

Workshop session II “Emerging applications: GM trees, stacks and clearfield crops“

7th May 2015, afternoon

Presentations: see separate files

Discussion:

Cross resistance of cornborers resistant to Cry1 (which is the most common event for Bt toxin production) to other engineered Bt-toxins was discussed (e.g. Cry2 toxins).

Some argued that the definition of a GMO needs to be updated and modified to capture also the new gene engineering methodologies. Others said that there is no need, but rather a risk, to open up the EU definition of GMOs. Yet others argued that some techniques would escape the current definition and that a careful legal and scientific analysis must be made on these cases. Hence, there was no consensus on whether the definition should be changed or kept as it is, simply making sure that the new techniques of biotechnology are understood to giving rise to GMOs that are falling under the scope of the existing legislation. It was argued that this room of legal interpretation does exist. However, a strategy needs to be developed to counter the US narrative of product vs process based regulations. In the EU, the regulations are clearly triggered by the process but what is evaluated is of course the product! Developers and supporters of non-regulation of GMOs create a lot of confusion about this in particular with politicians who do not understand the science nor the narratives behind it.

For the CIBUS rapeseed varieties, both are a problem: process and product. If this product should come to the farmers fields and commercial markets, at least traceability, transparency and proper risk assessment must be ensured. Others stated that herbicide resistant crops are a bad idea regardless how they were created.