GM CROP IMPORTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE EU FOOD SUPPLY

CropLife EUROPE

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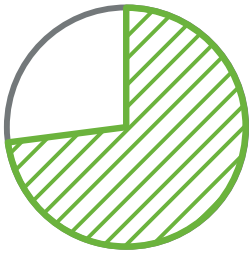
Genetically modified (GM) crops have been increasingly cultivated and consumed worldwide since the mid-1990's. Between 1996 and 2019, the area of biotech crops increased 112-fold, making it the fastest adopted agricultural technology worldwide.[1] An estimated 17 million farmers and their families benefit from GM technology today.[2]

For political reasons, GM crops do not get authorised for cultivation in the EU, even if the safety of GM crops has been repeatedly proven.[3] Their import, however remains essential for the balance and competitiveness of the EU feed market: the EU's feed sector is 74% import-dependent on protein rich crops, most of which are GM.[4]



The EU's feed sector is 74% import-dependent on high-protein crops, most of which are GM.[5]

How long does it take for a GM crop to be authorised for use?

Europe
5 YEARS
on average

4x longer than the average time it takes for the European Medicines Agency to assess human medicines for marketing authorisation.[9]

United States
1.8 YEARS

Australia
1 YEAR

Canada
5 MONTHS

Despite the current ambition to boost plant protein production in the EU, this scenario will not advance quickly, and would not be sufficient to remove the need for imports. EU protein crops imports are expected to grow by 22% to sustain demand in 2020/21 alone.[6]

The GM authorisation process in the EU remains lengthy and unpredictable, the legal timelines are rarely met. It takes on average over 5 years to authorise a GM crop for import into the EU.[7] This same process takes less than two years in the United States, less than one year in Australia, and less than six months in Canada.[9]

The delays in product authorisation in the EU have the potential to severely threaten trade flows and the supply of feed for the EU livestock sector. The overall cost to the European economy of such trade disruptions can total up to €9.6 billion per year.[8]

DELAYS AND UNCERTAINTY IN THE AUTHORISATION PROCESS OF GM PRODUCTS ARE COSTLY FOR FOOD AND FEED CHAIN OPERATORS AND ARE NOT JUSTIFIED ON SAFETY GROUNDS.

1 https://www.isaaa.org/resources/publications/briefs/55/executivesummary/default.asp
2 https://www.isaaa.org/resources/publications/briefs/55/executivesummary/default.asp
3 Bt corn producing insecticide is the only product to have ever been approved for cultivation in the EU, in 1996, predating the current framework.
4 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/eu-feed-protein-balance-sheet_2020-2021_en.pdf
5 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/eu-feed-protein-balance-sheet_2020-2021_en.pdf
6 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/short-term-outlook-spring-2021_en.pdf
7 Average time taken for the authorisation process of new products in the five-year period from 2016 to 2020
8 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2dba2ffd-a55c-4f83-b391-c63257fd598d
9 https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/annual-report/2020-annual-report-european-medicines-agency_en.pdf

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