

P-04-583 Ban all growing and selling of GM seeds foods and animal fish feed in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 04.03.15

Dear Panel,

It's very encouraging to see that the Welsh Government, in their own words: "has a long standing restrictive and precautionary approach to GM crop cultivation, that it admits that there remains no consensus on a range of issues such as animal and human health, environmental issues or socio economic issues and that a broader and more holistic evaluation of GMO's should be undertaken before they are approved"

It's of course a very positive thing that food and feed products derived from GM sources and/or that contain GMO's have to be clearly labelled as such under EU regulations. I would usually agree that an informed choice for customers is a good thing generally. But in the case of products from GM sources or containing GMO, I believe that the Welsh Government should go a step further and, under their devolved remit of health and the precautionary principle, protect the health of Welsh citizens by banning GM and GMO products altogether from Wales. Otherwise the Welsh Government's stance is contradictory by saying that they are following the precautionary principle when it comes to GM crops but ignoring it when it comes to foods and feeds that have GM/GMO ingredients. This makes no sense at all.

Given this, I fail to see how the Welsh Government can or should agree with the FSA's view that GM feed "represents no more risk to farmed livestock than conventional feed and that food from animals fed on authorised GM crops is considered as safe as food from animals fed on non GM crops". This paragraph openly contradicts the statement made by the Welsh Government in responding to this petition as seen in the first paragraph. Food and feed may also contain GMO's and therefore GM feed also cannot be considered safe for this reason as well.

Given that humans often eat animals that are fed with GM feed and that animal health is also obviously an issue, it seems obvious that it makes no sense to follow the FSA's advice given the statements made by the Welsh Government as seen above. The letter from the the Deputy Minister for Health, Vaughan Gethin and the Welsh Government in general are therefore still giving out confused and contradictory messages.

As demonstrated in my earlier reply there is an abundance of evidence from a wide variety

of sources that GM and GMO's are a danger to short and long term human and environmental health and is also ethically wrong and environmentally dangerous. Either the Welsh Government takes a precautionary approach to GM/GE/GMO or it doesn't is how I would summarise my points.

The precautionary principle is summed up by the EU Commission as:

“The precautionary principle applies where scientific evidence is insufficient, inconclusive or uncertain and preliminary scientific evaluation indicates that there are reasonable grounds for concern that the potentially dangerous effects on the environment, human, animal or plant health may be inconsistent with the high level of protection chosen.”

In other words, even if the evidence is inconclusive and there are even the smallest reasonable grounds for concern, the precautionary principle deems that it cannot go ahead. The EU website link below also states that burden of proof of the absence of danger may also rest with the producer, manufacturer or importer. No proof of absence of danger has been declared as regards to GM and GMO's, and where this has been claimed, these claims have been taken apart by peer reviewed scientific papers as is shown towards the end of this correspondence.

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/food_safety/general_provisions/l32042_en.htm

Therefore allowing GM and GMO products in Wales would suggest to me to be going against the precautionary principle, leaving the Welsh Government open to potential legal action.

As previously mentioned, from the great work done by GM Free Cymru and by key scientists such as Irina Ermakova, Professor Vyvyan Howard and Malcolm Hooper, Dr Stanley Ewen, Dr Arpad Pusztai, Manuela Malatesta and colleagues at the Universities of Pavia and Urbino in Italy to name a few, there is now overwhelming evidence available about the inherent dangers of GM foods, which includes cancer threats.

GM Free Cymru's Dr Brian John states that: "The European Commission appears to be intent upon issuing one contentious GM authorization after another, basing its decisions upon highly selective and biased research by the applicants themselves, and taking guidance from a despised European Food Safety Authority which has lost the confidence of NGO's and consumer groups across Europe".

Politicians are blindly promoting the merits of the large biotechnology companies such as Monsanto in spite of massive opposing public and scientific voices. Patenting nature and intervening through genetic engineering is also an act against nature itself and brings in to question morality, ethics, natural and human rights. An increasing number of countries such as Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Japan, Switzerland, the Basque country and Peru, to name but a few, are now expelling the chemical and bio tech giant Monsanto and eliminating all GM crops, seed, plants and foods from their country.

All of this peer reviewed scientific research can be found on the website of GM Free Cymru which includes evidence of why they believe assessments by the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) fail to meet legal requirements and therefore cannot be trusted by the FSA or Welsh Government. This as well as countless peer reviewed papers on GM and GMO dangers, the lack of trust by NGO's in the European scrutiny process as well as the undue influence of the GM corporations.

Deputy Health Minister Vaughan Gethin's statement in his letter that the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) has the confidence of the FSA (Food Standards Authority) in Britain is sadly not of any comfort at all – quite the opposite. His other statement that: "To date all the evidence suggests that food and feed derived from GMO's is as safe as that from non GM sources" is not only blatantly incorrect and misleading but also very irresponsible, displaying considerable and worrying ignorance of the available evidence. One look at the numerous peer reviewed papers on the GM Free Cymru site for example would let him know otherwise. I would invite Mr Gethin to visit the GM Free Cymru website (link below) and digest it's full list of scientific evidence and peer reviewed papers on the dangers of GM and GMO's, and then retract or update his incorrect statement as seen above and in his previous letter.

For a full list of peer reviewed papers listing all the studied dangers of GM's and GMO's please visit GM Free Cymru at <http://www.gmfreecymru.org.uk/crucial.html>

I would also urge the petition panel to write to Dr Brian John at GM Free Cymru (details supplied) so that he can present detailed scientific evidence about GM and GMO dangers to the panel and to all the appropriate Ministers at the Welsh Government. Dr John has campaigned and lobbied extensively on this issue, here and in the EU.

I am also once again concerned that the devolved area of health is not fully dealt

with in Wales as it should, and that the Welsh Government is relying on bodies not in Wales to 'give them' information and health policy. Health is devolved to Wales. It should be dealt with here. This is what people democratically voted for.

It is the duty of the Welsh Government and Assembly members to look at all the evidence that raises serious questions about the validity of the work of the EFSA, and of the safety of GM and GMO's in general.

I look forward to common sense prevailing and genuine scientific protocol being followed,

Sincerely,

G.Meredith