



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Europe**

## GM crops irrelevant in Europe

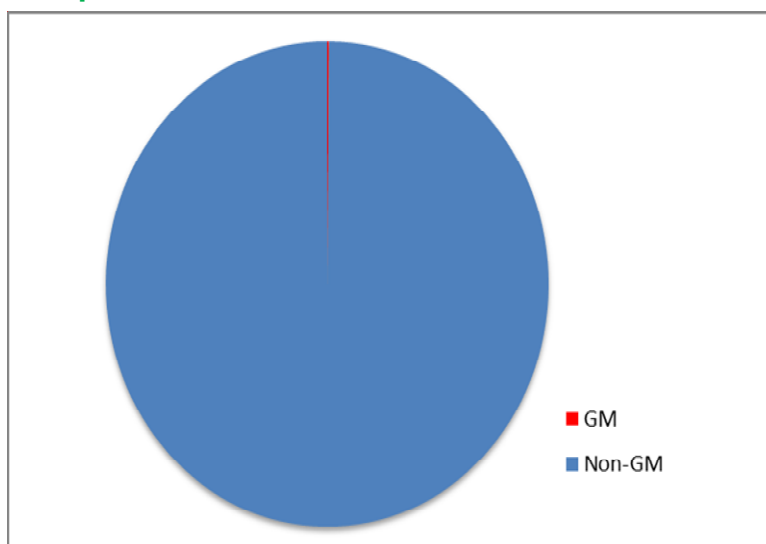
### Greener farming eclipses GM

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**



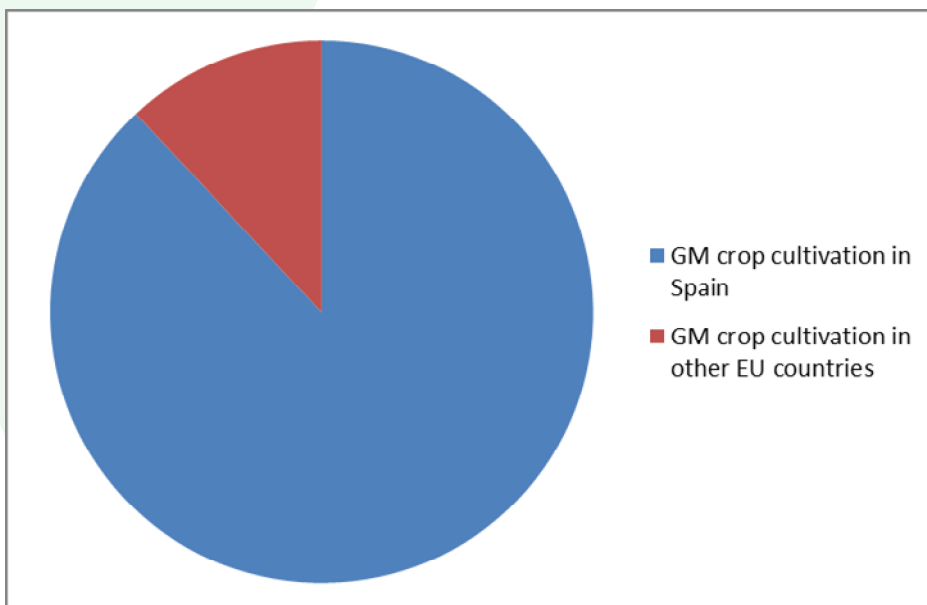
**Table 1: GMO cultivation in European countries, 2008–12**

Country and crops	2008 (ha)	2009 (ha)	2010 (ha)	2011 (ha)	2012 (ha)
<b>Cultivation of Maize Mon810</b>					
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
<b>Cultivation of potato Amflora</b>					
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](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](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](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](http://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](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](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).<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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>

gene could transfer horizontally into pathogenic bacteria, which would worsen the problem of 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.<sup>2</sup>

### **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.<sup>3</sup>

### **No contamination in imports of feed**

For several years the biotech and feed industry complained about unavoidable contamination of non-authorised 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-authorised GMOs in feed imports.<sup>4</sup> This is evidence that, in reality, feed imports are not contaminated by non-authorised 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.<sup>5</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013 BASF reaffirmed that they withdraw the developments of new GM potatoes for the European market.<sup>6</sup>

### **Prepared by Mute Schimpf | February 2013**

*Friends of the Earth Europe gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from DG Environment. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Friends of the Earth Europe and cannot be regarded as reflecting the position of the funder(s) mentioned above. The funder(s) cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information this document contains.*

<sup>2</sup> 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](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](http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/committees/subcommittee/2/gentamicin_rev.pdf)

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

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

<sup>5</sup> 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>

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



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Europe**

## Friends of the Earth Europe

### Member Groups

Austria	Global 2000
Belgium (Wallonia & Brussels)	Les Amis de la Terre
Belgium (Flanders & Brussels)	Friends of the Earth
Bulgaria	Za Zemiata
Croatia	Zelena Akcija
Cyprus	Friends of the Earth
Czech Republic	Hnutí Duha
Denmark	NOAH
England, Wales & Northern Ireland	Friends of the Earth
Estonia	Eesti Roheline Liikumine
Finland	Maan Ystävät Ry
France	Les Amis de la Terre
Georgia	Sakhartvelos Mtsvaneta Modzraoba
Germany	Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND)
Hungary	Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége
Ireland	Friends of the Earth
Italy	Amici della Terra
Latvia	Latvijas Zemes Draugi
Lithuania	Lietuvos Žaliųjų Judėjimas
Luxembourg	Mouvement Ecologique
Macedonia	Dvizhenje na Ekologistite na Makedonija
Malta	Friends of the Earth Malta
The Netherlands	Milieudefensie
Norway	Norges Naturvernforbund
Poland	Polski Klub Ekologiczny
Scotland	Friends of the Earth Scotland
Slovakia	Priatel'ia Zeme
Spain	Amigos de la Tierra
Sweden	Jordens Vänner
Switzerland	Pro Natura
Ukraine	Zelenyi Svit

**Friends of the Earth Europe** campaigns for sustainable and just societies and for the protection of the environment, unites more than 30 national organisations with thousands of local groups and is part of the world's largest grassroots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International.