conventional and organic crops will be examined and debated by panels of speakers including eminent scientists, consumer representatives, industry, and other GM experts from around the world. Discussions will take place in English and Italian with simultaneous interpretation in both languages. All Irish County Councils, farming organisations and consumer groups concerned about our farming future are urged to participate [25].

## Attribution:

Michael O'Callaghan

Co-ordinator, GM-free Ireland Network - [www.gmfreeireland.org](http://www.gmfreeireland.org)  
Chairman, Global Vision Consulting Ltd - [www.global-vision-consulting.com](http://www.global-vision-consulting.com)

Tel: + 353 (0) 404 43 885  
Mobile: + 353 (0) 87 799 4761

## Notes for editors:

[1] European Commission press release:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1077&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Refined oil derived from GT73 oilseed rape has already been approved for food use in 1997 in the EU under the 1997 Novel Foods regulation (Regulation 258/97) which has since been replaced by Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003. Today's decision covers industrial processing and animal feed.

[2] Most Irish dairy and meat produce comes from livestock fed on animal feed compounds made from genetically modified (GM) soya beans and GM corn gluten (maize). The introduction of GM animal feed began in 2001, but few farmers and consumers were aware of this until 2004 when the European Commission introduced mandatory GM labelling of animal feed and food containing more than 0.9% of GM ingredients. But EU law fails require to GM labelling of dairy and meat produce from animals that have been fed a GM diet. Marks & Spencer is the only Irish retailer which guarantees that all of its fresh dairy and meat produce comes from GM-free livestock. Consumers International has called for the practice to end because of scientific evidence of health risks.

The Irish Government's assurances that it can safely regulate GM animal feed were shattered following the discovery of an illegal shipment of 2,546 tonnes of a prohibited variety of American Bt Maize called Bt10 (which contains antibiotic resistance genes) at Greenore port in Co. Louth on 26 May 2005, months after emergency measures were adopted by the EC to prevent Bt10 seeping through European borders. Although this shipment (which was imported by Arkady Feeds Ltd, and still remains in a warehouse at Greenore Port) is prohibited from being sold, the fact that so many tonnes arrived aboard a single ship at an Irish port long after the EU required the USA to terminate these illegal exports, raises the question of how many hundred thousand tonnes of mislabelled Bt10 GM feed may have been fraudulently sold to Irish cattle and sheep farmers - and consumed by Irish livestock and people - over the past 4 years or more. Nobody knows how much Irish dairy, beef and lamb produce contaminated by Bt10 has been consumed, or exported under Ireland's clean green food island image since 2001. For more on this scandal see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/scandal/>

Organic farmers are prohibited from including any GM seeds, GM crops or GM ingredients of any kind.

[3] A detailed dossier on GT73 produced by Save Our Seeds is available at: [http://www.saveourseeds.org/dossier/fact\\_sheet\\_GT73.htm](http://www.saveourseeds.org/dossier/fact_sheet_GT73.htm)

[4] Monsanto's Roundup weedkiller, which contains the chemical glyphosate, is the world's most common agricultural herbicide and is widely used on Irish farms and in Coilte's monoculture tree plantations. Genetically modified "Roundup Ready" crops have been responsible for increased use of the herbicide in recent years. Monsanto's sale of glyphosate has expanded approximately 20% each year through the 1990s, accounting for 67% of the company's total sales as of 2001. More Glyphosate is now being introduced into the environment and the human food chain through cultivation of genetically modified crops that are tolerant to the herbicide and contain glyphosate residues.

A recent study of Roundup presents new evidence that the glyphosate-based herbicide is far more toxic than the active ingredient alone. The study, published in the June 2005 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives, (Sophie Richard, Safa Moslemi, Herbert Sipahutar, Nora Benachour, and Gilles-Eric Seralini, Environmental Health Perspectives, Vol. 113, No. 6 June 2005, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/members/2005/7728/7728.html> and <http://ga4.org/ct/k71TIKE1Wzfs/>) reports glyphosate toxicity to human placental cells within hours of exposure, at levels ten times lower than those found in agricultural use. The researchers also tested glyphosate and Roundup at lower concentrations for effects on sexual hormones, reporting effects at very low levels. This suggests that dilution with other ingredients in Roundup may, in fact, facilitate glyphosate's hormonal impacts.

Roundup is a mixture of glyphosate and other chemicals (commonly referred to as "inerts") designed to increase the herbicide's penetration into the target and its toxic effect. Since inerts are not listed as "active ingredients" the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not assess their health or environmental impacts, despite the fact that more than 300 chemicals on EPA's list of pesticide inert ingredients are or were once registered as pesticide active ingredients, and that inert ingredients often account for more than 50% of the pesticide product by volume.

For more information on glyphosate weedkiller visit the Pesticides Action Network at <http://www.pan-international.org>

[5] In December 2004, EU Environment Ministers voted with a simple majority against the approval of GT73 for use as animal feed. 13 Ministers voted against the approval (135 votes), 6 in favour (78 votes) and 6 abstained - including Ireland (108 votes) Since the abstentions resulted in failure to reach the so-called Qualified Majority Vote, the decision reverted to the EC, whose College of Commissioners approved GT73 for use as animal feed against the wishes of the majority on Wednesday 31 August 2005.

Here is the voting record of the 25 EU member states:

For: SK, SE, FR, PT, FI, NL (78 votes)

Against: IT, GR, DK, PO, MT, BE, HU, LT, LV, CY, AT, EE, LU (135 votes)

Abstention: IE (Ireland), SI, ES, DE, CZ, UK (108 votes)

For more info on this vote, visit [http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2004/GR\\_20\\_Dec\\_Monsanto.htm](http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2004/GR_20_Dec_Monsanto.htm)

[6] The official UK government advisors on GM foods and feeds - ACRE and ACAF - have said that they are not satisfied with the explanation that Monsanto has provided for the observed increased liver weight in rats fed GT73. They are not convinced by EFSA's assurance that GT73 "is as safe as conventional oilseed rape for humans and animals, and in the context of the proposed uses, for the environment." ACAF says it can only draw such conclusion "on receipt of satisfactory data from a further rat-feeding study using 15 per cent oilseed rape meal." Source: Statement by Mr. Elliot Morely, UK Minister for the Environment and Agri-Environment. In: minutes of the UK's European Standing Committee A, Tuesday 2 November 2004.

[7] Greenpeace wrote several letters to national authorities to get hold of the Monsanto data on GT73. After Greenpeace won a court case allowing it access to Monsanto's confidential data of feeding trials with GM maize in June 2005, it was expected that the data on the feeding trials with GT73 would be made public; but so far the documents have not been published. Contrary to EU law German officials explicitly refuse access to the data. Greenpeace is awaiting a reaction from the government of the Netherlands, where Monsanto originally filed the data.

However in late 2004, the German government commissioned Dr Arpad Pusztai, one of the few genuinely independent scientists specialising in plant genetics and animal feeding studies, to examine Monsanto's secret study on the feeding of MON863 GM maize to laboratory rats over a 90-day period. The Pusztai report (which you can download at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/scandals/Pusztai1.pdf>) found that the Monsanto study contained evidence of "statistically significant" differences to kidney weights and certain blood parameters in the rats fed on the GM maize as compared with the control groups. A number of scientists across Europe who saw the study (and heavily-censored summaries of it) expressed concerns about the health and safety implications if MON863 should ever enter the food chain. Professor Gilles-Eric Seralini of the University of Caen, who scrutinises the safety of GM products for the European Commission and French government, describes the findings as "very worrying". But following the release of the Pusztai report and pressure by environmental groups and the European Commission, a German court ordered Monsanto to disclose the secret study to Greenpeace. On 24 May 2005, Dr Brian John of GM-free Cymru (GM-free Wales) issued a press release (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/scandals/index.php>) stating that it would be "irresponsible and cynical in the extreme" to pass the corn for human consumption. But the EC went ahead and legalised the maize.

[8] A full transcript of the Irish Parliamentary debate of 24 November 2004 on Monsanto's GT73 can be downloaded from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-24november2004.pdf>

[9] The GM-free Ireland Network Briefing paper submitted for the 24 November 2004 debate may be downloaded from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf>

[10] Here is the full text of Article 23 of Directive 2001/1/EC (the "Safeguard clause"):

1. Where a Member State, as a result of new or additional information made available since the date of the consent and affecting the environmental risk assessment or reassessment of existing information on the basis of new or additional scientific knowledge, has detailed grounds for considering that a GMO as or in a product which has



been properly notified and has received written consent under this Directive constitutes a risk to human health or the environment, that Member State may provisionally restrict or prohibit the use and/or sale of that GMO as or in a product on its territory.

The Member State shall ensure that in the event of a severe risk, emergency measures, such as suspension or termination of the placing on the market, shall be applied, including information to the public. The Member State shall immediately inform the Commission and the other Member States of actions taken under this Article and give reasons for its decision, supplying its review of the environmental risk assessment, indicating whether and how the conditions of the consent should be amended or the consent should be terminated, and, where appropriate, the new or additional information on which its decision is based.

2. A decision shall be taken on the matter within 60 days in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 30(2). For the purpose of calculating the 60 day period, any period of time during which the Commission is awaiting further information which it may have requested from the notifier or is seeking the opinion of the Scientific Committee(s) which has/have been consulted shall not be taken into account. The period of time during which the Commission is awaiting the opinion of the Scientific Committee(s) consulted shall not exceed 60 days. Likewise, the period of time the Council takes to act in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 30(2) shall not be taken into account.

[11] An updated register of world-wide GM contamination incidents may be found at <http://www.qmcontaminationregister.org>

[12] Greenpeace critique of EFSA opinion on GT73:  
*Greenpeace technical critique of EFSA Opinion on Monsanto's Roundup Ready Oilseed Rape, GT73i* which you can download from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/Greenpeace/GPTechCritiqueOfEFSAOpinion.pdf>

Friends of the Earth critique of EFSA opinion on GT73:  
letter to the UK Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural affairs on 11 June 2004. Details may be found on page 10 of the *Forging a GM Policy for Ireland* briefing to the Irish Parliament on 24 November 2004, which you can download from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf>

Institute of Science in Society press release on GT73:  
No to GM Oilseed Rape, 22 September 2004, available at <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/NTGMORGT73.php>

The EC been accused of "playing politics with public health" by turning a blind eye on inconvenient scientific findings and approving potentially dangerous GM varieties simply to please the Americans and the WTO. See GM Free Cymru press release, 20 March 2005 which can be downloaded from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/GMFC1.pdf>

For more on this, see the briefing *Time to change European policy on GMOs in agriculture* issued to the new EC Commissioners on 17 March 2005 by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Community of Consumer Cooperatives (EURO COOP), Friends of the Earth Europe (FOEE), Greenpeace European Unit, and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) EU Group, 17 March 2005, which you can download from [http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/EU/BriefingGMOs\\_March05.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/EU/BriefingGMOs_March05.pdf)

[13] Official Journal of the European Union, June 2005 (L-164 page 57).

[14] Genetically modified organisms (GMOs): The significance of gene flow through pollen transfer [http://reports.eea.eu.int/environmental\\_issue\\_report\\_2002\\_28/en](http://reports.eea.eu.int/environmental_issue_report_2002_28/en)

[15] A Research Report published by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in September 2003 (*Quantifying Landscape-Scale Gene Flow in Oilseed Rape*) found that wind-blown

pollen from GMO oilseed rape has contaminated conventional oilseed rape 26km away, and has the potential to cross-contaminate related Brassica crops including broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mustard and turnip. So any farmer wishing to grow GM oilseed rape would need to ensure that his or her property is surrounded by – at minimum – a 54km wide buffer zone area devoid of farmers who want to conserve their GM-free status, and devoid of protected areas as well.

[16] In January 2005, Greenpeace published a detailed report entitled *No Market for GM Foods in Europe* which shows that the EU market for GM labelled food products is virtually closed. Europe's top 30 retailers and top 30 food & drink producers have policies and non-GM commitments which reveal a massive international food industry rejection of GM ingredients. This cuts across the industry from food and drink manufacturers to retailers, and includes everything from snacks and ready meals to pet food and beer. The combined total food and drink sales of the 49 companies with a stated non-GM policy in their main market or throughout the EU (27 retailers and 22 food and drink producers) amounts to € 646 billion, more than 60% of the total € 1,069 billion European food and drink sales. Irish food companies doing business internationally need to implement a non-GM policy without delay. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/NoMarketForGMFood.pdf> (2mb PDF file).

[17] Canadian farmer Percy Schmeiser faced a million dollar patent infringement lawsuit by Monsanto after his farm became contaminated by their GMO oilseed rape in 1996. He said "Monsanto wants total control of the seed supply, which ultimately would give them total control of the food supply. Any farmer could wake up tomorrow morning and no longer own or be allowed to use his seeds or plants... There is no such thing as "co-existence"! GMOs will destroy conventional and organic farmers because of cross-pollination and contamination. Farmers in Ireland should not allow GMOs in, because once you do there is no calling it back! I guarantee if you introduce them today they will be all over your country within four or five years!"

Read his interview at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/interviews/schmeiser.php>

[18] In February 2005 Monsanto filed world-wide patent applications on pig breeding methods, pig herds, and their offspring - including patents on naturally-occurring genes and any pigs that contain them. If granted in Ireland, this will empower Monsanto to legally prevent Irish farmers from breeding pigs whose characteristics are described in its patent claims, or force them to pay royalties. If Ireland approves the patents, many Irish pigs, their offspring, and the use of the genetic information for breeding will be entirely owned by Monsanto, Inc. and any replication or infringement of their patent by man or beast will mean royalties or jail for the offending farmer. The patent applications are being filed in over 160 countries. More information is available at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/news/index.php#pig>

[19] [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press\\_releases/gm\\_crop\\_trial\\_blow\\_to\\_biot\\_21032005.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/gm_crop_trial_blow_to_biot_21032005.html) (March 2005)

[20] Excerpt from The Guardian article of 26 July 2005:

"The cross-fertilisation between GM oilseed rape, a brassica, and a distantly related plant, charlock, had been discounted as virtually impossible by scientists with the environment department. It was found during a follow up to the government's three-year trials of GM crops which ended two years ago. The new form of charlock was growing among many others in a field which had been used to grow GM rape. When scientists treated it with lethal herbicide it showed no ill-effects. Since charlock seeds can remain in the soil for 20 to 30 years before they germinate, once GM plants have produced seeds it would be almost impossible to eliminate them. Although the government has never conceded that gene transfer was a problem, it was fear of this that led the French and Greek governments to seek to ban GM rape."

Farmers the world over are always troubled by what they call "volunteers" - crop plants which grow from seeds spilled from the previous harvest, of which oilseed rape is probably the greatest offender, Anyone familiar with the British countryside, or even the verges of motorways, will recognise thousands of oilseed rape plants growing uninvited amid crops of wheat or barley, and in great swaths by the roadside where the "small greasy ball bearings" of seeds have spilled from lorries. Farmers in Canada soon found that volunteers of GM oilseed rape have become impossible to kill with two or three applications of different weedkillers after a succession of various GM crops were grown. The new plants are dubbed superweeds because they proved resistant to three herbicides while the crops they were growing among had been genetically engineered to be resistant to only one. To stop their farm crops being overwhelmed with superweeds, farmers had to resort to using older, much stronger varieties of "dirty" herbicide long since outlawed as seriously damaging to biodiversity."



[21] A full transcript of the Irish Parliamentary debate of 24 November 2004 on Monsanto's GT73 can be downloaded from

<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-24november2004.pdf>

The GM-free Ireland Network Briefing paper submitted for the 24 November 2004 debate may be downloaded from

<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf>

[22] A full transcript of the Irish Parliamentary debate of 15 June 2005 on the EC proposals to revoke the national bans on GM crops made by six member states can be downloaded from:

<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-15June2005.pdf>

The GM-free Ireland Network Briefing paper submitted for the 15 June 2005 debate may be downloaded from

<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing2.pdf>

[23] 162 regional governments and over 4,500 sub-regional authorities now prohibit GM crops in 22 member states (including Co. Clare, Co. Monaghan, Co. Fermanagh, Clonakilty. For details visit the GMO-free Europe web site at <http://www.gmofree-europe.org> and <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map/>

[24] The AER GMO-free zones petition for local authorities can be downloaded from

[http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/Petition\\_GMO\\_free\\_zones.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/Petition_GMO_free_zones.pdf)

[25] Conference on co-existence, contamination and GM-free zones – Jeopardising consumer choice?

<http://www.consumersinternational.org>

Is it viable to grow GM crops without contaminating conventional and organic crops? Is consumer choice being threatened by the current growth of GM crops? How can GM-free zones be legally established, and what purpose do they serve? These are some of the questions that will be explored as part of a major international conference organised by Consumers International and the Government of the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna in Bologna, Italy on 9 September 2005. The challenges posed by the 'co-existence' of GM crops with conventional and organic crops will be examined and debated by panels of speakers including eminent scientists, consumer representatives, industry, and other GM experts. Speakers include Ignacio Chapela (University of California at Berkeley, USA), Angelika Hilbeck (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology), Marijane Lisboa (Consumer Defence Institute, Brazil) Muyanda Ililonga (Zambia Consumers Association), Andrew Kimbrell (Center for Food Safety, USA) and Benedikt Haerlin (Save our Seeds / Foundation on Future Farming). Discussions will take place in English and Italian with simultaneous interpretation in both languages. All Irish County Councils, farming organisations and consumer groups are urged to participate and protect our farming future.

#### **Useful web sites:**

Assembly of European Regions demand "power-sharing" over GMO crop decision - GMO Free zones reach all time high:

<http://www.a-e-r.org/press/2005/20050517/>

Consumers International: <http://www.consumersinternational.org>

GM contamination register: <http://www.gmcontaminationregister.org>

GM-free Ireland Network: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org>

GMO-free Europe: <http://www.gmofree-europe.org>

Independent Science Panel on GM: <http://www.indsp.org>

Institute of Science in society: <http://www.i-sis.org.uk>

Map of GMO-free zones in Ireland: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map>