

INFORMATION REQUEST – CONTACTS WITH AIC SINCE 1/9/12

From: AIC
Sent: 14 March 2013
To: GM Team, Defra
Subject: FAO Questionnaire on GM Low Level Presence (LLP)

Please find attached a letter on the current FAO request for information on the Low Level Presence of GM material.

Kind regards

AIC

Letter attached:

Dear,

AIC would like to draw to your attention the recently launched initiative by FAO to collect information relating to Low-Level Presence (LLP) of GMOs from its member countries

The evolving use of biotechnology worldwide and divergent regulatory approaches to managing GM crops have the potential to severely complicate international trade and threaten far-reaching economic, social and political implications which the European Commission has demonstrated on a number of occasions¹. However, the full ramifications of regulatory divergence on the global food supply and trade still remain uncertain.

FAO with its combined expertise on food security and agricultural trade is extremely high placed to undertake a comprehensive analysis of this issue by taking into account both exporting and importing

¹ Directorate General for Health and Consumers, "Evaluation of the EU legislative framework in the field of GM food and feed", July 2010; Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, "Study on the Implications of Asynchronous GMO Approvals for EU Imports of Animal Feed Products", December 2010; Joint Research Centre, "The global pipeline of new GM crops; implications of asynchronous approval for international trade", July 2009.

countries' perspectives. This initiative is of utmost importance for policymakers and stakeholders in the EU and their trading partners with a view of gaining a better understanding of the impact of LLP to the international trade on agricultural commodities and downstream food and feed industry.

The FAO survey will be discussed at the GM food and feed Standing Committee meeting scheduled for the 20th of March 2013. AIC supports an EU overall reply to the questionnaire rather than a reply per Member State of the Union. Single replies from each Member State would not be appropriate as the legislative framework in the field of GM food and feed is set at European level and implemented equally across Europe. Likewise, LLP situation occurs in the EU due to the different GM policies and non-synchronicity of GM traits authorizations between the EU and its trading partners.

We, therefore, ask you to request the European Commission to lead a constructive, full and overall response to the FAO's request at the Standing Committee meeting on the 20th of March 2013.

We thank you in advance for taking this request into consideration. We remain at your disposal should you need any further information. For ease of reference a copy of the FAO questionnaire is attached.

Yours sincerely,

SURVEY ATTACHED:

FAO survey on accidental presence of low levels of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in internationally traded food crops

Introduction

Low level presence (LLP) and adventitious presence (AP) of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in internationally traded crops is of growing concern to national authorities in a number of countries and to a number of private sector bodies. National policies and regulations that govern the acceptability of genetically modified (GM) crops vary. The land area under GM cultivation has grown steadily over the last two decades and many of the GM crops are important in international trade (including maize, canola, soybean). Furthermore, available information suggests that there are a number of new GM crops under development and that a growing number of countries are involved in developing these crops. Current systems of production, handling and transport lead to unintentional low level presence of GMOs in "non- GMO" consignments. A number of trade-related problems have been reported due to such unintentional mixing. FAO is carrying out a study to better understand the extent of trade-disruption due to LLP and AP. This questionnaire has been designed

to collect information from countries and will serve as the basis of the FAO analysis. Relevant environmental, food and feed safety regulations that may affect the movement of commodities with LLP or AP of GMOs will be considered within the study.

Working definitions

For the purposes of this study, LLP refers to low level presence of those GMOs that have been approved in at least one country on the basis of a food safety assessment according to the relevant Codex Guidelines. AP refers to the unintentional presence of GMOs that have not been approved in any countries on the basis of the international guidelines for safety assessment.

Objectives

1. To determine the extent of the impact of LLP in internationally traded commodities or trade flows, on food and feed availability, food security and to determine which commodities and which countries are most affected.
2. To determine how the impact of LLP/ AP in internationally traded commodities is likely to evolve over the next 5-10 years and how this impact will affect food security and economic development.
3. To investigate how selected regulatory scenarios could affect the movement of commodities with LLP or AP of GMO

QUESTIONNAIRE

GM Crop Production

1. Does your country produce GM crops?

- a. Yes - Research only (field trials)
- b. Yes – Both research and commercial production
- c. No

2. How many GM crops (the number of GM events) does your country produce (both research and commercial production)?

- a. Less than 20
- b. 21-50
- c. 51-80
- d. Over 80

3. In your country, how many GM crops (the number of GM events) are currently in pipeline?

- a. Less than 20
- b. 21-50
- c. 51-80
- d. Over 80

4. How many GM crops (the number of GM events) are authorized to be *commercialized* in your country?

- a. Less than 20
- b. 21-50
- c. 51-80
- d. Over 80

Export/import of agricultural commodities (both non-GM and GM)

5. Please fill out the table below for your country's export situation of some selected agricultural commodities.

Commodity	Does your country export any GM crops of this commodity?	What is the proportion of GM in total exports of this commodity?	Please list the major trade partner countries
Maize			
Soy			
Sorghum			
Wheat			
Rice			
Rapeseed			
Other (specify)			

Agricultural Industries Confederation Conference 14th November

'Staying Ahead of the Curve'

30 minutes (speech plus questions from audience)

115 words per minute. Current total 1885 (16 minutes, but in abbreviated form)

When drafting finished paragraphs should not be split across pages

Aim of the Speech

3 or 4 points

Strengthening relationships with AIC and its members

Appreciation of role of AIC members in delivering Defra advice

Importance of R&D in delivering a competitive farming sector

Audience

Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC) members representing a number of sectors within the agri-supply sector including: Animal Feed; Crop Protection and Agronomy; Fertilisers; Grains and Oilseeds; Seed.

Other speakers;

Joanne Denney-Finch IGD

Clive Black – Shore Capital

James Neville – Dairy 2020

Giles Oldroyd – John Innes Centre

Ian Pigott – Farmers Weekly Columnist

Speech

Very pleased to accept invite to join the Conference.

Recognise vital role played by the agricultural supply industries in supporting the agriculture sector

And I know that we share the same commitment to a modern and sustainable agriculture sector.

Title of the Conference today is “*Staying Ahead of the Curve*” describes the challenge for the agriculture supply industries and the agriculture industry itself.

And why for this reason I’m delighted to have taken on my Ministerial post within Defra.

I want a farming industry that is growing and thriving, with businesses that can get on with the job in hand without unnecessary barriers from Government.

I know that the AIC has over 300 Members in the agri-supply trade, representing 2/3 of inputs used by UK farmers, worth £6.5 billion. These statistics demonstrate what an absolutely vital role your members play in supporting the farming sector.

We share a common desire for a thriving and growing farming sector and I recognise the great value from my

department's collaborative working with the AIC and its members.

Global population rises mean there will be an increasing demand for food, but the global marketplace will become increasingly competitive and this means we have to play to our strengths, and really focus on the things that we do best.

We recognise that farmers and landowners need the right advice as well as the right incentives to be successful and to deliver for the environment.

We greatly appreciate the role that AIC and its members play in the delivery of professional advice, with an impressive 5,000 employees visiting farms on a daily basis with a 20,000 farmer-advisor conversations each week.

We value AIC's involvement in the establishment and continued success in one of the longest established Continuing Professional Development schemes, the BASIS Professional Register and also through the voluntary certification scheme FACTS.

Defra is currently looking at ways to improve delivery of advice and incentives to farmers and land managers, including how we can work better with industry to develop joint approaches.

Pleased to see AIC represented on the National Stakeholder Group of the new Farming Advice Service with employees of members working as trusted independent advisers to deliver government advice on cross compliance, competitiveness and environmental issues.

We are currently reviewing how advice is provided, both government funded and in partnership with industry such as the Campaign for the Farmed Environment. This work aims to streamline and simplify the messages/asks of farmers in a way which yields better results for the environment and competitiveness.

We are keen to build on the success of voluntary approaches to positively engage farmers and enhance established good practice rather than using regulatory options.

One of the most visible partnership approaches has been the Campaign for the Farmed Environment where the AIC has played a very positive role in delivering as a full partner, through advisors in local delivery as well as national focus. The expertise and enthusiasm from the AIC together with the support from other partners has been instrumental in delivering the many successes of the CFE.

We are currently working together with partners to see what future role the CFE model may play in helping deliver better environmental advice to farmers.

The AIC has also been instrumental in providing advisory leadership in two other linked initiatives. The Voluntary Initiative helped demonstrate the success of voluntary approaches – in this case for better pesticide stewardship – and is seen as a credible alternative to regulation.

Working with Tried and Tested has also demonstrated the role of industry advisors working with government to promote better nutrient management practice.

Delivering in partnership with the industry and reaching farmers through trusted advisors is how we want to work

in the future and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with the AIC.

Through the take up of advice on best practice we have many farms amongst those with the lowest unit costs of production in Europe. But we know that there are many farmers for whom this is not yet a reality, and there remains a range of performance across farms.

There are UK cereal farms with margins per hectare amongst the highest in Europe. But our analysis shows that the average cereal farm in England is operating at around 75% of the level of the most efficient, with scope for many farms to improve their level of efficiency and competitiveness on the international market.

I share your goal of want to see more farmers adopting best practice and look forward to continuing to work together to meet this challenge.

The proportion of farmers adopting best practice and the pace with which technological developments move that frontier of best practice forward in time contribute to the overall level of productivity of the farming sector.

Our data shows that the productivity of the UK agriculture industry has increased by 25% over the past 20 years.

This is good news, but we know we operate in an internationally competitive market. Our progress needs to be compared with that of our competitors. And many of our competitors are achieving higher rates of growth [the US has seen a rate of productivity growth that has been double the rate seen in the UK over the same period]. So we must not be complacent and there is more we need to do.

Coming to the challenge of technological developments which are vital to the advance what best practice looks like and to contribute to productivity growth.

Innovation is vital to improve production systems and to provide a successful future. We need the best research, technology and knowledge transfer that we can get.

In total the UK government invests over £400M annually on agriculture and food research. We need to ensure that we investing this money as effectively as we can, complementing the contribution of privately funded research where I know the AIC members provide a very valuable contribution, investing £45m each year on near market research.

There is a particular challenge in translating our world class fundamental science into practical applications that can be taken up by farmers. Just the sort of valuable

applications delivered by the commercial research of AIC members.

It is for these reasons that I am working in close cooperation with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to produce an ambitious new Agri-tech strategy.

This will help us take practical steps to make the best use of science and technology to support agriculture. It will help us be at the forefront of developing innovation, to increase efficiency and yields, help businesses adapt to climate change, and to ensure that the knowledge we gain is shared and communicated across the farming sector.

We have in the last fortnight issued a 'call for information' about what the strategy should address, will greatly value hearing ideas on what we need to deliver through this Agri-tech strategy.

I know that the AIC have been working with the AHDB, NFU and TSB to produce the "Feeding the Future" report to consider future requirements for agricultural R&D, and that emerging findings and key recommendations are presented at the National Farm Management Conference on 21 Nov 2012 for wider industry consultation.

This is very helpful development, to provide a clear message from the industry on the route that needs to be taken on agricultural research. The report will be a

valuable contribution to determining what we need to include and address within the Agri-tech Strategy.

An area of novel technology that continues to generate debate is the use of GM crops. Now widely grown in other parts of the world but have yet to make a significant breakthrough in Europe.

In part this is due to the unduly slow operation of the EU approval process, which is deterring investment and innovation in this technology. We believe that decisions on GM crops should be based on the scientific evidence and want the EU regime to operate more effectively, so that safe GM products have fair access to the EU market.

GM is one of the tools that could help us to meet the challenges ahead on food security and sustainability, but it must be used responsibly. Before GM crops are grown here measures will be needed to ensure that GM and non-GM production can coexist, and that people can choose between them. Defra will want to work with the industry to establish a pragmatic coexistence regime, and I'm sure that the AIC will be an important partner in taking this forward.

I cannot of course set out a picture of where we are going in the future without turning to Europe. This is of course a critical time for shaping the next stage Common Agricultural Policy.

We do of course want a CAP that gives us the right conditions in which our industry can thrive and not be held back. We want an efficient and responsive agricultural sector in the EU and globally and we want the future CAP to help achieve this.

But we need to be realistic that all European countries are tightening their belts and that we are going to have to do our share of this. As such the UK Government wants to see a very substantial reduction in the size of the CAP budget, focused on the subsidies which offer the poorest value for money. Which means targeting CAP payments for the delivery of public goods that the market does not reward.

We have some of the most innovative and resilient farmers in the world. But it is vital that we can continue to be competitive in an international market. The CAP proposals as it currently stands is restricting our competitiveness – it is holding us back. We want to see a continuation of the move away from trade-distorting market measure support. We are seriously concerned about the European Parliament's amendments on this, which would take us back to the CAP of the past and undo all of the pro-market reforms we have previously undergone. We need a much, much better framework to work in.

Now is the chance to really build on the good market-orientated reforms of the past and we are negotiating hard

with the Commission and European Parliament to continue to drive reform in this direction.

We are committed to working with the farming industry as the negotiations unfold to make this happen and are striving for a deal that helps industry improve its competitiveness. And we are putting down markers against attempts from some Member States and the European Parliament to turn things back.

Negotiations are now happening in earnest. There is still some way to go and no country will get everything they want. But we are going to push to ensure that the CAP is ambitious and offers value for money, for example by reflecting the tough budget restraints occurring across the

EU. It must not discourage innovation and entrepreneurship. But instead encourage the high levels of environmental performance that that we have seen in our industry to date. It is also vitally important that the final CAP is realistically implementable for farmers and authorities.

So to conclude, I am excited about the challenges I have taken on as Minister. Because I think that there are incredible opportunities ahead for agriculture. I look forward to working with the AIC and its members in meeting these challenges.