# Inadequate procedure led to transgenic crop approvals: European Ombudsman starts investigation

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) does not have guidance for risk assessment of transgenic crops with altered nutritional composition
Friday, 26 October 2018

The office of the European Ombudsman has confirmed it will investigate a complaint by GeneWatch UK, supported by TestBiotech, regarding the authorisation for import of three transgenic crops with altered oil content for use as food and feed.

The three transgenic soybeans, produced by Monsanto (Bayer) and Pioneer (DowDuPont / Corteva), were approved for import by the European Commission in 2015. The organisations objected to the authorisations at the time, but the Commission refused to review the substance of their complaint until this year, after losing a legal case brought by Testbiotech. In their complaint to the ombudsman, the organisations state that a letter sent to them by the Commission in July 2018 is still inadequate to address their concerns and to protect the environment and human health.

Issues highlighted in the complaint include:
• Lack of guidance on how to assess the risk of nutritionally-altered GM crops
• Failure to properly assess health risks of altered oil content
• Failure to protect vulnerable groups, including children and people with relevant health conditions
• Inadequate labelling

TestBiotech and GeneWatch UK are also preparing a detailed analysis of problems with the risk assessment of nutritionally-altered GM crops as part of the RAGES project (Risk Assessment of Genetically Engineered Organisms in the EU and Switzerland). This outcome will presented in 2019 and will include some broader issues which are not part of the ombudsman complaint, such as the difficulties in assessing risks to the environment of new nutrients in the food chain.

**Contact:**
Helen Wallace, Director, GeneWatch UK: +44-330-0010507; +44-7903-311584 (mobile); helen.wallace@genewatch.org [1]
Christoph Then, Testbiotech Tel 0049 151 54638040, info@testbiotech.org [2]

**Further information:** The complaint [3]
The letter from the EU Commission [4]
Decision of the General Court of the European Union [5]
RAGES project [6]

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