



Minutes of the third meeting of the European GMO Socio-Economics Bureau (Seville, 7-8 September 2015)

Participants

- Representatives from AT, DK, FR, DE, NL, PT, SI, ES, SE and NO.
- Representatives from the European Commission.
- Stephane Lemarie (INRA) (only 1st day).
- Karen Hofreiter (TU Munich) (only 1st day)
- Anwar Naseem (Rutgers University) (only 1st day).

Introduction by JRC-IPTS

- 1) Introduction by European Commission.
- 2) Tour de table for introduction of participants.
- 3) Presentation of the agenda.

Presentation by the European Commission

DG SANTE gave an update on the new Directive (EU) 2015/412 based on which Member States have the possibility to restrict GMO cultivation on their territory. An overview of the restrictions of the geographical scope of GMO applications/authorisations is available on the website of the European Commission.¹

DG SANTE also anticipated that the European Parliament may object on the draft directive allowing Member States to restrict or prohibit the sale and use of EU-approved GMO food or feed on its territory (including imports), which then happened in the Environment Committee meeting in October 2015.

Open Session with invited scientists

Karen Hofreiter (TU Munich) described the protocol of conducting a systematic map of the evidence on the socio-economic impacts of GM cultivation as part of the FP7-funded GRACE project (<http://www.grace-fp7.eu/>). The application of the protocol resulted in about 660 documents published by June 2014. GRACE is currently establishing of a searchable database of these documents.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/authorisation/cultivation/geographical_scope_en.htm

Laura Riesgo (JRC-Seville) summarized the available empirical evidence on the impacts of Bt maize cultivation in Spain. She presented research, both conducted in-house and outside the JRC-Seville on farm-level effects as well as on the trade and greenhouse gas emission impacts of cultivating Bt maize.

Stephane Lemarie (INRA) provided an overview of methods available to conduct ex post and ex ante impact assessments at the farm level. He also presented the findings of an older study that estimated ex ante the impacts of Bt maize in France.

Anwar Naseem (Rutgers University) focused his presentation on the use of partial equilibrium models to estimate the economic welfare surplus resulting from the adoption of GM crops. He gave examples of studies at several stages of complexity of these models, from basic ones to those incorporating trade, innovators rent, multi-market aspects and distributional issues.

Discussion of General Comments from MS received to the 3rd ESEB document

Five general topics were presented by the ESEB secretariat and subsequently discussed by the participants. On these five topics it was agreed to add clarifications related to summarizing impacts and the issue of comparing data between MS, how to address stacked events, as well as data availability. It was also agreed to add greenhouse gas emissions to the topics.

Discussion of Specific Comments (Farm impacts)

Forty-seven topics from the comments received on the document were put on the table for discussion, and specific actions to proceed decided. These topics were related to:

- Lower consumer prices
- Authorization rules & cultivation proposal
- Description & map of pests
- Bt adoption in introduction
- Maize supply chain, silage
- Scenario descriptions
- Move ex ante/post discussion
- Other methods than surveys
- Literature on field trials validity
- AT adoption rate
- Adoption indicators ex ante
- Farm and farmer characteristics
- Coexistence measures as variable cost
- US crop insurance
- Quality attributes
- Price received
- Subsidies
- Labour double counting

- Rotation and tillage
- Input increase
- Extensive margin
- Energy and fuel
- Time perspective
- Time management
- Split price effects
- Starch & bioenergy industry
- Industry concentration
- Mycotoxins
- Food industry indicators
- Retail sector
- Farmers separate
- GRACE reference
- Results to introduction

Several other comments were also clarified during the discussion. Finally, the JRC raised three more discussion topics based on the potential use of several specific references related to maize cultivation practices (Rüdelsheim & Smets, 2011), impacts of GM maize (Brookes & Barfoot, 2015; Brookes, 2008) and social impacts (Fischer et al., 2015). With the exception of Fischer et al. (2015), an extension of the text based on these references was agreed upon.

Update of Work Program

The final point on the agenda was a discussion of the next steps for moving the document to publication. It was decided that the secretariat incorporates all agreed changes in the document and sends it back to the working group in October, giving group member two weeks for comments, so that it can be later on sent to DG SANTE.

JRC informed the group that a discussion with DG SANTE will take place to discuss the future work of ESEB.