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Global Agricultural Information Network

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Hungarian Safeguard Measures Against Production of Amflora Potato

Report Categories:

Biotechnology

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Report Highlights:

The Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoA) issued a statement on its official website announcing the launch of a safeguard procedure for a new biotechnology potato variety recently approved by the EU Commission.

General Information:

The MoA issued a statement on its official website announcing the launch of a safeguard procedure for a new biotechnology potato variety recently approved by the EU Commission. This is consistent with Hungary's five years moratorium on the MON810 biotechnology corn strain. The Government of Hungary continues to focus on the "GMO-free" ideal rather than looking for new methods of competitive crop production. The statement was released during the Parliamentary election campaign, and has the support of the Prime Minister designate.

Summary of the Statement:

The EU Commission by its 2010/135/EU Decision approved placing on the market of the EH92-257-1 (Amflora) biotechnology potato variety products and the adventitious or technically inevitable presence of this kind of potato in foodstuffs or animal feed. The gene technology is a new method and its agricultural application is based on the results of incomplete or only partial studies. In many aspects, sufficient analyses has not been made either in Hungarian or foreign laboratories.

The 53/2006 Decision of the Hungarian Parliament outlined the need to preserve Hungary's GMO-free status which increasingly is a market competitiveness boon and improves the safety of the food supply and the environment.

The opportunity for production and unlimited use of the Amflora potato strain may only be curtailed, according to the legislation, by initiating a safeguard procedure. The safeguard measure may be used by a Member State (MS) if it supposes, based on new scientific results, that the approved biotechnology strain risks human health or the environment. In these cases the MS may temporarily limit or forbid the use or distribution of the given biotechnology variety in its own territory.

There are considerable doubts about the safety of the marker genes in the Amflora biotechnology potato variety. These marker genes may result in resistance for several antibiotics in the aminoglycoside group used in humane and veterinary medicine. Additionally, the commercial cultivation of the Amflora potato variety may harm the natural environment. As a result, the MoA launched a safeguard procedure.