

MOTION 52

The IFOAM General Assembly urges the IFOAM World Board to define guidelines for the use of varieties derived from new breeding techniques. This implies

1. evaluating the compliance of new plant breeding techniques using the principles of Organic Agriculture,
2. promoting the legally bound declaration of breeding techniques that do not comply with the principles of Organic Agriculture, and
3. developing a strategy to prevent varieties derived from such breeding techniques from entering the organic sector.

In order to achieve these goals by the next GA in 2017, a working group should be installed.

Rationale:

Regarding the lengthy debate on compliance of varieties derived from cell fusion and the difficulties encountered in trying to remove such varieties from Organic Agriculture, we are concerned that the same situation might happen with new breeding techniques (e.g. RNA interference, gene silencing, site directed mutagenesis, tilling, zink-finger-nucleasis, cisgenetics), which are entering the market.

Most of these techniques manipulate DNA or regulatory RNA by refined genetic engineering. These interventions might no longer be detectable in the final variety and thus not be considered as genetically engineered variety.

If there is no legal requirement to declare (label) the applied breeding techniques, farmers will have no choice to avoid the use of varieties that are derived from breeding techniques that might not comply with the Principles of Organic Agriculture.

First a common understanding and agreement on the criteria for the evaluation of breeding techniques need to be developed under the umbrella of IFOAM, followed by a global strategy to exclude, from the onset, breeding techniques that might not comply with the Principles of Organic Agriculture.