



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food and feed safety, innovation
Director

Brussels,
 SANTE/E3 (2016) 6412068

Dear Petitioner,

Subject: Petition: Authorisation of Toxic Soybean

Pesticides residues in food and feed and genetically modified (GM) food and feed are subject to different legal frameworks.

The GM soybeans applications in question have been positively assessed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and no safety concerns as regards potential effects on human and animal health and the environment have been identified. Therefore, in line with Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 and following the no opinion vote in the Standing and Appeal committees, on 22 July 2016 the Commission adopted the authorisation decisions for soybeans FG 72, MON 88708 x MON89788 and MON 87705 x MON 89788¹.

All food and feed to be placed on the market in the EU, including derived from GMOs, have to comply with all maximum residue levels (MRLs) set under Regulation (EC) No 396/2005, not only for glyphosate, but also for isoxaflutole, dicamba and any other substance in the scope of that Regulation. Residue levels up to the MRL are safe for consumers. Because MRLs are set as low as reasonably achievable, taking into account Good Agricultural Practice, these are set at even lower levels than required for the protection of consumers.

Regarding glyphosate, on 11th July 2016, a qualified majority of Member States in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed voted in favour of a proposal by the Commission to amend the approval conditions of glyphosate. These conditions include a ban of the co-formulant POE-tallowamine from glyphosate-based products. In more general terms, the Commission, together with Member States experts and EFSA, has begun work on the identification of unacceptable co-formulants used in plant protection products, in order to further increase the protection of public health.

¹ OJ L 199, 26.07.2016

Indeed, the legislation requires cumulative and synergistic effects of pesticide residues to be considered in the MRL setting, but only when the methods for assessment will be available. This is not yet the case and the legislation recognises that further work in this respect is needed. The Commission is working with the Member States, EFSA and other scientists to develop such a methodology for cumulative risk assessment. This is a very complex area of work which requires more time. I would like to emphasize that this issue is not specific to GM crops but pertains to all uses of plant protection products (PPPs), as it may also be necessary in conventional agriculture to treat a crop with PPPs containing different active substances, either as a result of pest pressure from different organisms or to manage possible resistance.

Yours faithfully,



Sabine Jülicher