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Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Labeling Regulations for Modified Corn and Soy

Products - A Proposal

2002

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Report Highlights:

The Biotechnology Committee of the Food Control Services of Israel's Ministry of Health has released for public comments a proposal for regulations regarding the labeling of genetically modified corn and soy beans and their products. In their present form the regulations are opposed by some government ministries and by the food processing industry. In general, the regulations follow the European model but do not require the labeling of processed products if they do not contain genetically modified DNA or protein above one percent.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Cairo [EG1], IS

Executive Summary

The following proposal for regulations governing the labeling of soybeans, corn and their by products is a subset of a broader set of regulations governing the importation and use in Israel of genetically modified organisms (GMO). An inter ministerial committee prepared them over a period of some two years. They have not been finalized or published because of strong opposition both by some government ministries and the private food processing sector.

Importation of agricultural plant varieties and genetically modified animals and other organisms is already controlled by a special committee in the Ministry of Agriculture before which come all proposals for experimentation and applications to import modified organisms.

In general, the regulations follow the European model for GMO labeling but do not require the labeling of products which contain less than one percent of protein or DNA from modified organisms.

At this time it is unclear when the regulations will be finalized and submitted to the appropriate parliamentary committee for approval. The regulation is scheduled to come into force two years after its publication as approved by the committee, in the official government journal "Rashumot".

The following is an unofficial translation of the proposed labeling regulation.

STATE OF ISRAEL
Public Health Services
Food Control Services
Central Office

September 11, 2002

Proposal of Principles for Regulations dealing with Genetically Modified Soybeans
or Corn

1. Definitions

- a. Genetically modified soya or corn - corn or soya containing material originating from a genetically modified plant (corn or soya) including foodstuffs containing components from genetically modified plants (corn or soya).
- b. Genetically modified plant – as appearing in Paragraph 1 of the Seed Regulations (Modified Plants And Organisms) 5762 - 2002.
- c. The Director – Director General of the Ministry of Health or whomsoever he has authorized for the purpose of these Regulations.
- d. Recognized laboratory – A laboratory recognized by the Director for the purpose of this Regulation.
- e. The Standard – Israeli Standard I.S. 1145, Tammuz 5742 (July 1982) – Labeling of Pre-packaged Food.
- f. Registered variety – A registered variety of genetically modified corn or soya.
- g. Registration Certificate – As intended in Paragraph 5 of the Regulation.

2. No person shall produce, import, market, store or transport genetically modified corn or soya unless same is of a registered species and bears a valid registration certificate.

3. Application for Registration:

- a. Any person wishing to register a variety is to submit an application for the registration of the variety to the Director on the form appearing in the addendum.
- b. The applicant is to attach the following documents in two copies, in Hebrew or English, to the Application for Registration:

(1) A description of the genetic modification and its characteristics and also complete data on

its effect and possible influence on human beings.

- (2) Professional literature pertaining to the results of experiments on the genetically modified variety and its uses outside of Israel.
 - (3) Reports on the results of experiments conducted on the genetically modified variety and proposed methods of use in Israel together with certification issued by the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture in accordance with Paragraph 7A of the Seed Regulations (Genetically Modified Plants And Organisms – 5762 - 2002).
 - (4) Complete toxicology file plus summary.
 - (5) Details of the proposed method, including a sample of the modified material, in order to enable identification of the genetically modified variety in foodstuffs.
 - (6) Original certificate or a certified true copy from the authorized body in those countries where the variety has been approved or has been found to be fit for human consumption.
 - (7) Any additional data which may be requested by the Director, including tests in a recognized laboratory.
4. The Director will send a notice to the Applicant of his decision regarding the Application for Registration within 45 days of receipt of the Application for Registration together with all the appendices as mentioned in section 3. In the event of the Director refusing the Application, he shall provide rationale for his decision.
 5.
 - a. After having examined the Application for Registration together with the documents which were submitted in accordance with Section 3, the Director shall be entitled to register the variety and to issue a registration certificate to the Applicant.
 - b. The registration certificate will specify the name of the variety, permitted methods of use and restrictions thereon, if any.
 - c. The registration certificate will be valid for three years from the date appearing thereon.
 6.
 - a. The Director may cancel the registration certificate of the genetically modified variety at any time if he considers that there is any fear that the modified variety or foodstuffs containing the genetically modified variety, are liable to endanger public health.
 - b. The Director may order the cessation of production or marketing of genetically modified foodstuffs and the recall of a genetically modified foodstuff containing genetically modified material in the event of there being any fear that they are liable to endanger public health.

- c. The Director will permit the owner of the registration certificate a hearing within 14 days of his issuing a notice of his intention to cancel the registration. Nothing in the granting of an opportunity to be heard shall be deemed to delay implementation of the prohibition of production, marketing and recall.
7. The owner of a registration certificate wishing to renew the registration certificate, is to submit an application for renewal to the Director on the form appearing in the addendum at least one month prior to the expiry date of the certificate.
 8. No one may produce, import, market, store or transport genetically modified corn or soya unless the foodstuff is marked as follows:
 - a. Pre-packaged
The words “genetically modified” are to appear after the name of the foodstuff, in letters of the same size as those of the name of the producer, as detailed in Table No. 1 of the Standard.
 - b. Pre-packaged food components
The words “genetically modified” are to appear alongside the name of the component in the list of components or alternatively, an asterisk (*) is to be printed alongside the name of the food component while another asterisk will appear at the end of the list of components followed by the words “genetically modified”.
 - c. Bulk
Is to be marked prominently on a sign or label attached thereto, of a size which is no less than two centimeters by five centimeters in size containing the words “genetically modified” in lettering of not less than 8 millimeters in size.
 - d. Wholesale packaging
The words “genetically modified” are to follow the name of the foodstuff in lettering which is no smaller than the letters appearing in Table 1 of the Standard for large packages of over 900 grams.
 - e. Raw materials destined for further processing
Any factory using genetically modified corn or soya as a raw material or containing genetically modified corn or soya, shall at all times store such materials in a container or packaging marked with the words “genetically modified”. Finished products manufactured from such raw materials are to be marked in accordance with the requirements appearing in section 8a- d of these Regulations.
 9. These Regulations shall not apply to foodstuffs:
 - (1) Which do not contain protein and DNA emanating from genetically modified corn or soya.

- (2) Which contain less than 1% genetically modified material.
 - (3) Which are used for research or experimentation purposes and are not intended for human consumption.
 - (4) Prior to harvesting.
10. An importer of corn or soya is to attach to his application for early approval and his application for a release certificate, a declaration from the supplier or producer of the corn or soya stating one of the following:
- (1) That the corn or soya has been genetically modified, noting the name of the variety;
 - (2) That the corn or soya has not been genetically modified.
11. An analysis of foodstuffs for the presence of genetically modified corn or soya will be conducted by a recognized laboratory.
12. These Regulations are in addition to every law.
13. These Regulations will come into force two years from the date of their publication.

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