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for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Your ref:
Our ref: RFI6978
Date: 5 December
2014

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: DEFRA COMMUNICATIONS AND MEETINGS WITH THE ABC AND ITS MEMBER COMPANIES SINCE 15 JULY 2014. REF. RFI6978

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 27 October, about Defra communications and meetings with the ABC and its member companies since 15 July 2014. As you know we have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

Following careful consideration, we have decided not to disclose some of this information. I enclose a copy of the information which can be disclosed, which consists of e-mail correspondence between Defra and the ABC and its member companies.

A small part of the information you requested is being withheld as it falls under regulations 12(3) and 13(1) (third party personal data) of the EIRs, as the information constitutes personal data relating to third parties. This data consists of names and contact details of people sending or receiving the correspondence disclosed. Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) of the EIRs provide that personal data relating to third parties is exempt information if disclosure would breach the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

We consider that disclosure of this information is likely to breach the first data protection principle in Schedule 1 to the DPA, which relates to the fair and lawful processing of personal data, in two ways. First, disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data, second, disclosure would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 2 to the DPA. Therefore, we have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure under regulation 12(3) and 13(1) of the EIRs.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless



exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

We attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you. We also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Defra FOI and EIRs Team
InformationRequests@defra.gsi.gov.uk

:

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the Intellectual Property Office's website.

Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

RFI6978: DEFRA COMMUNICATIONS AND MEETINGS WITH ABC AND ITS MEMBER COMPANIES ON GM ISSUES 15 JULY – 27 OCTOBER 2014

EMAIL FROM MONSANTO TO DEFRA 21/10/14

Dear -----

Further to my phone message. Monsanto's ----- is visiting London in the first week of November. In light of the developments with the Nationalisation/Right to Ban proposal and hiatus (another defacto moratorium?) on import approvals it would be very helpful from our perspective if ----- could meet with a UK Government representative to discuss these matters.

----- can address question about Monsanto's investment priorities in terms of both technologies and geographies.

I wanted to discuss if a meeting may be possible and if so how best to proceed. The ideal time would be on Wednesday November 5 or Friday November 7.

Kind regards

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA 12/10/14

Dear -----,

Thanks for the information on the discussions during the first week of COP12.

I am at the venue and this Sunday there is a contact group on Syn Biology meeting.

I will follow that and hope to meet your colleague -----, either tonight or in the coming days.

Best regards,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 10/10/14, COPIED TO BAYER

Thanks ----- – that's really helpful.

I hope you have a safe journey back

Kind regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO SYNGENTA 10/10/14, COPIED TO BAYER

Subject: RE: COPMOP

Hi -----,

Still here but escaping 1st thing tomorrow morning!

Synbio has had its turn in the Working Group on Wednesday and was sent to a Contact Group for further discussion on Wednesday evening. There was due to be another session last night, but it was cancelled and there's been no further news.

The Contact Group got to the heart of the argument: should we be moving towards an international regulatory framework for synbio and should we be waiting for that before doing any more research in this area. There were strong and passionate arguments on both sides of the debate but I think it quickly became clear that a complete moratorium was not a viable option. The Chair of the Contact Group convened a smaller group to try to find a solution to the issue. The EU were involved, but as numbers were limited I wasn't able to be in the discussion (just the Commission and the Presidency were there). The outcome, although it hasn't been formally discussed or reported yet, is I think that we will talk about needing to have risk assessment / regulation in place but that it can be national, regional or international and that we will continue to do further work to define what synbio is, how much of it is already covered by international regs both for the organisms and the products, and what impact those areas that covered elsewhere might have on biodiversity. The EU position is that we won't support any hint of a new international regulatory regime at this stage. Although, we'll have to see where we end up in the final negotiations.

If there's anything more today I'll let you know.

I hope this is helpful.

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 9/10/14,

Subject: COPMOP

Hi -----

I wondered how your week was going. Any discussion on Synthetic Biology? Is it still freezing?

Weather in the UK a bit mixed – lots of torrential rain and sunshine.

Hope you have a safe journey back

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO BAYER 7/10/14

Dear -----

The discussions on synthetic biology are expected to start in the working group tomorrow morning. I'll definitely let you know the key points of the discussion before I head home.

I've cced ----- so you have his contact details.

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA COPIED TO SYNGENTA, 6/10/14

Dear -----,

I hope that you have arrived safely in Korea.

During our recent call, you mentioned that you will be attending the first week of the COP12 and that your colleague ----- (hope that I have heard the name correctly) will be attending also during the second week of the COP12.

I will join the meeting for the second week and I hope that I will be able to get in touch with -----.

It would be really helpful for me if you could briefly share your impressions from the first week of COP12 and what happened in the discussions around synthetic biology.

Best Regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO BAYER AND SYNGENTA, 23/9/14

Subject: RE: Contact

My contact details are below.

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA AND SYNGENTA, 23/9/14

Subject: RE: Contact

My mobile phone number is -----

Best Regards

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA, COPIED TO BAYER 23/9/14

Subject: Contact

Hi -----

Here are -----'s contact details as requested

Look forward to seeing you soon

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO SYNGENTA 10/9/14

Hi -----,

That's right. I'll see you at Nobel House at 10:30 tomorrow.

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 10/9/14

Subject: RE: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety_meeting and final positions

Dear -----

I am looking forward to meeting you tomorrow. Just to confirm – we intend to come to Nobel House. Does this meet with your expectations?

Thanks again

EMAIL FROM ABC TO DEFRA 8/9/14

Morning -----,

Just a quick heads-up on a recent anti-GM documentary screened in France, in case you hadn't seen it.

Last week, Canal + showed “Bientot dans vos assiettes!” (“Coming soon to your plate!”) which included some clips from the public EuropaBio Growing Voices launch in Brussels last January. Owen Paterson is featured in the documentary, including his comments at the event on Golden Rice, from about 1h02mins into the video which you can find here <http://nemesistv.info/video/938RDWRB6B37/bientot-dans-vos-assiettes>

The documentary is entirely biased, linking disabilities and sickness in Argentinean children with the use of biotech crops (whether caused by the GM element or glyphosate) and used Patrick Moore’s presence at the event in January to portray him as being involved in EuropaBio/the pro-GM lobby. They also tried to interview the head of FoodDrinkEurope and claimed that she was heading Monsanto’s public affairs business and avoiding them.

Although the programme of the event was online, it was a closed-door event for TV crews which was a requirement for the presence of the Ambassador-level participants who attended. However, the event was open to journalists and the Canal + journalist sat in the front row of the event, filming under his jacket. In fact, he’s done fairly good job of making a perfectly routine panel event look sinister by using a hidden camera and some clever editing.

So nothing especially dramatic, but thought you might want to forward on to your media team too.

Best,

-----.

EMAIL FROM EUROPABIO TO DEFRA 2/9/14, COPIED TO MONSANTO

Dear -----

----- from Monsanto (in cc) will be also available to join the meeting on 11th September.

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA 1/9/14

Dear -----,

Not sure if this Royal London paper has crossed your respective tables at DEFRA but it is a very interesting digest of the myths and the author’s views on their credibility, of GM crops.

https://www.rlam.co.uk/Documents-RLAM/Literature/RLAM_Who's%20afraid%20of%20GM%20Food_Niall%20O'Shea_Aug%202014-FINAL.pdf

Best Regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO EUROPABIO 1/9/14, COPIED TO BAYER AND SYNGENTA

To: -----

Subject: RE: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety_meeting and final positions

Hi all,

Yes, 10:30 works well for us.

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM EUROPABIO TO DEFRA 1/9/14, COPIED TO BAYER AND SYNGENTA

Subject: RE: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety_meeting and final positions

Dear -----

Would you be available to meet ----- and ----- (both in copy) at 10:30?

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO EUROPABIO 1/9/14, COPIED TO BAYER AND SYNGENTA

Subject: RE: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety_meeting and final positions

Dear -----,

I won't be in Brussels on 10 September, so can we meet in London on 11 September? If you can suggest some suitable times I'll arrange a meeting room at Defra.

Many thanks,

EMAIL FROM EUROPABIO TO DEFRA 26/8/14, COPIED TO BAYER AND SYNGENTA

Subject: RE: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety_meeting and final positions

Dear -----,

Thank you very much for kindly accepting our request for a meeting!

As indicated in my last e-mail, should the meeting take place in London, ----- of Bayer and ----- of Syngenta (both in copy), representing EuropaBio at the MOP7, will be pleased to meet you, preferably on 11th September.

Should you, however, come to Brussels, you can most likely meet with more EuropaBio members here, again on September 11th. When do you expect a confirmation of your business trip?

As already discussed, please also find attached the industry position papers on Article 18.2(a), Article 17, Article 15, Article 18.3, Article 26 and contained use, which are also available on the CropLife International website (<http://croplife.org/plant-biotechnology/biosafety-protocol/>).

I remain at your disposal for further questions!

Many thanks and kind regards,

EMAIL FROM EUROPABIO TO DEFRA 25/8/14

Subject: RE: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety_meeting request

Dear -----,

Thank you very much for your e-mail (attached below) and apologies for the belated reply mainly due to the summer holidays season!

On behalf of EuropaBio, I would like to confirm that we intend to provide you by 4th September with the industry's views with regard to specific agenda items for the upcoming COP-MOP7. We are currently in the process of finalising our positions in coordination with CropLife International and under the auspices of the Global Industry Coalition (GIC). Furthermore, we would like to kindly request a meeting with you and your colleagues which will allow us to exchange views and explain the industry positions on the different topics.

Depending on your availability and convenience, ----- of Bayer and -----t of Syngenta, who will be representing EuropaBio at the MOP7, will be happy to meet with you on the 8th or 11th September. Please let us know whether this will suit you and your team.

Many thanks and best wishes,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 20/8/14

Hi -----

That sounds great – thanks. Nobel House is good for us.

Due to this being the vacation period I probably won't be able to confirm the time until the beginning of September.

Sorry for the inconvenience.

Kind regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO SYNGENTA 20/8/14

Subject: RE: Syngenta meeting

Hi -----,

I'm free all day on 26 November, so I can meet at a time that suits you. Would you like to meet at Nobel House?

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 20/8/14

Subject: RE: Syngenta meeting

Hi -----

Could we suggest 26th November? Does any particular time suit you? We would like some colleagues from Europe to attend so the afternoon may be best for us but I need to confirm this.

Kind regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO BAYER 18/8/14

Hi -----,

As discussed, here are the rapporteurs and shadows that we know so far:

Frederique Ries – ALDE (Rapporteur)

Julie Girling – ECR shadow

Gilles Pargneaux – S&D shadow

I'll update you when we know more.

Best wishes,

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO SYNGENTA 11/8/14

Subject: RE: Syngenta meeting

Hi -----,

Thank you for suggesting some dates, at the moment I'm free anytime on 15, 26 or 27 November. Would you like to meet at Defra? When would best suit you?

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 8/8/14

Subject: Syngenta meeting

Dear -----

I am coming back to you regarding the Syngenta follow up meeting we have been trying to arrange.

Are any of the following dates suitable?

18-20th November

26-27th November

Hopefully we will get to meet before the end of the year!

Kind regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO EUROPABIO, ABC MEMBERS AND OTHERS 31/7/14

Subject: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Dear Colleague,

I am ----- within Defra dealing with GM policy and regulation. I am writing to contacts representing a range of stakeholder groups that may have an interest in the forthcoming international meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (<http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/>).

The next meeting of the Parties will take place in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, between 29 September and 3 October. An agenda and some meeting documents have been issued by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and are available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MOP-07>. Further documents will be added as they are developed in the lead up to the meeting.

I will be attending the meeting in Korea as the head of the UK delegation. We will be working very closely with colleagues from across the EU to develop an EU negotiating position.

If you have specific comments on the agenda items or papers please let me know by 4 September. This will allow consideration ahead of the meeting.

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA 31/7/14

Thanks -----,

How about 1330 or 1400 then on the 14th?

Best Regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO BAYER 31/7/14

Subject: RE: Tuesday

The 14th works well for me, I'm free all day, so just let me know what time suits you.

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA 31/7/14

Subject: RE: Tuesday

Hi -----,

Good to hear! How about early afternoon on the 12th or 14th August?

Have a good vacation – going somewhere nice?

Best Regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO BAYER 31/7/14

Subject: RE: Tuesday

Hi -----,

Thanks for checking in – the GM team are still alive and well.

I'm on leave next week, but otherwise I'm around all summer. Is there another day that would suit you for a catch up?

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM BAYER TO DEFRA 31/7/14

Subject: Tuesday

Hi -----,

Haven't spoken since the traumatic events of the last re-shuffle – I trust you have (a) survived, and (b) flourished? I wondered if you were around on Tuesday 5th for a catch-up late morning, early afternoon?

Best Regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO SYNGENTA 21/7/14

Thank you very much -----. These look like they'll be very helpful.

Kind regards,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 21/7/14

Subject: Documents

Thanks for a very useful discussion today.

Please find the documents as discussed.

I will send you updated versions as they become available

Kind regards

EMAIL FROM DEFRA TO SYNGENTA 16/7/13

Hi -----,

We're pretty flexible on the 24th or the 29th, with perhaps a slight preference for the 29th. What time would suit you?

Thanks,

EMAIL FROM SYNGENTA TO DEFRA 15/7/13

Subject: RE: Monday's visit

Hi -----,

Apologies again for the slow response. I have been liaising with colleagues.

Could you meet on either 23, 24 or 29 July? Once we have a date I can advise what we will look to cover.

Thanks,

(an earlier email chain was attached to this email:)

From: Defra

Sent: 09 July 2014 09:18

To: Syngenta

Subject: RE: Monday's visit

Hi -----,

A meeting would be very helpful. Do you want to suggest some dates that would suit you? Could you also let me know what in particular you'd like to cover, so I can make sure I have the right people from my team involved.

Kind regards,

From: Syngenta

Sent: 8 July 2014

To: Defra

Subject: RE: Monday's visit

-----,

Apologies for the delay in the response.

Would it be possible for myself and my colleague ----- to meet at some point in the next few weeks to discuss a range of issues, including some of the points we raised during ----- and -----'s recent visit?

Regards,

From: Defra

Sent: 6 June 2014

To: Syngenta

Subject: Monday's visit

Dear -----

I'm very sorry that I had to miss the visit to Jealott's Hill on Monday. I had been looking forward to it.

----- mentioned that there was some discussion of new breeding techniques and how they should be treated. Would it be helpful for us to have a chat / meeting about this?

Kind regards,
