

Declaration with respect to a proposal for a strategy on how to deal with varieties made by cell fusion techniques in organic farming.

Paris, 28 April 2009

The group of expert stakeholders present at the Eco-PB/ITAB workshop on “strategies for a future without cell fusion techniques in varieties applied in Organic farming” in Paris,

Acknowledging the fact that:

- Cell fusion techniques are a technique of genetic modification under the IFOAM definition on genetic modification (see www.ifoam.org);
- that genetic modification is incompatible with the principles of organic farming;
- we lose credibility and confidence from the organic consumers if we use GMO techniques;
- that the IFOAM General Assembly in Modena (2008) has unanimously accepted a motion stating that “The IFOAM GA 2008 confirms that cell fusion, including protoplast and cytoplasm fusion, do not comply with the principles of organic agriculture. Therefore we urge the IFOAM World Board to develop clear guidelines on how to deal with varieties derived from cell fusion, including protoplast and cytoplasm fusion breeding techniques”;
- if IFOAM (shows leadership and) adopts a strategy to ban cell fusion techniques from organic farming this will be:
 - acceptable for farmers,
 - showing the seed companies that we make a clear standpoint,
 - an example for other private organizations and agreements.

Recommends to IFOAM and any other private body:

To ban all crop varieties made by cell fusion techniques from organic farming.

Goal 1: develop and maintain (in the market) varieties that are suitable for and compatible with organic farming;

Goal 2: get and keep organic seeds free from cell fusion techniques;

Goal 3: forbid the use of cell fusion varieties in organic farming

a) for the short term concentrate on private standards (IFOAM, Demeter, Bioland, Biobreizh) and agreements by traders (Carrefour, etc.) and farmer and policy organizations,

b) for the long term it should be implemented in public law.

Tools:

- Suggest to national governments to install a no cell fusion-button on the national organic seed databases (is already done by OrganicXseeds database);
- Don't allow CMS varieties in organic variety-tests;
- Promote the use and production of organic seed;

- Use a negative list of varieties that a) are made by cell fusion techniques or b) varieties of which it is unknown which techniques are used. Eco-PB could compile and publish such an European list every year;
- IFOAM should exclude varieties made by cell fusion techniques explicitly in the seed section of the IFOAM standards;
- Involve trading companies, supermarkets and transplant growers to commit to private agreements. For instance: trading companies can introduce it in their quality insurance policy; as it is a GMO!
- Promote organic breeding for Brassica and chicory varieties and any other species that might be affected by a ban of cell fusion techniques;
- To raise awareness among organic farmers, therefore educational documents need to be developed by Eco-PB in cooperation with institutes that have connection with southern countries;
- Ask the IFOAM-EU Group to adopt a position paper written by ECO-PB based on the outcome of this meeting;
- ECO-PB will redefine the definition of breeding methods for varieties that are compatible with the principles of organic farming. *That is the starting point for a green lists of organic and non-GMO varieties.*

Time frame

- The outcome of this meeting will be used as an input for the IFOAM breeding conference in Santa Fé/USA, August 2009; there will be a workshop on this issue;
- We aim to formulate a world wide strategy in Santa Fé;
- We ask IFOAM to develop private standards/norms and accreditation criteria for the next General Assembly or at least within the coming five years;
- We propose that private bodies (including traders, farmers and policy organisations) introduce a ban on varieties made by cell fusion techniques a.s.a.p.
- We aim at implementation within public law (in Europe) a.s.a.p. after the private standards have been accepted;
- ECO-PB will publish the first EU negative list before the end of this year.
- ECO-PB will elaborate pedagogic documents for producers and countries that are not represented at the workshop.