



Modern Biotechnology

Position

Euvepro is committed to sharing information about the use of modern biotechnology, including genetic modification, in a balanced, open manner, and supports the controlled, responsible use of these techniques.

Background

The use of biotechnology to modify foods is not new - indeed man has used biological processes for thousands of years to obtain foodstuffs such as cheese, bread and wine. These processes may not only characterise the nutritious food product but may also convey properties such as better shelf-life, improved digestibility or importantly, broader availability.

Modern biotechnology includes the use of enzymes in a wide range of food products, and for many years some of these enzymes have been produced by micro-organisms genetically modified to improve their functionality in such products as cheese, bread and starch.

What is "Genetic Modification?"

Genetic modification employs techniques to transfer DNA from one species to another or modify one or more genes naturally present in that species, thereby introducing certain properties that are desired and seen as an improvement in the quality of the host species.

It is a highly controlled and regulated process and represents a major extension of the classical breeding processes that have been employed in the past, dramatically reducing the time it would take to develop these traits by natural selection.



What is GM Soya?

In 1996 Monsanto announced that a new, genetically modified variety (Round-Up Ready®) would be introduced to the USA crop of soya. Round-Up Ready soya beans were genetically modified to make the growing seedlings tolerant to the herbicide "Round-Up®", a well established, efficient product, which breaks down into harmless components in the soil.

The initial benefit to the grower was a significant reduction in the number of applications and volume of herbicide applied, and a higher yield of soya beans per acre planted. The benefit to the environment was less damage to the soil due to harmful residual chemicals.

Is it legal?

Full approval was given by both the FDA and EU for the use of Round-Up Ready soya beans in foods for human consumption and animal feeds. To date **no other genetically modified soya beans have been approved for use in the EU.**

Other foods approved for use in Europe include GM maize, GM rape and GM tomato.

Consumer choice

The legal framework governing this subject is crucial for the market to operate and to ensure consumer trust in the technology. In order to enable consumer choice, the EU introduced various labeling regulations which have been periodically reviewed and modified to allow for improvements in agricultural practices.



Regulation EC/1830/2003 stipulates that if genetically modified beans are used in the manufacture of a food product, the final product must be labeled in such a way as to indicate the presence of genetically modified soya. If conventional or traditional soya beans are used, there is no need to label the finished consumer product in this fashion. Regulation EC/1830/2003 also defines acceptable levels of GM bearing in mind modern farming practices may give rise to a small amount of adventitious presence (see "Whereas 24" of the Regulation).

Regulation EC/1830/2003 stipulates that it is necessary to prove the authenticity of traditional/conventional beans through some system of traceability – testing alone is insufficient proof of the GM traditional status of the beans.

How does this work?

Local enforcement authorities are at liberty to check GM content of finished products and/or ingredients using EU validated methods (PCR), and to request proof of a traceability chain.

What does this mean for Euvepro members?

Demands for the segregation of crops between traditional and GM has led to the establishment of elaborate systems, often referred to as IP (Identity Preserved). The IP preserves the identity of traditional/conventional beans from farm to finished ingredient. This allows food processors the choice between non-GM products and products containing GM which must be labeled as such on the finished consumer product.

Inevitably this segregation has given rise to increased production costs; however, Euvepro members are committed to provide their customers with products manufactured from traditional soya beans should this be their choice.

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