



French Academies call for freedom of research on Genetically Modified Plants (GMPs) to be restored

Considering that Genetically Modified Plants (GMPs) have been on the market for more than 15 years and that they are cultivated on large-scale crop areas worldwide, and making the observation, moreover, that a new generation of GMPs is emerging from the laboratories, the 3 French Academies (Agriculture, Science, Technologies) have engaged in a common reflection process, concluded by a Forum on 19 November 2013, so as to provide a scientific review and draw prospects for GMPs*.

This reflection has brought about the following conclusions:

Knowing that:

- French farmers may reuse as farm seeds the grains GMPs produce, under the same conditions as they re-use grains obtained from traditional seeds (*French Law regarding Biotechnological Inventions*, 8 December 2004);
- transgenic, traditional and organic farming may legally coexist (*French Law*, 25 June 2008),

the French Academies remind that:

- public research should maintain and develop its expertise at the service of all, including through experimentation;
- GMPs are not the only promising solution for agriculture. They constitute a tool to be used alongside others for a sustainable, productive and environmentally friendly agriculture, designed to serve a globally fast-growing population;
- the spread of some currently available GMPs should be backed up by close attention to environmental effects and especially resistance against biotic factors (living organisms such as insects, weeds). This notably implies that Best Management Practice training should be provided to farmers;
- the use of GMPs should be assessed on a case-by-case basis before it be authorised, from a Cost-Benefit-Risk analysis viewpoint that takes into account the different social, ecological and economic circumstances;
- the very strict EU regulation on marketing authorisation allows testing their long-term efficacy and safety.

In order to advance in this discussion, the French Academies call for delving deeper into GMP-related scientific and agronomic issues, based on objective grounds. This implies restoring the freedom to conduct research and trials, including long-term, open-field experiments in compliance with current regulations.

* <http://www.academie-agriculture.fr/groupe-de-reflexion/plantes-genetiquement-modifiees>
<http://www.academie-sciences.fr/activite/rapport/groupepgm.htm>
<http://www.academie-technologies.fr/en/>

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