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Slovakia

Biotechnology

Consumer Perceptions of Biotech

2004

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Report Highlights:

According to a recent survey, more than half of the Slovaks think biotechnology and GMOs are "useful" or "rather useful" in agriculture, medicine, and ecology. They remain negative about biotech use in the food sector. More than 40% think there is only limited information on biotechnology. Almost 21% had never heard of "GMOs". In general, Slovaks trust scientific institutions, medical associations and non-governmental environmental organizations to protect their interests and rights.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Vienna [AU1]
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According to a recent survey, more than half of the Slovaks who responded to the survey think biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are “useful” or “rather useful” in agriculture, medicine and ecology. They remain negative about using biotechnology in the food industry (see graphs on page 3).

More than 40% of the respondents still think that there is only limited information available on biotech products. Almost 21% responded that they never heard of GMOs. 35% of the respondents knew the term “genetically modified organism”, and three quarters of these knew the correct meaning. Less than 25% of the respondents were aware that there are already existing laws and regulations for biotech products in Slovakia. Almost 42% of the respondents were not interested in biotechnology or think “it’s not their problem”.¹

In general, Slovaks trust that scientific institutions, medical associations and non-governmental environmental organizations will protect their interests and rights. However, consumers are susceptible to the influences of non-governmental environmental organizations that try to scare consumers by providing one-sided or partial information. In general, Slovakia still lacks enough information on biotech products even though the situation improved in the last couple of years. There are several new Slovak web pages dedicated to the discussion of biotechnology (e.g. <http://www.gmo.sk/>, <http://www.sizp.sk/sizp/GMO/>), and several seminars have taken place in Slovakia, many sponsored by USDA or with USDA presenters.

Greenpeace Slovakia began a special campaign against biotechnology in 2002. They claim that biotech products should not be deliberately released, and products containing biotech content should be labeled. Greenpeace also recently asked for changes in the Law 151/2002 on the use of biotechnologies and GMOs, which will soon be amended. Greenpeace is arguing for the protection of traditional agriculture, a stronger position on coexistence, and making information about biotech product releases public.

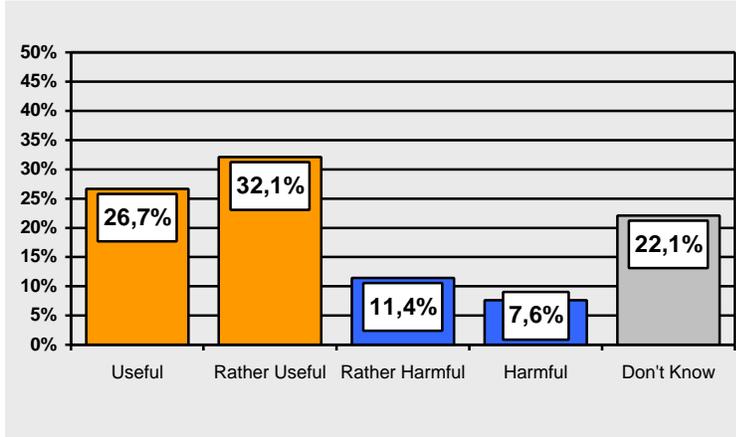
According to another survey conducted in 2001 and used by Greenpeace on their web page, 78% of respondents would “prefer” or “rather prefer” consuming traditional food to GM food.² As a result of the anti biotech campaign, various shops in Slovakia have pledged to not sell food containing biotech products.

¹ Source: Markant, October 2003

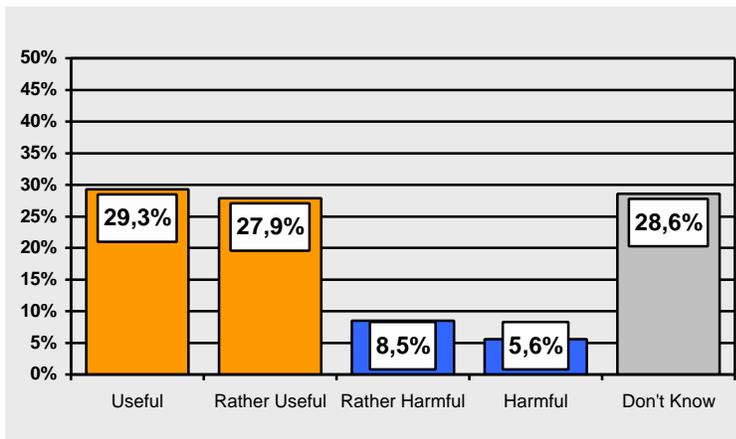
² Source: Focus, 2001

Public opinion on use of GMOs in Slovakia³

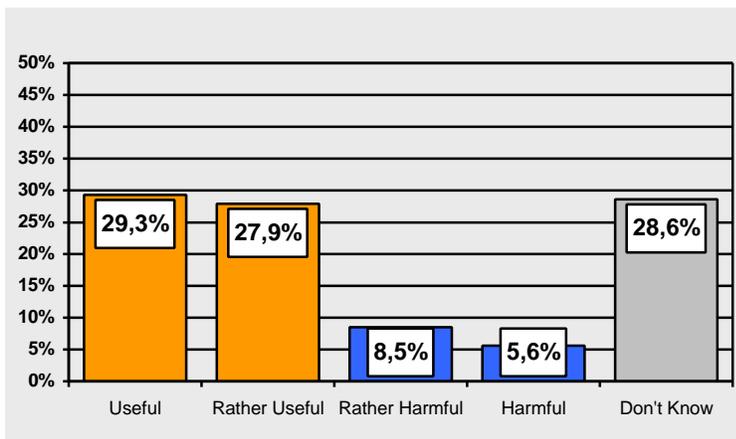
Agriculture:



Medicine:



Ecology:



³ Source: Markant, October 2003

Food Industry:

