

GM-FREE REGIONS' NETWORK  
BRUSSELS DECLARATION ON ANIMAL FEED

Brussels, 6 December 2007

The *GM-Free Regions' Network*, which brings together 43 regional governments from within the European Union, welcomes the outstanding success of its "*GM-free animal feed - quality production and European regional agricultural strategy*" initiative, which was conducted in Brussels on 5 and 6 December 2007 with the support of the EU Committee of the Regions and the Association of European Regions of Products of Origin (AREPO).

This conference, which attracted several hundreds of participants from the United States, Brazil, Canada, China, Europe and India, provided a clear demonstration of the fact that the market for GM-free products is well developed and enjoys powerful consumer support. This movement must now be amplified.

It also showed that the Network's concerns are shared by public opinion in Europe and in many Asian and American nations.

The *European GM-Free Regions' Network* voices its grave concern at the tensions on global availability of GM-free oil-protein crops and wishes to stabilise relationship with producing countries.

- Along with the European mass-retailing sector and with producers of quality foods under public or private labels, it highlights the need to ensure the production of GM-free protein-rich feed.
- Along with all of the market players, it notes that the vast majority of Europeans request the right to buy food made without genetically modified organisms.
- It believes that, in order to remain competitive, the European agricultural sector within the frame of the new CAP will, increasingly, need to maintain its products' traditional authenticity and territorial identity within the context of a transparent, sound, fair commercial offer.
- It demonstrates that the agricultural use of genetically-modified organisms is an issue of the utmost commercial and strategic importance, both in terms of production and as regards the environmental, economic, social and territorial sustainability of regional and European economies.

The *European GM-Free Regions' Network* appeals to its institutional partners in the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions to ensure that the wishes expressed by the production, processing and distribution players and regional institutions represented at the conference are taken into account:

- It calls on the European Commission and European Parliament to take advantage of the debate initiated by the Brussels Conference of 5 and 6 December 2007 to set about gaining a comprehensive understanding of the importance of ensuring the availability of GM-free animal feed.

⇒ *It calls for the development of a specific needs-detection policy, encompassing the needs and interests of all players across the board.*

- It states its wish that consumers should enjoy the benefits of **real transparency from farm to fork**, notably concerning the exact make-up of the animal feed consumed by European herds upstream of food production.

⇒ *It calls for consumers to be given an informed choice.*

- It believes that, given the current upward pressure on oil-protein raw materials prices as a result of demand for agrofuels, it is essential that **the European Union's capacity to produce raw materials of this type** be re-evaluated.

⇒ *It calls for the implementation of a policy governing the production of GM-free vegetable proteins within the European Union and asks that this issue be raised specifically within the context of bilateral commercial relations with the United States, India, Africa and the MERCOSUR countries.*

*It calls for these themes to be taken into account during the next review of the Common Agricultural Policy so that European agriculture can constitute an example for the world in terms of sustainable development, thereby hastening the day when food shortages, development imbalances and unequal access to wealth are things of the past.*

The GM-Free Regions' Network undertakes to:

- *defend the interests of the agricultural and agri-food sectors with respect to the defence of GM-free animal feed production,*
- *help public and private labels achieve recognition for their work in favour of product quality,*
- *shape and consolidate the implementation of sustainable agriculture practice in order to reconcile producers and consumers and to protect the environment for future generations.*
- *collaborate with European and national authorities on this question, since the regions, with their particular institutional roles and close links to civil society, are the best equipped when it comes to defending the interests of their territories.*

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