

NEWS ALERT

Dublin, Friday 22 September 2006 • GM-free Ireland Network

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ILLEGAL GMO RICE COVER-UP BY EFSA AND FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

FSAI safety claims based on insufficient evidence

No testing of product on supermarket shelves

Certified GM-free rice found to be contaminated

Call for FSAI head to resign

The GM-free Ireland Network has written to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) demanding why American GM long grain rice is still on sale in Ireland even though GM rice is illegal in the EU and all US long-grain rice imports are banned in Japan and Switzerland. The letter can be downloaded at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/rice/GMFI-FSAI1.pdf>

Bayer CropScience genetically modified LL601 rice from experiments in the USA in 1999-2001 contaminated food supplies world-wide without detection until January 2006.

The unapproved rice contains virus DNA suspected of causing pre-cancerous growth in animals, and bacterial DNA for resistance to glufosinate ammonium weedkiller, a neurotoxin linked to birth defects.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and FSAI (whose CEO Dr. John O'Brien is a former director of the International Life Sciences Institute biotech industry lobby group) claims there is no health risk, even though the EFSA GMO panel said there is insufficient data to justify this claim, and Bayer is refusing to release a secret dossier that might well show that LL601 is genetically unstable and dangerous.

The illegal GM rice was found in Tesco, Aldi, and Morrisons stores and has probably been sold by most retailers and consumed for years by millions of people. Kellogs Rice Krispies, Gerber baby food, and Anheuser-Busch beer could also be contaminated.

Representatives of major Irish retailers who attended a briefing on the issue by the FSAI yesterday said the FSAI has not required them to conduct their own tests or to recall suspect products.

The EU admitted yesterday that some of 12 US rice consignments certified as GM-free were also contaminated, so the certification system is a total farce.

GM-free Ireland coordinator Michael O'Callaghan has asked the FSAI to ban all imports of US long-grain rice and to recall all US long-grain rice from stores pending further investigation of this massive food safety scandal. He said "Dr. John O'Brien's ties to the biotech industry present a clear conflict of interest. Having a former director of a biotech industry lobby group in charge of Ireland's food safety is not acceptable."

For latest news coverage see: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/news/index.php>

30 Aug press release: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/press/GMFI29.pdf>

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