

Key messages – Seralini's study

19 September 2012

General line – reactive statement

- We have been made aware of this study through the media today
- In the past, similar claims made by the same individual and other pressure groups that have not met these criteria. These claims were systematically refuted by peer-reviewed scientific papers as well as by the European Food Safety Authority – see EFSA's press release for more info: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/gmo070628.htm>
- What we can say is that the numerous peer-reviewed scientific studies performed on biotech crops to date, including more than a hundred feeding studies, have continuously confirmed their safety, as reflected in the respective safety assessments by regulatory authorities around the world.
- Millions of farmers in the world see the real story about biotech crops every season in their fields where measurable agronomic, environmental and economic benefits help contribute to their sustainable farming practices.

Safety and risk assessment

- All GM crops that are currently on the market have proven to be safe. GM products all have to go through a rigorous safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). In 2000 and 2010, the European Commission released two reports that cover 25 years of research on GM crops or food on human health or the environment: "A decade of EU-funded GMO research (2001-2010)" and "EC-Sponsored research on safety the genetically modified organisms (1985-2000)." Conclusion were that there are no threats or dangers of approved to GM crops.
- Biotech crops are rigorously tested for safety prior to commercialization.
 - Biotech crops are tested to ensure they are as safe as conventional crops, and have similar nutritional and compositional content.
 - Biotech crops are among the most extensively tested foods in the history of food safety.
- In the past, EFSA has found Seralini's scientific findings to be sorely lacking. It stated that (see EFSA [website](#)) that it had examined a paper by Seralini et al. a feeding study in animals. EFSA stated that "Following a detailed statistical review and analysis by an EFSA Task Force, EFSA's GMO Panel has concluded that this re-analysis of the data does not raise any new safety concerns." And that "The statistical analysis made by the authors of the paper did not take into account certain important statistical considerations. The assumptions underlying the statistical methodology employed by the authors led to misleading results. EFSA considers that the paper does not present a sound scientific justification in order to question the safety of MON 863 maize."
- In Europe, tens of millions of farm animals, including chickens, pigs and cows are fed with GM soybeans mostly imported from Latin America. With the current regulation and monitoring by veterinary authorities, any health impacts related to the consumption of GM crops should have been reported if there were any safety concerns. This has not been the case for the past one and a half decades, since GM first entered the EU.

- An estimated 2 trillion meals containing GM ingredients have been eaten around the world over the last 13 years without a single substantiated case of ill-health. The World Health Organisation has said that: *'No effects on human health have been shown as a result of the consumption of such foods by the general population in the countries where they have been approved'*.
- Scientists and the European Commission agree GMOs are no riskier than conventional crops and foods. In 2011, the European Commission recently released a compendium of 50 research projects on the safety of GMOs over the last decade. The Commission funded research from 130 research project involving 500 independent research groups over 25 years, concluding that *"There is, as of today, no scientific evidence associating GMOs with higher risks for the environment or for food and feed safety than conventional plants and organisms."*
- The French Academies of Medicine, Pharmacy and Sciences have stated: *"No evidence of health problems exists in the countries where GMOs have been widely eaten for several years,"* an opinion endorsed by academies of science and medical councils around the world.

About the study:

- Before they can release details of their findings, scientists know that they must first test, test, and test again to ensure that their findings are accurate. They must ask others to double-check their research and their work is always open to question and challenge forever. This is undertaken through a well-established process known as peer-review. They are also professionally obliged to include important caveats in their work highlighting where it might not be applicable and whether it has any implications which require further investigation.
- The scientific field of agricultural biotechnology has suffered more than most from the lack of peer-review in the 'evidence' used by campaign groups. The level of coverage generated by GM science over the past 10 years has overwhelmingly focused on a small number of un-reviewed reports claiming negative effects of the technology.
- Contrary to what it is said, this study is not the first to have evaluated the long-term health effects of GMOs. These studies have been carried-out using rats but also other animals by scientific researchers from all parts of the world. No toxic effect has been reported. If this was the case, International, European and national food safety agencies would have taken the appropriate measures.
- From what we read in the press, the study authors' assertions of negative impacts on rodent health as an alleged result of eating biotech corn can be refuted by numerous studies in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, and substantial experience with humans and animals around the world consuming biotech maize for years without a single documented health problem.
- Seralini's science has in the past not withstood peer review. A world-wide initiative of hundreds of public sector scientists called Public Research and Regulation Initiative (PRRI) have previously referred to Seralini's work. In a public letter available on their website they wrote that *"Dr. Seralini... presented arguments against EFSA guidance and opinions that would not stand the test of proper peer review."*

- However, we cannot comment on the content of an article that has not yet been published. We will have a look at it at the same time as the whole scientific community, as soon as it is made available.