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Report Name: European Commission Authorizes 10 GE Crops for Import

Country: Belgium

Post: Brussels USEU

Report Category: Biotechnology - Plants and Animals

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Report Highlights:

On August 17, 2021, the European Commission (EC) approved seven genetically engineered (GE) crops (3 corn, 2 soybean, 1 rapeseed, and 1 cotton) and renewed the authorizations for two corn and one rapeseed crop used for food and animal feed. The EC approves groups of events twice a year - during the December holiday season and in mid-summer. The ten authorizations and renewals were published in the European Union's Official Journal on August 26, 2021, and they remain valid for 10 years.

General Information:

On August 17, 2021, the European Commission (EC) approved seven genetically engineered (GE) crops (3 corn, 2 soybean, 1 rapeseed, and 1 cotton) and renewed the authorizations for two corn and one rapeseed crop used for food and animal feed. The authorization and renewal decisions apply to food and feed for import and processing, but do not cover cultivation and are valid for 10 years. All products will be subject to the EU's strict labelling and traceability rules.

The following ten Commission Implementing Decisions for the authorizations and renewals were published in the European Union's (EU) Official Journal on August 24, 2021:

- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1385 of 17 August 2021 renewing the authorisation for the placing on the market of feed and products other than food and feed containing or consisting of genetically modified oilseed rape GT73 (MON-ØØØ73-7)
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1386 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean DAS-81419-2
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1387 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean DAS-81419-2 × DAS–44406–6
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1388 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize 1507 × MIR162 × MON810 × NK603 and genetically modified maize combining two or three of the single events 1507, MIR162, MON810 and NK603
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1389 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified cotton GHB614 × T304-40 × GHB119
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1390 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MZIR098 (SYN-ØØØ98-3)
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1391 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified oilseed rapes Ms8 × Rf3 × GT73, Ms8 × GT73 and Rf3 × GT73
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1392 of 17 August 2021 renewing the authorisation for the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize Bt 11 (SYN-BTØ11-1)
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1393 of 17 August 2021 renewing the authorisation for the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 88017 × MON 810 (MON-88Ø17-3 × MON-ØØ81Ø-6)
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1394 of 17 August 2021 authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 87427 × MON 87460 × MON 89034 × 1507 × MON 87411 × 59122 and genetically modified maize combining two, three, four or five of the single events MON 87427, MON 87460, MON 89034, 1507, MON 87411 and 59122

Authorization Process:
All GE crops have gone through the EU's full authorization procedure, including a favorable scientific assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as set in Directive 2001/18/EC.[1] After a positive evaluation by EFSA, the EC puts forward a proposal for the authorization of the events that must be voted at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) for Genetically Modified Food and Feed and Environmental Risk by EU Member State (MS) representatives. A positive outcome in the PAFF Committee requires a qualified majority.[2] Member States did not reach a qualified majority either in favor or against the GE crops at the Standing Committees and at the subsequent Appeal Committees thus the Commission has the legal duty to proceed with the authorizations.

Consideration and Outlook:
The EC usually approves groups of events twice a year - during the December holiday season and in mid-summer. The Member States had many EFSA approved GE crops waiting in the authorization pipeline due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the suspension of Standing Committee meetings back in 2020. These ten events were approved during subsequent PAFF Committee meetings since December 16, 2020 followed by meetings on April 19, May 17, and June 8, 2021. The Appeal Committee meetings took place, respectively on February 26, June 9, July 6, and July 22, 2021. This is the second group of GE approvals for export to the EU that the Commission approved in 2021, following the eight events that were approved in January 2021.

Attachments:

No Attachments.

[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32001L0018

[2] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/qualified-majority/