HOW THE SAFETY OF GM CROPS IS ENSURED

CropLife EUROPE

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All genetically modified (GM) crops imported into the EU market are safe, labelled, and traceable.

GM food and feed products can only be authorised in the EU if they have undergone a rigorous safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

EFSA evaluates the impact of GM products on human and animal health, as well as the environment. A positive scientific opinion from EFSA is the basis upon which the EU's risk managers – that is, the European Commission and EU Member States – decide on the authorisation of GMOs for the EU market. Once approved for import, the legislation also imposes post-market environmental monitoring for each GM crop that has been authorised.

In the EU, consumers have their freedom of choice guaranteed.

The EU food labelling system obliges operators to indicate if the food or feed they produce contains GM organisms (GMOs).[1] Companies also have the option to indicate on a label that their product does not contain GMOs.

The consensus of regulatory agencies globally is that GM crops are safe. A range of in-depth studies on GM crops over the past two and a half decades in Europe and the US confirm a track record of safe use.

The European Commission funded at least 50 studies on GM crop safety, involving 400 independent European research groups. They concluded that GM crops are as safe as conventional crops.[2] The same conclusion was reached by the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine scientific collective. This panel of 20 scientists analysed data accumulated over a 20-year period since commercial GM crops were initially introduced; this data comprised almost 900 publications, including European and North American health data.[3]

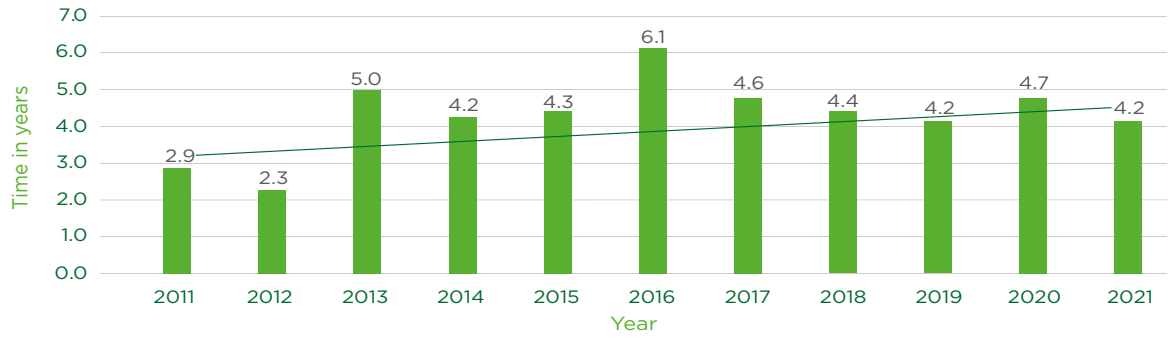
Despite long-standing experience with GMOs and the absence of a single substantiated case of adverse effects on human and animal health, or on the environment, legal timelines for the GM authorisation process in the EU are rarely met and continue to increase.

In the EU, it takes on average five years from the time of submission until the final authorisation of a GM crop for import. 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. In the EU, most delays occur during EFSA's risk assessment phase, which takes over four years on average for new products.

The delays in product authorisation in the EU have the potetial to severely threaten trade flows and negatively impact food supply. Food and feed chain operators rely on the EU system to authorise GM crops for import in a timely manner. The overall cost to the European economy of such trade disruptions can total up to 9.6 billion per year.[4]

The authorisation process in the EU: EFSA's risk assessment for new GM products for import

The legally foreseen timeline for the EFSA assessment is six months according to Reg. 1829/2003 (Art. 6).[5]



GM CROPS IMPORTED INTO THE EU ARE SAFE, LABELLED AND TRACEABLE

1 This applies when GMOs account for at least 0.9% of the food or the feed.
2 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d1be9ff9-f3fa-4f3c-86a5-beb0882e0e65
3 https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23395/genetically-engineered-crops-experiences-and-prospects
4 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2dba2ffd-a55c-4f83-b391-c63257fd598d
5 The graph shows average time in years from submission of the publication of the positive scientific opinion by EFSA of a GM product until the adoption by the European Commission of the implementing decision granting its authorisation

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