



**Friends of
the Earth
Europe**

GM crops irrelevant in Europe

Greener farming eclipses GM

February 2013

The area of land dedicated to growing genetically modified (GM) crops in the European Union remains insignificant when compared with conventional and organic farming. In 2012, **GM crops were grown on just 0.12% of arable land** in Europe, compared with nearly 4% for organic. Twenty-one member states cultivated no GM crops at all.

The EU has 103,027,410 hectares of arable land (excluding permanent crops, such as vineyards), of which only 132,041 hectares were planted with GM crops in 2012. Between 2008 and 2012, Germany and Sweden abandoned any cultivation of GM crops. In Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, cultivation of GM crops decreased around 45% in the same period. Only Spain and Portugal saw increases in GM crop cultivation in 2012. Almost ninety per cent of all GM crops in Europe are grown in just one country, Spain.

Graph 1: Percentage of GM crops grown in Europe in 2012

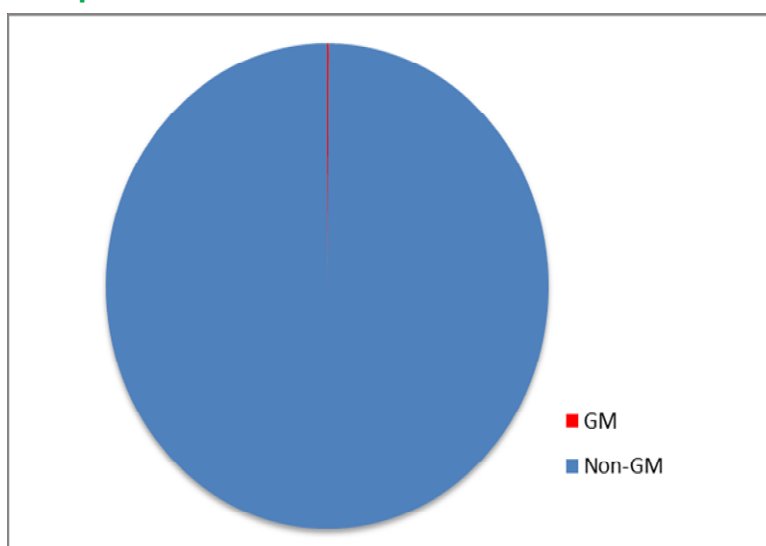


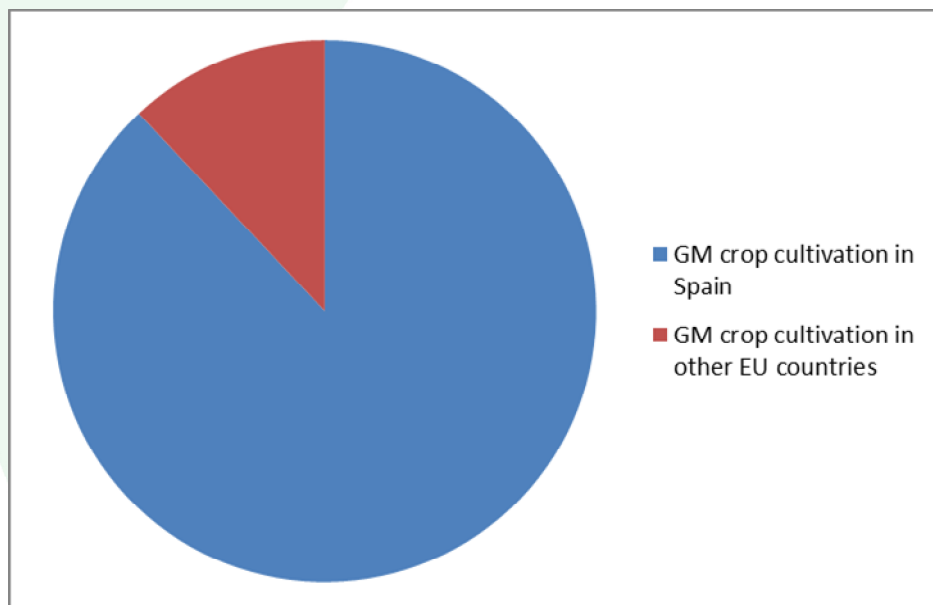
Table 1: GMO cultivation in European countries, 2008–12

Country and crops	2008 (ha)	2009 (ha)	2010 (ha)	2011 (ha)	2012 (ha)
Cultivation of Maize Mon810					
Spain (1)	79,269	76,057	67,726	97,346	116,306
Portugal (2)	4,856	5,202	4,869	7,723	9,278
Czech Republic (3)	8,380	6,480	4,830	5,090	3,052
Poland (4)	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Slovakia (5)	1,931	875	1,248	760	216
Romania (6)	6,130	3,244	823	588	189
Germany (7)	3,173	0	0	0	0
Cultivation of potato Amflora					
Sweden (8)	0	0	103	16	0
Germany (9)	0	0	15	2	0
	106,739	94,858	82,614	114,525	132,041

Sources:

- (1) Official figures 2012 on government website, based on industry information due to lack of any public register in Spain http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/calidad-y-evaluacion-ambiental/temas/biotecnologia/2012_tcm7-220599.pdf
- (2) Official government figures 2012 <http://www.dgadr.pt/> and http://cibpt.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/dados-nacionais_2012_agost.pdf
- (3) Official government figures 2012 http://www.mzp.cz/cz/mista_pestovani_gmo
- (4) This assumes no change throughout 2012. There are no official government figures in Poland. According to an article in daily Rzeczpospolita (20 January 2010) quoting the estimates of the Polish Association of Maize Producers (Polski Związek Producentów Kukurydzy) in 2009, the total acreage of MON 810 was 3000 ha: www.rp.pl/artykul/422200.html
- (5) Official government figures 2012 <http://www.mpsr.sk/index.php?start&navID=764&navID2=764&sID=40&id=4830>
- (6) Official government figures 2012 <http://www.anpm.ro/articole/registre-64>
- (7) Official government figures 2012, numbers in the year 2008 covers only the cultivation of Maize Mon810. http://apps2.bvl.bund.de/stareg_web/search.do?year=2011&d-16544-p=3
- (8) Swedish Board of Agriculture figures 2012 <http://www.jordbruksverket.se/amnesomraden/odling/genteknikgmo/kommersiellanvandning/kommersiellodlingochhandel/kommersiellodlingiar.4.7e1323431288aff333480001901.html>
- (9) Official government figures 2012, numbers in the year 2008 covers only the cultivation of Maize Mon810. http://apps2.bvl.bund.de/stareg_web/search.do?year=2011&d-16544-p=3

Graph 2: Percentage of GM crops grown in Spain of the total EU area cultivated with GM crops in 2012



More national bans on GM maize and potato

In January 2013, the Polish government announced its ban of GM maize Mon810, as well as of the GM potato Amflora. Now seven countries across Europe have banned the main EU-authorized commercial crop, Monsanto's GM maize MON 810. Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg and Poland have all enacted bans on GM maize MON 810, based on health and environmental concerns. In February 2010, Bulgaria also initiated a total ban on the cultivation of GM crops (GMOs).¹

The Amflora potato has been banned by Austria, Luxembourg, Hungary and Poland because of the presence of an antibiotic resistance marker (ARM) gene. There are concerns that this gene could transfer horizontally into pathogenic bacteria, which would worsen the problem of

¹ The National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, *Amended GMOs Act keeps the ban on release and marketing of genetically modified tobacco, vine, rose oil, wheat and on all vegetable and fruit crops*, 18 March 2010 <http://www.parliament.bg/en/news/ID/1995>

antibiotic resistance in veterinary and human medicine. Under EU law, plants with antibiotic-resistant genes are supposed to be phased-out because they jeopardise human health.²

Increasing demand for GMO-free products

In summer 2012, a French law on GMO-free labelling came into force. Similar laws already existed in Austria and Germany. Dairy products, eggs and meat from animals fed GMO-free can be labelled as GMO-free. Leading food retailers such as Carrefour, Rewe, Edeka and Coop Italy label more and more products as GMO-free. More and more farmers in these three countries are replacing GM soy feed with either home-grown proteins or with conventional soy. In Austria, dairy and egg producers use exclusively conventional feed for their animals. In Germany, 80% of egg producers are already committed to using GMO-free feed. Additionally, an increase in dairy companies converting to conventional feed can be observed.³

No contamination in imports of feed

For several years the biotech and feed industry complained about unavoidable contamination of non-authorized GMOs in imported feed. Latest news from the European Commission underlines that in the last 18 months officials have not reported a single contamination case with non-authorized GMOs in feed imports.⁴ This is evidence that, in reality, feed imports are not contaminated by non-authorized GMOs, and there is no reason to allow contaminated food to be fed to animals in Europe.

Biotech industry in retreat

In January 2012 BASF announced it is halting the development and commercialisation of GM crops in Europe due to *“lack of acceptance for this technology in many parts of Europe – from the majority of consumers, farmers and politicians.”* BASF also stated that it has stopped the commercialisation of the Amflora potato.⁵ On 29th January 2013 BASF reaffirmed that they withdraw the developments of new GM potatoes for the European market.⁶

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² The European Medical Association and the World Health Organisation have highlighted the critical importance of these antibiotics for human health. European Medicines Agency (2007), *Presence of the antibiotic resistance marker gene nptII in GM plants for food and feed uses*, 22 February 2007 http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Other/2010/01/WC500054091.pdf

World Health Organization (2008), *Second Meeting of the Subcommittee of the Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines*, 29 September to 3 October 2008 http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/committees/subcommittee/2/gentamicin_rev.pdf

³ <http://www.ohnegentechnik.org/ohne-gentechnik/was-bedeutet-ohne-gentechnik.html>

⁴ Response to written question from MEPs Martin Haeusling and José Bové on 11 February 2013

⁵ BASF, BASF to concentrate plant biotechnology activities on main markets in North and South America, 16 January 2011 <http://www.basf.com/group/pressrelease/P-12-109>

⁶ Approval process for the potato projects in Europe to be discontinued <http://basf.com/group/pressrelease/P-13-133>



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