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IFOAM rejects GMO thresholds for organic products

IFOAM, like all its members is struggling with the GMO situation. On one hand it is against all use of GMOs, on the other hand it cannot ignore the fact that GMOs are present and that they are likely to stay. Contamination of organic products by GMOs poses a serious challenge to the organic sector and the strategies taken in different countries vary. IFOAM has now taken a clear position against thresholds and mandatory testing of organic products. However, it urges organic producers not to market their products as GE free.

At a meeting held last month the World Board of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) adopted a comprehensive position on Genetic Engineering (GE) and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

The position paper opposes the use of genetic engineering in agriculture and calls for a ban on GMOs in all agriculture in view of the unprecedented danger it represents for the entire biosphere and in particular, the economic and environmental risks it poses for organic producers. Seven reasons were cited:

- Negative and irreversible environmental impacts.
- Release of organisms that have never before existed in nature and which cannot be recalled.
- Pollution of the gene-pool of culti-

vated crops, microorganisms and animals as well as of off farm organisms.

- Denial of free choice, both for farmers and consumers.
- Violation of farmers' fundamental property rights and endangerment of their economic independence.
- Practices which are incompatible with the principles of sustainable agriculture.
- Unacceptable threats to human health.

Mandatory and comprehensive labelling of GMOs is needed

In countries where GMOs are already in use IFOAM urges the introduction of mandatory and comprehensive labelling to secure the right of consumer choice. It is also intended that this will ensure that GMOs do not enter the organic production chain

IFOAM urges the introduction of mandatory and comprehensive labelling.