

STOP GENETIC CONTAMINATION



This ship DOES CONTAIN Syngenta's illegal GMO maize variety Bt10.

The European Union legally requires all imports of GMO animal feed to be certified free of Bt10.

With a good Biosafety Protocol every country should have the right to ban unapproved GMOS

Syngenta's Bt10 maize

Why identification and certification is needed

In December 2004 Syngenta told the US government that it had made a mistake. It had been selling the wrong GMO to American farmers for four years. Instead of farmers planting the approved Bt11 insect resistant GMO maize they had been actually growing and exporting Bt10, an experimental maize not approved anywhere in the world.

Did Syngenta or the US tell the Biosafety Clearing House or other governments? NO, they kept it secret. Only after concerned government employees leaked the information to the scientific journal *Nature* did the world come to know about the incident.

The lies and deception didn't stop there. Syngenta told the world that "*Bt10 and Bt11 are physically identical*" and that, "*Therefore, there is no change to the food, health and environmental profile of the corn.*" This message was repeated by many governments, including the US. However, NGOs disagreed and pointed out that Bt10 contains one or more copies of the ampicillin resistance marker gene (beta lactamase), which is not present in Bt11. Since ampicillin is a widely used clinical antibiotic, and European Food Safety Authority, Codex Alimentarius, FAO-WHO and many medical and scientific experts have recommended against the use of genes for such antibiotics in GM foods. Syngenta eventually admitted that this was correct.

Because Bt10 was not commercialised, there was no information on its genetic make-up in the public domain. This meant that governments around the world were unable to test imports for the presence of this potentially harmful GMO. Eventually Syngenta provided a testing company with the data needed, and a testing method was approved – 5 months after Syngenta knew about the incident.

On 18th April 2005 the European Union introduced emergency measures to stop the contamination. All imports from the United States containing GMO animal feeds had to be certified free of Bt10.

Due to the lack of any strict identification requirements, Syngenta has provided very little information about Bt10. Nobody really knows how much of the world's food supply has been contaminated and where it has gone. Originally it was claimed that over the past 4 years only 1000 tonnes of Bt10 had been imported into the European Union. However, last week the EU dramatically announced that the Irish government had impounded a ship after tests showed it contained 2546 tonnes of maize contaminated with Bt10.

What we can learn from this incident:

- The GMO industry has once again shown that they are out of control. How can they be selling the wrong GMO for 4 years without even knowing?
- Strict identification and certification is needed in the Biosafety Protocol so that countries do not have to resort to "emergency procedures".
- Information about unapproved and experimental GMOs must also be made public to allow governments to detect contamination incidents quicker.