

Organic Updates

Danish Government Tests Reveal GMOs in Organic Feeds

Since January 1, 2001, the Danish Plant Directorate under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries has been testing organic feed for GMOs. The results of the most recent test of organic feed was published August 1, 2001. Almost half of the samples revealed GMO content. The Danish authorities interpret the EU organic feed regulations as not allowing GMO. Danish organic feed is required to be entirely organic. Previous regulations allowed up to 25 percent conventional feed. To emphasize the seriousness of this offense, the Danish Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries fined two firms.

Organic feed sampled from eight Danish feed companies revealed traces of GMO's in 20 samples out of a total of 48, and in 7 samples, in quantities of more than 1 percent. The representative for the Organic Service Center stated that it is unavoidable that GMO's would be found in organic soybeans, since they are transported in the same ships which transport conventional beans. The Minister, Ritt Bjerregaard, says it is unacceptable that any GMO's would be in organic feed. She said it is proven that some feed companies are able to provide 100 percent organic feed.

As most organic feed ingredients are imported, the Minister has written to her European colleagues to encourage them to intensify their controls. The Netherlands allows up to 1 percent of GMO's in their organic feed and although Sweden has a zero tolerance level, they do not randomly test organic feeds for GMO's.

The Minister wants to change legislation in order to be able to publish the names of the companies in violation--forcing them to be more cautious and eager to secure GMO free organic feed. Feed producers, on the other hand, have stopped selling organic feed at fixed prices until a threshold is accepted.

As a follow-up to a previous sample, the Ministry is now planning another series of random samples for food containing soybeans and corn products. The survey from February to July, 2000 disclosed that one third of all products contained more than one percent GMO and none of these were labeled, as required. Ten percent of all products tested had a GMO content above 3 percent. Labeling of approved GMO's is mandatory if the GMO content is above 1 percent. The results of this new survey will be published before January 1, 2002.

For more news on organics, see HTP's newsletter "Organic Perspectives," available at the HTP home page: www.fas.usda.gov/http/organics/organics.html.