Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet
Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
~~001. cable~~	~~Re: Brazilian Science Minister on GMO Issue and International Space~~ Station (4 pages)	~~08/31/1999~~	~~P1/b(1)~~ NL 4/3/2020
002. cable	Re: [Genetically-Modified Organism Policy] (4 pages)	09/03/1999	P1/b(1)
~~003. cable~~	~~Re: Canada: Genetically-Modified Foods - Greenpeace (5 pages)~~	~~09/16/1999~~	~~P1/b(1)~~ NL 4/3/2020
~~004. cable~~	~~Re: [GMO Labeling Threshold] (2 pages)~~	~~10/04/1999~~	~~P1/b(1)~~ NL 11/24/2014
~~005. cable~~	~~Re: GMO Threshold Regulation Passes (3 pages)~~	~~10/22/1999~~	~~P1/b(1)~~ NL 4/3/2020

COLLECTION:
Clinton Presidential Records
NSC Cables
Jan 1999 - Dec 2000 ([GMO…])
OA/Box Number: 530000

FOLDER TITLE:
[08/09/1999 - 10/29/1999]

2013-0836-F
ke3015

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHDLA4173 2211432-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 091432Z AUG 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
OSRI: RUEHDL
DTG: 091432Z AUG 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0212
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5540
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
SUBJ: IRISH FOOD SAFETY CHIEF SLAMS SUPERMARKET CHAIN FOR ADOPTING AN ANTI-GMO POSITION

TEXT:

UNCLAS DUBLIN 004173

DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY TO FAS/OA/GALVIN; FAS/ITP/SHEIKH; FAS/ITP/EAME/SCHWARTZ; FAS/OFSTS/HARBERT; FAA/AO/NE/GEERKEN; APHIS/OA; FSIS/OA
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
STATE PASS FDA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, ECON, EI
SUBJECT: IRISH FOOD SAFETY CHIEF SLAMS SUPERMARKET CHAIN FOR ADOPTING AN ANTI-GMO POSITION

1. IRISH FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY (FSAI) CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DR. PATRICK WALL HAS PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE IRISH SUPERMARKET CHAIN, SUPERQUINN, FOLLOWING THE CHAIN'S DECISION TO ALLOW THE ANTI-GMO CAMPAIGN GROUP, GENETIC CONCERN (GC), TO GIVE GUIDED "TOURS" THROUGH ONE OF ITS OUTLETS AND EXPLAIN TO CUSTOMERS GC'S OPPOSITION TO GMO FOODS. WALL, WHOSE FSAI REPORT EARLIER THIS YEAR ON THE HEALTH SAFETY OF GMO FOODS NOW ON IRISH GROCERY SHELVES DID MUCH TO CALM MANY CONSUMER FEARS, POINTEDLY NOTED THAT IF SUPERQUINN'S DECISION TO ALLOW THE GC "TOURS" WAS TAKEN ON PUBLIC HEALTH GROUNDS, THEN LOGICALLY THE CHAIN SHOULD STOP SELLING CIGARETTES AT ITS OUTLETS AS WELL.

2. GC CONDUCTED A NUMBER OF "TOURS" THROUGH ONE SUPERQUINN OUTLET WHICH FOCUSED ON ASPECTS OF INTENSIVE FARMING, LABELING ISSUES, THE LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF GM FOODS ON BABIES AND THE USE OF GM TECHNOLOGY IN NON-FOOD CROPS. SUPERQUINN HAS, ACCORDING TO A COMPANY SPOKESPERSON, A POLICY OF ALLOWING TOURS ON ITS PREMISES BY GROUPS PROVIDING INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS ON ISSUES SUCH AS DIABETES, COELIAC DISEASE OR VEGETARIANISM.

3. SUPERQUINN HAS ALSO RECENTLY PLEDGED TO WITHDRAW ALL GMO FOOD FROM ITS SHELVES STATING ITS POLICIES ARE "CUSTOMER-DRIVEN" AND THE FIRM'S CUSTOMERS ARE UNEASY ABOUT GMOS. SUPERQUINN SAID THAT ITS DECISION WAS BASED ON ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND "NOT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS." AT THE TIME OF THE GMO WITHDRAWAL FROM SUPERQUINN'S SHELVES, FSAI'S DR. WALL HAD PUBLICLY SAID THAT HIS AGENCY COULD NOT ADDRESS ALL THE ISSUES GMOS RAISE, BUT IT COULD ADVISE CONSUMERS ON THE SAFETY OF GMO FOODS. WALL MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE FSAI HAS CONCLUDED THAT GMO FOODS CURRENTLY ON THE IRISH MARKET DO NOT POSE A HEALTH RISK.

4. THE FOOD AND DRINK FEDERATION OF THE IRISH BUSINESS AND EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION (IBEC) SAID THAT THE MOVE BY SUPERQUINN WAS FACILITATING "PROPAGANDA IN ITS RAWEST FORM WHICH WILL SIMPLY ADD TO CONSUMERS CONFUSION AND MISINFORMATION." IT CAUTIONED CONSUMERS ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY GC AND SAID THAT WHILE SOME MEMBERS OF GC WERE IN A POSITION TO TALK ABOUT ORGANIC FOODS BECAUSE OF THEIR ORGANIC FARMING BACKGROUND, THEY HAD BEEN SHOWN AS "NOT AS OBJECTIVE WHEN IT COMES TO GM FOODS."

5 COMMENT. AN EMBASSY INTERN JOINED ONE OF THE TOURS AND FOUND GC'S PRESENTATION INFORMATIVE AND NON-CONFRONTATIONAL. THE GC "TOUR-GUIDE" HIGHLIGHTED THE PRESENCE OF GMOS IN A LARGE RANGE OF PROCESSED FOODS AS WELL AS THE ABSENCE OF LABELING DETAILING THE PRESENCE OF GMO DERIVATIVES IN FOODS. PRESS REPORTS OF THE TOURS ALSO NOTED THE HIGH PROPORTION OF PEOPLE ALREADY AWARE OF GMOS ON THE TOURS AND THE LACK OF INTEREST FROM "REAL SUPERQUINN CUSTOMERS".

6. SUPERQUINN'S DECISION TO LET GC, A PARTISAN INTEREST GROUP CHAIRED BY IRELAND'S LARGEST ORGANIC FARMER, GIVE INFORMATIONAL TOURS ON GMO'S IS ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO LETTING ANIMAL PROTECTION GROUPS PROVIDE INFORMATION ON FOX HUNTING. WALL'S QUICK AND PUBLIC REACTION WAS HELPFUL, HOWEVER, AND SUGGESTS THAT HIS AGENCY IS GOING TO PLAY A MORE PUBLIC ROLE IN RESPONDING TO SOME OF THE MORE OUTRAGEOUS ANTI-GMO STUNTS HERE IN IRELAND. SUPERQUINN'S ACTION, HOWEVER, IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT, ALTHOUGH NOT YET UP TO THE LEVEL OF HYSTERIA IN THE UK, CONSUMER UNEASE OVER GMOS IS SIMMERING. END COMMENT.
SULLIVAN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 4173

TOR: 990809105055 M3994257

DIST:

SIT: BLINKEN BREMNER DAVIDSON GORDON HAMMONDS HOLTZAPPLE LEE NORLAND SAPIRO SCHAEFER SHAH VONLIPSEY
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHROA5420 2230847-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 110847Z AUG 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY ROME
OSRI: RUEHRO
DTG: 110847Z AUG 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY ROME
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3865
INFO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0677
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHXI/LABOR COLLECTIVE
SUBJ: THE (UNOISCUSSED) LABOR DIMENSION TO GMO'S

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

TEXT:

UNCLAS ROME 005420

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR G, DRL/IL, EUR/WE, EB/ATP
USDOC FOR 3133/USFCS/OIO/EUR/PBUCHER
4212/IEP/EUR/SED/ITALY/ACORRO/DDEFALCO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, ETRO, TBIO, SENV, ICFTU, WHO, IT, US
SUBJECT: THE (UNOISCUSSED) LABOR DIMENSION TO GMO'S

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) AS ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE, THE DEBATE OVER GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO'S) IS PROCEEDING APACE IN ITALY. INSPIRED BY A REPORT ON THE DELETERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR MONARCH BUTTERFLIES OF EATING POLLEN FROM GENETICALLY-ALTERED CORN, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST NGO "GREENPEACE" DISPLAYED A CONDOM-COVERED MEGA-COB IN FRONT OF THE HEALTH MINISTRY ON AUGUST 3. ALONG WITH SUCH PUBLICITY MOVES, GREENPEACE AND OTHER ACTIVISTS ALLEGE THAT GMO'S COULD POSE RISKS FOR HUMAN AND ANIMAL FOOD. COUNTERARGUMENTS, HERE AS ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE, PROCEED ALONG SCIENTIFIC AND SCIENCE ETHICS LINES. FROM WHAT WE CAN TELL, THE UPSHOT IS THAT PUBLIC OPINION (WHAT THERE IS OF IT) IS TURNING AGAINST GMO'S, AND IT IS BUT A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE EU ANO NATIONAL POLICY ON GMO'S IS SET FIRMLY IN HOSTILE CONCRETE.

2. (SBU) SOMETHING IS MISSING HERE. ORGANISMS GENETICALLY ALTEREO TO INCLUDE THEIR OWN PEST DEFENSES DO MORE THAN LOWER PESTICIDE EXPENSES FOR EUROPEAN FARMERS

AND INCREASE PROFITS FOR MONSANTO AND OTHER AGROCHEMICAL COMPANIES. GMO'S ALSO REPRESENT A POTENTIALLY LIFESAVING ALTERNATIVE FOR MILLIONS OF AGRICULTURAL LABORERS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, WHOSE WORK INCLUDES ROUTINE HANDLING ANO BREATHING OF THE PESTICIDES ON WHICH WE DEPEND TO PRESERVE THE CROPS THAT FEED AND CLOTHE US. FROM OUR STANDPOINT, DISCUSSION OF GMO ETHICS OUGHT TO INCLUOE NOT ONLY THE FATE OF BUTTERFLIES BUT ALSO THAT OF PEOPLE - THOSE NOW IN HARM'S WAY - A OIMENSION TO THE GMO OEBATE NOW LACKING.

3. (SBU) WE ARE EAGER TO MAKE THIS CASE TO ITALIAN TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER OPINION FORMERS WHO, WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE, ARE NOT INDIFFERENT TO THE FATE OF RURAL WORKERS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. HOWEVER, OUR CASE WILL CARRY WEIGHT IF IT IS BUTTRESSED BY FIGURES AND EXAMPLES. ARE STATISTICS AVAILABLE, PERHAPS FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, TO DOCUMENT THE HUMAN TOLL IN ONE OR MORE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF RELIANCE ON PESTICIDES? HAVE ANY AGRICULTURE-ORIENTED MNC'S OPERATING IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD SWITCHED FROM PESTICIDES TO GMO'S AND TABULATEO THE BENEFITS IN WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY? ARE STATEMENTS AVAILABLE FROM TRADE UNIONS REPRESENTING AGRICULTURAL LABORERS THAT TAKE A PRO-GMO STANCE?

FOGLIETTA

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 5420

TOR: 990811054619 M3997231

DIST:

SIT: BLINKEN BREMNER DAVIDSON GORDON NORLAND SAPIRO VONLIPSEY
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHFRA3695 2291258-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 171258Z AUG 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
OSRI: RUEHFR
DTG: 171258Z AUG 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3396
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1144
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE 0123
RUEHSR/AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
SUBJ: NON-GMO SECTOR IS SLOWLY GETTING ORGANIZED

TEXT:

UNCLAS PARIS 013695

USDA FOR OSEC; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER;
FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/PSHEIKH/RMACKE;
OFSTS/LHARBERT; CMP/JPARKER; CMP/COTS/LBLUM;
CMP/G&F/RRIEMENSCHNEIDER; FAA/GEERKEN;
APHIS/CREED; FSIS/JPRUCHA

STATE PASS USTR FOR SCHER AND MURPHY
STATE PASS FDA
EU POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
CONGEN MILAN PASS ATO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, FR, TBIO, KSCA
SUBJECT: NON-GMO SECTOR IS SLOWLY GETTING ORGANIZED

1. SUMMARY: IN LIGHT OF THE EUROPEAN CONSUMER RESISTANCE TO GMO PRODUCTS, SOME COMPANIES PLAN TO ORGANIZE A SEPARATE NON-GMO SECTOR. SOME PRODUCERS AND PROCESSORS ALREADY HAVE AGREEMENTS WITH SUPPLIERS, PARTICULARLY IN BRAZIL. WHILE THEY ARE HAVING TO COPE WITH HIGHER MARKETING COSTS AND WITH DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN TESTING FOR GMOS, THEY ARE MAKING PROGRESS IN ESTABLISHING SOURCES OF SUPPLY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CURRENT NON-GMO SECTOR: THE FEDERATION NATIONALE D'AGRICULTURE BIOLOGIQUE (FNAB) HELD A

MEETING IN MAY 1999, IN WHICH BRAZIL AND FRANCE WERE INVITED TO DISCUSS NON-GMO SOYBEANS. PARTNERSHIPS WERE CREATED BETWEEN COTRIMAIO AND COOPAGRI (FINISTARE), CAM (MAYENNE), AND CANA (LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE). EXPORTS UP TO 5,000 MT OF GUARANTEED NON-GMO BRAZILIAN SOYBEAN CAKE SHOULD ARRIVE IN FRANCE IN AUGUST. CARREFOUR AND MARKS&SPENCER ARE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN THESE PARTNERSHIPS. ANOTHER CONFERENCE WAS ORGANIZED LAST MAY IN PARIS BY LABORATORIES WOLFF, DURING WHICH THE COMPANY "LES FERMIERS DE LOUA" (MANAGING DIRECTOR: YVES DE LA FOUCHARDIARE) ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF A NON-GMO POULTRY LINE. THE BOURGOIN PROJECT IN AUVERGNE (CENTER OF FRANCE) HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER GEVABA FOR POULTRY PRODUCTION, BSA FOR SLAUGHTER, CARREFOUR FOR DISTRIBUTION, AND THIVAT NUTRITION ANIMALE (SUBSIDIARY OF CEREAL GROWERS EPIS CENTRE) FOR FEED, AND SHOULD ACHIEVE NON-GMO PRODUCTION OF 10,000 TO 15,000 ANIMALS PER WEEK.

3. THESE PROJECTS ARE FACING A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS: FIRST, THE DETECTION OF GMOS OR GMO RESIDUES IS STILL DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE. VERY FEW LABORATORIES IN FRANCE HAVE THE APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT TO TEST PRODUCTS, AND EACH ANALYSIS COSTS AROUND FF2,000. SECOND, THE EU THRESHOLD FOR "NON-GMO" PRODUCTS HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED. IT COULD BE FROM 0 TO 5 PERCENT, WITH 1 OR 2 PERCENT AS THE MOST LIKELY NUMBER. THIRD, SETTING UP SUCH A SECTOR MEANS THAT PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS, AND DISTRIBUTORS MUST BE ABLE TO GUARANTEE THE ORIGIN AND QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT BY ASSURING SEPARATE MARKETING CHANNELS, WHICH IS EXPENSIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SECTOR SET UP BY "LES FERMIERS DE LOUA" WILL COST AROUND FF6 MILLION.

4. RESEARCH: RESEARCH ON THESE QUESTIONS IS CURRENTLY MONITORED BY INRA (EGIZIO VALCESCHINI IS PROJECT LEADER) AND FOCUSES ON FOUR POINTS: 1) ANALYSIS OF CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PAY EXTRA COSTS OF SEGREGATION, 2) ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLEAR DEFINITION OF A NON-GMO PRODUCT, 3) TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A NON-GMO SECTOR (STRATEGIES TO LIMIT GENETIC DISSEMINATION AFTER HARVESTS, ETC.), AND 4) TRACEABILITY.
RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED PRIMARILY ON CORN AND SOYBEANS BUT MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE OTHER GMO CROPS. A PRELIMINARY REPORT SHOULD BE ISSUED BY THE END OF 1999.
PEARSON

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 3695

TOR: 990817090150 M4005251

DIST:

SIT: BOWLES ORFINI SANDALOW
SIT: NSC

PRT: STERN

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHTUA3652 2321030-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 201030Z AUG 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
OSRI: RUEHTU
DTG: 201030Z AUG 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1621
INFO: RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 5285
SUBJ: GENETICALLY-MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO) IN TUNISIA

TEXT:

UNCLAS TUNIS 003652

FOR EB/TPP/ATT/ATP MARILYN BRUNO AND NEA/ENA
RABAT FOR AGATT/QUINTIN GRAY

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ECON, ETRD, KSCA, SENV, TBIO, TS
SUBJECT: GENETICALLY-MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO) IN TUNISIA

REF: A. A) STATE 113313
B. B) STATE 151442

THE GOT IS A STRONG PROPONENT OF GMO USAGE. PREVIOUSLY, IT SENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE U.S. TO STUDY THE BENEFITS OF GMOS, REQUESTED AND RECEIVED FAS ASSISTANCE IN DRAFTING ITS GMO LEGISLATION, AND PROPOSED 12 USG-GOT JOINT GMO PROJECTS (CURRENTLY UNDER USG REVIEW). TUNISIA SUPPORTS USG POSITIONS ON GMOS. POST FEELS THAT REFTELS COULD UNNECESSARILY DRAW ATTENTION TO NEGATIVE MEDIA COVERAGE THAT GMOS HAVE RECEIVED IN OTHER COUNTRIES. THEREFORE, WE FEEL IT IS BETTER TO NOT/NOT DISSEMINATE THIS INFORMATION TO THE GMO-FRIENDLY AND ASTUTE GOT.
RAPHEL

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01
SSN: 3652
TOR: 990820064208 M4010670
DIST:

SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: PRIORITY
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: PAAEZYUW RUEHBRA3224 2431728-EEEE--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNY EEEEE ZZH
LINE3: P 311728Z AUG 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
OSRI: RUEHBR
DTG: 311728Z AUG 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6980
INFO: RUEANAT/NASA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PULO 5890
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 4925
SUBJ: BRAZILIAN SCIENCE MINISTER ON GMO ISSUE AND INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

TEXT:

UNCLAS E F T O BRASILIA 003224

DEPT PASS TO USDA

DEPARTMENT FOR OES/ETC AND WHA/BSC
NASA FOR CODE IH
USDA FOR FAS/ITP (B. SLUTSKY)

SENSITIVE

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, TSPA, SENV, EAGR, BR
SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN SCIENCE MINISTER ON GMO ISSUE AND INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

REF: BRASILIA 2396

UNCLASSIFIED BUT SENSITIVE. HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

1. (U) CHARGE, ACCOMPANIED BY EST COUNSELOR AND EMBASSY POLMIL OFFICER, PAID A COURTESY CALL AUGUST 30 ON AMB. RONALDO SARDENBERG, RECENTLY APPOINTED AS BRAZIL'S MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. THIS CABLE COVERS SARDENBERG'S COMMENTS ON COMMERCE IN GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOS) AND ON BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS). ALSO PRESENT WERE BRAZILIAN SPACE AGENCY PRESIDENT GYLVAN MEIRA FILHO AND KATIA GILABERTE AND MANUEL MONTENEGRO, RESPECTIVELY HEAD AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICE.

(2 WS)

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION
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2. (SBU/NF) THE CHARGE ASKED SARDENBERG FOR A READ-OUT OF CURRENT STATE OF PLAY ON EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE FUNDING SHORTFALL DELAYING WORK ON BRAZIL'S PORTIONS OF THE ISS. SARDENBERG NOTED THAT BRAZIL RECENTLY HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM NASA REGARDING THE ISS (EMBASSY NOTE: WHICH WE UNDERSTAND REQUESTS BRAZILIAN CLARIFICATION OF THEIR PLANS FOR PURSUING THE PROJECT AND NOTES, IN EFFECT, THE NEED FOR THE ISS TO MOVE FORWARD, PREFERABLY WITH BRAZIL BUT IF NECESSARY WITHOUT.) SARDENBERG INDICATED UNDERSTANDING OF NASA'S POSITION AND SAID THERE WOULD BE A REPLY SHORTLY. HE ADDED THAT EFFORTS WOULD CONTINUE TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY FUNDING, THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL ROUNDS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ALREADY ON THIS SUBJECT, HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT BRAZIL WOULD PURSUE THE ISS, AND HE HAD BEEN ASSURED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL (I.E. PRESIDENT CARDOSO) OF ITS DESIRE TO DO SO. SARDENBERG SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE PERSONALLY DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH HIS "PEERS" (EMBASSY NOTE: A REFERENCE, INTER ALIA, TO THE MINISTER OF BUDGET AND PLANNING WITH WHOM HE HAS BEEN DEALING) TO FIND A PRACTICAL SOLUTION.

3. (SBU/NF) GYLVAN MEIRA SAID BRAZIL WAS AWARE THAT SOME ASPECTS OF ITS ISS CONTRIBUTION WERE NOW REACHING A TIME-CRITICAL STAGE IN TERMS OF THE ISS SCHEDULE. HE ADDED THAT IN ITS REPLY TO NASA, BRAZIL WOULD SUGGEST THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO SWAPPING SUCH ITEMS FOR BRAZILIAN ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHER COMPONENTS WHICH FALL DUE LATER IN THE OVERALL PROGRAM. SARDENBERG IMMEDIATELY INTERJECTED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT A MAXIMUM EFFORT WOULD NOT BE MADE OR THAT THERE WAS LACK OF CERTAINTY OVER BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION AND THE DETERMINATION TO MEET THE EXISTING TIMETABLE. THE CHARGE THANKED SARDENBERG FOR THE ASSURANCE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE NOTED A RECENT LOCAL PRESS ARTICLE QUOTING A BOEING SPOKESMAN THAT THERE WAS NO SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH THE ISS PROJECT HERE; THE CHARGE SAID THAT, IN HIS EXPERIENCE, SUCH STATEMENTS TYPICALLY MEANT THERE WAS A PROBLEM. EST COUNSELOR ADDED THAT, IN FACT, BOEING WAS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH THE CONTINUED IMPASSE ON THE FUNDING ISSUE.

GMO'S
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4. (SBU) THE CHARGE RAISED GMO'S AND THE CURRENT DEBATE IN BRAZIL OVER THEIR INTRODUCTION, NOTING OUR CONCERN OVER THE ISSUE GIVEN THE i{W2o_EkY`ES ABJURING THE TECHNOLOGY WOULD FIND
THEMSELVES UNCOMPETITIVE. BRAZIL ITSELF HAD A MAJOR STAKE IN THE MATTER GIVEN ITS OWN AGRO-BUSINESS AND POTENTIAL. THE CHARGE ASKED FOR SARDENBERG'S PERSPECTIVE.

5. (SBU) SARDENBERG NOTED THAT THE SCIENCE MINISTRY HAD A STRONG, WELL-QUALIFIED AND SCIENTIFICALLY BASED

COMMISSION, CTN-BIO, WHICH REVIEWED INTRODUCTION OF GMOS INTO BRAZIL; HE WAS CONFIDENT THEY WOULD SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT IN TECHNICAL TERMS AND HE HIMSELF RELIED ON THEM FOR ADVICE. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WERE NOW STRONG POPULAR FEELINGS IN BRAZIL AGAINST GMO PRODUCTS, ONLY RECENTLY AROUSED BY A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE TECHNOLOGY, AND HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN A TARGET FOR CRITICISM ON THE ISSUE. (SARDENBERG HELD UP A PORTUGUESE-LANGUAGE LEAFLET BEING DISTRIBUTED IN RIO DE JANEIRO BY GREENPEACE AND DISMISSED IT AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF "TERROR" CAMPAIGN BEING WAGED.) MOST PEOPLE, HE ADDED, ALSO CONFUSED GMOS WITH MAD COW DISEASE, DIOXINS, OR OTHER PHENOMENA WHICH HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH GMOS. SARDENBERG SAID "WE" WOULD BE WORKING THE ISSUE, BEGINNING WITH PUBLIC HEARINGS TO AIR OPINION, PERHAPS FOLLOWED BY OTHER MEASURES. IN THE MEANTIME, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, WHICH WAS TO CONSIDER GMOS ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. MORE TRANSPARENCY IN THE PROCESS--OF WHICH THE PUBLIC HEARINGS WOULD BE A FIRST STEP--WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN BETTER MANAGING THE ISSUE. IN THE MEANTIME, HE ADDED, DEVELOPMENTS AND CLAIMS IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE OVER GMOS IN THE U.S. HAD IMMEDIATE REPERCUSSIONS ON THE DEBATE WITHIN BRAZIL.

6. (SBU/NF) EMBASSY COMMENT: ON ISS, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THAT THE BRAZILIANS HAVE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF TRADING OFF SOME SHORT-LEAD TIME ITEMS FOR COMPONENTS WITH MORE DISTANT DUE DATES IN THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPACE STATION. GIVEN SARDENBERG'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE MATTER AND HIS QUICK INTERJECTION FOLLOWING MEIRA'S PRESENTATION, WE SUSPECT THAT THE BRAZILIANS' FOCUS REMAINS ON GETTING THE EXISTING PROGRAM BACK ON TRACK, BUT THAT WITH TIME RUNNING OUT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A CONTINGENCY FALLBACK OPTION (AND NASA REACTIONS THERETO) SHOULD SARDENBERG'S EFFORTS TO CATALYZE FUNDING IN THE NEAR FUTURE PROVE UNSUCCESSFUL.

7. (SBU/NF) EMBASSY COMMENT CONT.: ON GMOS, SARDENBERG'S COMMENTS POSITION HIM SQUARELY ON THE SIDE OF A DISPASSIONATE, SCIENTIFIC APPROACH SIMILAR TO THAT CHAMPIONED BY HIS PREDECESSOR. (IN HIS INITIAL STATEMENTS AFTER ASSUMING THE MINISTRY, HE HAD BEEN CAUTIOUSLY NON-COMMITTAL ON GMOS.) THE SCIENCE MINISTRY AND ITS TECHNICAL CADRE THUS WILL LIKELY REMAIN ESSENTIALLY SUPPORTIVE OF GMO INTRODUCTION INTO BRAZIL. HOWEVER, INCREASED PUBLIC AWARENESS AND DEBATE OF THE ISSUE THIS YEAR (REFTEL) HAVE BROUGHT OTHER PLAYERS INTO THE GAME--ESPECIALLY THE ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY--WHICH BY NATURE ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS TOWARDS GMO TECHNOLOGY AND WHICH

ARE NOW JOCKEYING WITH THE SCIENCE MINISTRY FOR PREEMINENCE IN THE REGULATORY STRUCTURE ADDRESSING GMOS. END COMMENT.

GALLUCCI

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 3224

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ORIG: AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5670
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0215
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0229
SUBJ: DELIVERING THE GMO MESSAGE TO NEW EU COMMISSIONER DAVID BYRNE: AMBASSADOR HOSTS GMO ROUNDTABLE

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 DUBLIN 004680

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, SENV, PREL, EI
SUBJECT: DELIVERING THE GMO MESSAGE TO NEW EU COMMISSIONER DAVID BYRNE: AMBASSADOR HOSTS GMO ROUNDTABLE

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SUMMARY
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1. (SBU) AS PART OF EMBASSY'S ON-GOING EFFORTS TO DELIVER THE U.S. MESSAGE ON GMOS, AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN BROUGHT TOGETHER A DIVERSE GROUP OF IRISH FARMING, BIOTECH, ACADEMIC, CONSUMER, AND PUBLIC HEALTH#doIWERE 1) HIGHLIGHT TO BYRNE GOVERNMENT GIVES THIS ISSUE; 2) PROVIDE BYRNE WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GMO ISSUE BEFORE THE "BUREAUCRATS OF BRUSSELS" FENCE HIM OFF FROM DIRECT ACCESS TO U.S. VIEWS;

AND 3) BY INTRODUCING HIM TO IRISH VOICES WHO GENERALLY SHARE U.S. VIEWS ON GMOS, PROVIDE BYRNE WITH A "KITCHEN CABINET" TO WHOM HE MIGHT TURN, IF HE EVER SEEKS A "REALITY CHECK" ON HIS STAFF'S VIEWS. THE ATTENDANCE OF EMBASSY LONDON AND EU MISSION AGCOUNSELORS WAS INVALUABLE TO THE LUNCHEON'S SUCCESS, ESPECIALLY IN PROVIDING BYRNE WITH SPECIFICS OF HOW THE CURRENT EU REGULATORY SYSTEM FAILS TO MEET THE TRANSPARENT, SCIENCE-BASED STANDARDS THE U.S. RIGHTFULLY EXPECTS.

2. (SBU) BYRNE, ENGAGED AND IN A SELF-DESCRIBED "LEARNING MODE" THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSION, APPEARS TO HAVE NO PERSONAL QUALMS ABOUT GMO TECHNOLOGY. HE APPRECIATES HOW AN EU FAILURE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A POSITIVE GMO POLICY WILL HARM EU FARMERS AND BIOTECH INDUSTRIES AND, WORST OF ALL, POSSIBLY SPARK A U.S.-EU TRADE DISPUTE DWARFING THE BANANAS "WAR." BYRNE WANTS CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN U.S. AND EU REGULATORS IN THIS AREA, A POINT HE MADE IN HIS SUBSEQUENT WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS TO THE EU PARLIAMENT THIS MONTH. BYRNE JUST AS CLEARLY, HOWEVER, BELIEVES THE EU PUBLIC IS NOT READY TO ACCEPT GMO-PRODUCTS ON THEIR FOOD SHELVES, WHATEVER THE MAJORITY SCIENTIFIC OPINION, AND THAT THE EU CANNOT -- AND SHOULD NOT -- MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT PUBLIC SUPPORT. THE QUESTION TO WHICH BYRNE RETURNED OFTEN WAS SIMPLE: "WHO EDUCATES THE PUBLIC ON GMOS ?" BYRNE DOES NOT SEE HIS ROLE, OR THAT OF HIS STAFF, AS ONE OF "LEADING EU OPINION" ON THE GMO ISSUE, BECAUSE REGULATORS "NEED TO BE IMPARTIAL." BYRNE HEARD EMBASSY'S MESSAGE ABOUT U.S. FRUSTRATION WITH THE EU'S FLAWED GMO REGULATORY SYSTEM, WHICH, WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING U.S. COMPLAINTS, BYRNE INDICATED WAS IN NEED OF "REVIEW." HE, IN TURN, STRESSED THAT "U.S. THREATS OF SANCTIONS" OVER GMO DISPUTES ARE ONLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND REFLECTED IN SEVERAL COMMENTS THE OFT-HEARD EU LINE ON THE "SPECIAL MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROLE" AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PLAY IN EUROPEAN LIFE. EMBASSY'S CONCLUSION IS THAT BYRNE IS OPEN TO U.S. VIEWS ON GMOS AND THE FAILINGS OF EU REGULATION -- WE READ ECHOES OF THE LUNCHEON DISCUSSION IN HIS EU PARLIAMENT SUBMISSION WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT THE NEED FOR A "SCIENCE-BASED AND TRANSPARENT" REGULATORY PROCESS -- BUT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT HIM TO USE HIS BULLY PULPIT AS COMMISSIONER TO EDUCATE CONSUMERS OR PROMOTE GMO TECHNOLOGY. END SUMMARY.

FIRST UP TO BAT: DELIVERING THE U.S. MESSAGE ON GMOS

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3. (SBU) HOPING TO BE THE "FIRST UP TO BAT" IN PROVIDING COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE FOR HEALTH AND CONSUMER SAFETY DAVID BYRNE WITH VIEWS ON WHAT BYRNE HIMSELF CALLED "THE HOTTEST POTATO ON MY PLATE," AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN HOSTED BYRNE AT A SMALL, INFORMAL LUNCHEON ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON GMO ISSUES (REF A CONTAINS BIO BACKGROUND ON THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE). ATTENDING THE EVENT WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF A CROSS-SECTION OF IRISH INTERESTS IN THE GMO DEBATE -- FARMERS, THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA, CONSUMERS, AND GOVERNMENT FOOD SAFETY EXPERTS (NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS FOLLOWS BELOW AT PARA. 14). ALL

THE IRISH ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION WERE WELL-KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY AND SHARE U.S. VIEWS ON GMO ISSUES, ALTHOUGH EACH HAS A UNIQUE VIEWPOINT NOT ALWAYS
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IDENTICAL TO THAT OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. ALSO ATTENDING WERE THE AGRICULTURAL MINISTER-COUNSELORS FROM US EMBASSY LONDON AND THE US MISSION TO THE EU, BOTH OF WHOM WERE INVALUABLE IN PROVIDING SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON TECHNICAL AND REGULATORY ASPECTS OF GMOS AND UNDERSCORING AMBASSADOR'S POINTS ON GROWING U.S. FRUSTRATION WITH THE FLAWED EU REGULATORY PROCESS FOR GMO-FOODS/CROPS.

4. (SBU) IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE LUNCHEON SUCCEEDED IN MAKING BYRNE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. PLACES ON IMPROVING THE EU'S GMO REGULATORY REGIME. BYRNE HEARD THIS MESSAGE NOT ONLY FROM U.S. PARTICIPANTS, BUT FROM IRISH AS WELL -- DR. JIM RYAN, CEO OF BIORESEARCH IRELAND, A GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR BIOTECH INDUSTRIES, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD BYRNE THAT DELAYS AND CONFUSION OVER STANDARDS IN REGULATORY APPROVAL OF GM-PRODUCTS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPEDIMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN BIOTECH INDUSTRY.

5. (SBU) BEYOND RECEIVING THIS MESSAGE, EMBASSY'S CONSIDERED GUESS IS THAT THE DISCUSSION WAS BYRNE'S FIRST IN-DEPTH PRESENTATION ON GMOS. FOR THAT REASON, THE LUNCHEON WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE HIS VIEWS TO AN EXTENT THAT MAY NEVER AGAIN BE POSSIBLE, ONCE HIS STAFF "OF GRAY CAUTIOUS BUREAUCRATS" BEGIN TO INSULATE HIM FROM DIRECT ACCESS TO OTHER VIEWS. BYRNE, WHO HIMSELF ADMITTED HE IS LEARNING ABOUT THE ISSUE, EXHIBITED A SOLID FAMILIARITY WITH THE ISSUE -- HE RAISED THE NOW-INFAMOUS "MONARCH BUTTERFLY STUDY" AND INQUIRED ABOUT "TERMINATOR SEEDS." BUT HE WAS LESS INFORMED ABOUT HOW GMO TECHNOLOGY "WORKS", THE EXACT EU REGULATORY SCHEME FOR NOVELL FOODS/GMOS, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH GMOS ARE USED IN U.S. AGRICULTURE. EMBASSY WAS PLEASED THAT BYRNE USED THE LUNCHEON TO ASK HIS FELLOW GUESTS QUESTIONS ON THESE TOPICS AND OTHERS AS WELL. TIME WILL TELL IF A FINAL EMBASSY GOAL FOR THE LUNCHEON -- GIVING BYRNE AN

IRISH "KITCHEN CABINET" TO WHOM HE MIGHT TURN, IF HE EVER DECIDES TO SEEK A "REALITY CHECK" FROM THE VIEWS OF BRUSSELS -- IS REALIZED, BUT IT IS A GOOD OMEN THAT BYRNE SUBSEQUENT T THE LUNCHEON, DID CONTACT ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS, PAT SMITH OF THE IRISH FARMING ASSOCIATION (IFA), FOR COPIES OF GMO-RELATED MATERIALS SMITH PRODUCED FOR THE IFA.

FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS: GMOS -- "HE LIKES THEM"

6. (SBU) IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE MOST POSITIVE CONCLUSION TO BE DRAWN FROM THE DISCUSSION IS THAT BYRNE HIMSELF APPEARS NOT TO HAVE ANY PERSONAL CONCERNS OR QUALMS WITH GMO TECHNOLOGY. THERE WAS LITTLE DISCUSSION OF THE "ETHICS" OF GENE TECHNOLOGY (SAVE FOR A DISCUSSION OF "TERMINATOR GENES") FOR EXAMPLE. BYRNE'S OWN QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS DID NOT REFLECT A PERSONAL HOSTILITY TO GMO TECHNOLOGY. BYRNE CONCURRED WHEN SEVERAL OF THE PARTICIPANTS DREW HIS ATTENTION TO THE "IRONY" OF ORGANIC FARMERS CLAIMING GMO FOODS ARE DANGEROUS, ALTHOUGH IMPROPERLY CLEANED/PREPARED ORGANIC FOODS HAVE CAUSED SERIOUS HARM TO IRISH CONSUMERS, BUT THERE IS NO RECORD OF ANY GMO FOOD CAUSING SIMILAR HARM OR ILLNESS. BYRNE IS NOT A GMO "TRUE BELIEVER", BUT THE FACT THAT THE DISCUSSION DID NOT CENTER ON THE "WHETHER OR NOT" OF GMO FOODS, BUT RATHER ON THE "HOW TO REGULATE AND EDUCATE" IS A GOOD OMEN FOR BYRNE'S FUTURE DIRECTION.

7. (SBU) THREE OTHER GENERAL THEMES OF NOTE RAN THROUGH THE DISCUSSION: CONSUMER EDUCATION, CHANGES TO THE FOOD SAFETY REGULATORY SYSTEM IN EUROPE, AND AVOIDING U.S.-EU TRADE FRICTION OVER THE ISSUE.

WHO EDUCATES THE CONSUMER?

8. (SBU) MUCH OF BYRNE'S FOCUS IN THE DISCUSSION WAS ON EDUCATING THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC ABOUT GMOS. BYRNE DOES NOT SEE HIS REMIT AS INCLUDING "CONSUMER EDUCATION." THIS WOULD COMPROMISE HIS "IMPARTIALITY" AS A REGULATOR. BUT HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE BELIEVES THE COMMISSION CAN NOT MOVE FORWARD WITH A FAVORABLE GMO APPROACH, IF EUROPEAN PUBLICS ARE OPPOSED. BYRNE CITED THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY STUDY AS THE TYPE OF INFORMATION THAT MUST BE "REBUTTED" IF EU PUBLICS ARE GOING TO ACCEPT

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GMOS. BYRNE LISTENED AS SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS EXPLAINED HOW THE STUDY WAS FLAWED, BUT THEN POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS EXACTLY THE KIND OF FACTUAL INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE

TO THE PUBLIC AFTER A "SENSATIONALIZED" ANTI-GMO STORY APPEARS.

9. (SBU) THERE WAS DISCUSSION ABOUT WHO BORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FAILURE TO "PRE-SELL" GMOS TO THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC. BYRNE, JOINED BY MANY OF THE OTHER IRISH PARTICIPANTS, ARGUED THAT THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY IS FAILING TO ADDRESS CONSUMER CONCERNS AND TO EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS OF GMOS. MARY REVELT, AG MINISTER-COUNSELOR AT THE US EU MISSION, STRESSED THE POINT TO BYRNE, HOWEVER, THAT, IN THE END, THE REGULATORY PROCESS COULD NOT BE A PRISONER OF UNINFORMED PUBLIC OPINION. THE PROCESS HAD TO BE BASED ON SCIENCE, NOT PUBLIC FEARS. OTHER IRISH PARTICIPANTS AGREED THAT A TRANSPARENT, SCIENCE-BASED SYSTEM MEANS THAT REGULATORY AUTHORITIES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO, IN SOME CASES, LEAD PUBLIC OPINION, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. DR. PATRICK WALL, HEAD OF THE IRISH FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY, POINTED OUT, AS AN EXAMPLE, THAT HIS AGENCY HAD ISSUED A PAMPHLET ON GMO FOODS AND THEIR REGULATION IN IRELAND IN WHICH HIS AGENCY HAD STATED THAT ALL APPROVED GMO FOODS IN IRELAND WERE SAFE (REF B). DR. WALL TOLD BYRNE THAT THIS KIND OF EDUCATION OUTREACH, WITHOUT ADVOCATING A SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGY, IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FOOD SAFETY REGULATORS.

10. (SBU) IN A NOTABLE DISSENTING VIEW FROM THE GENERAL GLOOM OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ON THE HARD ROAD AHEAD IN BUILDING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE ABOUT GMOS, DR. PETER DARGAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSUMER ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND, ARGUED THAT IN FACT CONSUMERS ARE INCREASINGLY BETTER INFORMED ABOUT GMOS AND, AS THEY LEARN MORE, EVEN FROM THE POPULAR MEDIA, THEY BECOME MORE SANGUINE ABOUT GMO PRODUCTS. HE PREDICTED THE "GMO DEBATE" WOULD BE OVER IN 18 MONTHS, AT LEAST IN IRELAND, AND DECIDED FIRMLY IN FAVOR OF GMOS. DARGAN, AT ONE TIME A GMO SKEPTIC UNTIL HIS PARTICIPATION IN AN USIS-SPONSORED IV PROGRAM "CONVERTED" HIM ON THE ISSUE, CLAIMED THAT IRISH CONSUMERS ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT GMO FOODS, BUT THEY WANT A CHOICE OR AT LEAST TO FEEL THEY HAVE THE OPTION OF A CHOICE. LABELING IS THE KEY TO GIVING CONSUMERS A "PERCEPTION" OF CHOICE, A POINT WHICH BYRNE SAID STRUCK HIM AS IMPORTANT TOO.

A SUPRA-NATIONAL EU FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY?
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11. (SBU) BYRNE INQUIRED ABOUT HOW FOOD SAFETY AND GMOS ARE REGULATED IN THE UNITED STATES. HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON THE USEFULNESS AND NEED FOR ONE OVER-ARCHING EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY REGULATOR WHICH WOULD SUPPLANT EXISTING NATIONAL REGIMES. HE HEARD DIFFERING VIEWS FROM IRISH PARTICIPANTS. BYRNE SAID THAT HE HAS NO FIRM VIEWS HIMSELF, BUT WONDERED IF PART OF THE PUBLIC CONFUSION AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GMO TECHNOLOGY DID NOT COME FROM CONFLICTING REGULATORY DECISIONS AND STANDARDS. BYRNE INDICATED THAT REFORM AND REVIEW OF THE EU'S EXISTING REGULATORY REGIME IN THE FOOD SAFETY AREA WOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR HIM. HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE U.S. SYSTEM.

U.S. SANCTIONS DON'T HELP RESOLVE THE ISSUE

12. (SBU) A DISCUSSION ON THE DIFFERENT U.S. AND EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD SCIENCE AND FOOD SAFETY PRODUCED A FIRM STATEMENT FROM BYRNE THAT, IN HIS VIEW, SANCTIONS AND THREATS OF TRADE WARS ON ISSUES SUCH AS GMOS ARE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, A POINT ON WHICH HE HAD THE BACKING OF SEVERAL OF THE IRISH PARTICIPANTS. DR. WALL, OF THE IRISH FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY, TOLD THE GROUP THAT A PUBLIC PERCEPTION THAT GMOS AND BEEF HORMONES ARE BEING FORCED ONTO EUROPEAN TABLES AT THE BARREL OF A U.S. TRADE SANCTION GUN WOULD CREATE A COUNTERPRODUCTIVE BACKLASH. BYRNE SPOKE OF THE "SPECIAL MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROLE" AGRICULTURE AND FOOD HAS IN EUROPEAN LIFE AND URGED THE U.S. TO USE "EDUCATION" AS THE MEANS OF RESOLVING THE ISSUE. BYRNE REPEATED HIS INTEREST IN GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND U.S. REGULATORY EXPERTS

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COMMENT

13. (SBU) EMBASSY WAS PLEASED TO READ IN BYRNE'S MID-AUGUST, THIRTY-ONE PAGE SUBMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ECHOES OF THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION. IN LINE WITH HIS REMARKS AT THE LUNCHEON, BYRNE'S WRITTEN STATEMENTS ON GMOS ARE NOTABLE FOR THE ABSENCE OF AN ANTI-BIOTECHNOLOGY FLAVOR AND AN UNWILLINGNESS TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO ENDORSING THE CURRENT EU REGULATORY APPROACH. HE STRESSES THE NEED TO REVIEW THE PROCESS AND COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN U.S. AND EU FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITIES. ASKED DIRECTLY ABOUT GMO SAFETY, BYRNE WROTE " ON GMOS, I SUPPORT A SCIENCE-BASED APPROACH...GMO AUTHORIZATIONS SHOULD THEREFORE BE SCIENCE-BASED TIME-LIMITED AND CAREFULLY MONITORED," A PHRASE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM A TRANSCRIPT OF THE LUNCHEON DISCUSSION. IF NOTHING ELSE, BYRNE'S WRITTEN COMMENTS CONFIRM WHAT MISSION TOOK AWAY FROM THE LUNCHEON DISCUSSION -- BYRNE IS A MAN OPEN TO OUR VIEWS ON GMOS AND WITH WHOM "WE CAN DO BUSINESS."

PARTICIPANTS
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14. (U) ATTENDING AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF BYRNE: MR. PETER DARGAN, CHAIRMAN, CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND; DR. JIM RYAN, CEO BIORESEARCH IRELAND; MR. PATRICK SMITH, DIRECTOR, IRISH FARMERS ASSOCIATION; DR. PATRICK WALL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND; DR. PETER WHITAKER, PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND; MS. MARY REVELT, MINISTER COUNSELOR FOR AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS, U.S. MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION; MR. THOMAS HAMBY, MINISTER COUNSELOR FOR AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS, U.S. EMBASSY LONDON; MR. EARLE SCARLETT, DCM EMBASSY DUBLIN ; AND RICK MILLS, ECONOFF EMBASSY DUBLIN. SULLIVAN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 04
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SUBJ: COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE LIIKANEN TESTIFIES ON EMPLOYMENT, E-COMMERCE AND GMO'S

HE WOULD USE THE IMPACT ON SME'S AS A BENCHMARK IN CONSIDERING NEW PROPOSALS FOR REGULATION. WOULD THE

TEXT:

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HE WOULD USE THE IMPACT ON SME'S AS A BENCHMARK IN CONSIDERING NEW PROPOSALS FOR REGULATION. WOULD THE REGULATION BE A BURDEN ON SME'S? IF NOT, THEN BIG BUSINESS COULD PROBABLY TOLERATE IT TOO. WITH REGARD TO STANDARDS, HE SUGGESTED THAT MUTUAL RECOGNITION IS THE PREFERRED FIRST APPROACH. IT IS FASTER AND LIGHTER. HARMONIZATION IS A SECOND CHOICE BECAUSE IT OFTEN TAKES MUCH LONGER TO ACHIEVE RESULTS.

10. LIIKANEN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF AN MEP QUESTION ABOUT HOW HE WOULD MEASURE HIS SUCCESS AS A COMMISSIONER TO LAUNCH INTO A DISCUSSION OF INTERNAL REFORM OF HIS DG AND BY EXTENSION OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE COMMISSION. HE ARGUED THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY COMMISSION PROGRAMS -- CITING 17

IN THE FIELD OF INNOVATION ALONE -- WITH TOO MANY DIFFERENT BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES. THESE NUMEROUS SMALL PROGRAMS ARE HARDER TO MANAGE, LESS TRANSPARENT TO OUTSIDERS, HAVE LESS IMPACT, AND MAY BE MORE OPEN TO FRAUD. DARINGLY, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE PARLIAMENT WAS AS MUCH TO BLAME FOR THIS SITUATION AS THE COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL. HE ASKED THE PARLIAMENT NOT TO TASK THE COMMISSION IN AREAS "WHERE THERE IS NO EUROPEAN VALUE ADDED" SAID HE WOULD TRY TO REDUCE AND CONCENTRATE THE NUMBER OF PROGRAMS IN HIS AREA TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY.

AN UNWIELDY PORTFOLIO

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12. (SBU) COMMENT: LIIKANEN WILL HAVE AN EXTREMELY BROAD SET OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN HIS NEW JOB, AS EVIDENCED BY THE WIDE RANGE OF MEP QUESTIONS (IN ADDITION TO THOSE REPORTED HERE) ON SECTORS AS DIVERSE AS TOURISM, TEXTILES AND HEALTH CARE. AS SUGGESTED IN HIS REMARKS TO MEP'S, IF HE DOES NOT CONCENTRATE HIS ENERGIES, THEN HE RISKS DISSIPATING THEM TO LITTLE EFFECT. IF HE DOES CHOOSE TO CONCENTRATE, HIS OBVIOUS ENTHUSIASM FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET COULD LEAD HIM TO FOCUS HIS ATTENTION ON THIS SECTOR. END COMMENT. (DRAFTED:ECON:CHELMER)

CLOUD

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 5460

TOR: 990916101449 M4051990

DIST:

SIT: NSC

Cable

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CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
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ORIG: AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 1619
INFO: RUEHKW/AMCONSUL KRAKOW 5128
RUEHXE/EASTERN EUROPEAN POSTS COLLECTIVE
SUBJ: POLAND'S DRAFT GMO REGULATIONS ALARM FOOD AND BIOTECH INDUSTRY

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 009084

STATE FOR EUR/NCE (WOJTASIEWICZ, PHILPOT), EB/ATP
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USTR (SCHER, RDRISCOLL, NOVELLI)
USDA FOR U/SEC SCHUMACHER, FAS FOR OA/GALVIN, ITP/MACKE,
HESSE, AVIDOR, OFSTA/SLUTSKY, FAA/BURST
POSTS FOR AGRICULTURE AND ECON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SENV,EAGR, ETAD, PL
SUBJECT: POLAND'S DRAFT GMO REGULATIONS ALARM FOOD AND
BIOTECH INDUSTRY

REF: WARSAW 8211

THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED PLEASE HANDLE
ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: REGULATIONS ON GMO REQUIREMENTS MAY BE APPROVED BY THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT OF POLAND IN SEPTEMBER. THE REGULATIONS WILL DEFINE REQUIREMENTS FOR LABELING OF GMO PRODUCTS AND FOR OBTAINING APPROVAL TO "RELEASE" GMO ORGANISMS FOR RESEARCH AND COMMERCIAL PURPOSES IN POLAND. ACCORDING TO COMPANIES IN POLAND WITH A INTEREST IN GMOS, THE REGULATIONS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION WOULD CREATE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HAD CIRCULATED AN EARLIER DRAFT OF THE GMO REGULATIONS IN APRIL. MONSANTO AS WELL AS PIONEER, AGREEVO AND NOVARTIS (THREE OTHER BIOTECHNOLOGY COMPANIES WITH OPERATIONS IN POLAND) PREPARED A JOINT RESPONSE DELIVERED THROUGH THE POLISH ASSOCIATION OF FOOD INDUSTRY. MONSANTO COMPLAINED THAT

THE DRAFT REGULATIONS WERE DRASTICALLY CHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL VERSION PREPARED BY A PANEL OF POLISH BIOTECHNOLOGY EXPERTS WHICH CURRENTLY REVIEWS APPLICATIONS TO RELEASE GMO PLANTS IN POLAND FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.

3. THE POLISH FOOD PROCESSORS FEDERATION (PFPF), MONSANTO AND SEVERAL OTHER COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS SHARED THEIR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT GMO REGULATIONS WITH US. (NOTE: PFPF MEMBERS ACCOUNT FOR OVER HALF THE VALUE OF POLISH FOOD PRODUCTION. MANY U.S. COMPANIES WHO HAVE INVESTED IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING IN POLAND ARE MEMBERS OF PFPF INCLUDING PEPSICO, CARGILL, PIONEER AND MONSANTO. END NOTE.) THE PFPF RECEIVED AN OFFICIAL LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT REQUESTING COMMENT ON THE DRAFT REGULATION BEFORE AUGUST 31. THE PFPF MET ON MONDAY, AUGUST 30 TO PREPARE A JOINT RESPONSE TO THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT CONCERNING THE LATEST VERSION OF THE REGULATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HAS SENT THE REGULATIONS FORWARD FOR SIGNATURE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE COMMENTS FROM THE PFPF HAD NOT YET BEEN SUBMITTED.

4. THE DIRECTOR OF THE PFPF MET WITH AG COUNSELOR AND AG ATTACHE ON SEPTEMBER 2 TO DISCUSS PFPF'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEW GMO REGULATIONS. IN GENERAL, PFPF REPRESENTATIVES HOPE THAT THE CURRENT REGULATION WILL NOT BE APPROVED BECAUSE IT CONTAINS NO PROVISION FOR A GMO THRESHOLD LEVEL WHICH WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR FOOD PROCESSING COMPANIES TO DEAL WITH IN POLAND. NESTLE TOLD US THEY PLAN TO ATTEND THE PFPF MEETING. NESTLE ALSO HOLDS THE OPINION TAT THE DRAFT REGULATION SHOULD CONTAIN A GMO THRSHOLD LEVEL PROVISION.

5. KEY ISSUES INCLUD:

--NO GMO THRESHOLD. THE DRAFT REGULATINS MAKE NO PROVISION FOR EXEMPTING PRODUCTS WHIC HAVE MINIMAL GMO CONTENT FROM THE GMO REQUIREMENS FOR PACKAGING, LABELING, ETC. THE GENERL CONSENSUS OF THE POLISH INDUSTRY SEEMS TO BE TAT A 2 PERCENT THRESHOLD SHOULD BE INCLUDED INTHE REGULATIONS. ACCORDING TO MONSANTO, A PERCENT THRESHOLD ON GMO CONTENT WOULD ELIMINATE HE NEED FOR LABELING ON MOST PRODUCTS. A THRESHOLD WAS INCLUDED IN THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE REGULATIONS PREPARED BY THE POLISH BIOTECHNOLOGY EXPERTS.

--ILLOGICAL PACKAGING REQUIREMENT. THE DRAFT REGULATIONS WOULD REQUIRE THAT GMO PRODUCTS OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ANY GMO CONTENT MUST BE IN "PACKAGING TO PRECLUDE RELEASE". THE INDUSTRY SUGGESTS THAT THIS REQUIREMENT SHOULD BE DELETED SINCE IT MAKES NO SENSE TO PRECLUDE RELEASE OF AN APPROVED COMMERCIAL PRODUCT. THE INDUSTRY COMPLAIN THAT THIS REQUIREMENT IS IMPRACTICAL. IF THE PRODUCT IS APPROVED FOR COMMERCIAL SALE THERE IS NO REASON WHY IS SHOULD REQUIRE PACKAGING TO PRECLUDE RELEASE.

--ONEROUS LABELING REQUIREMENTS. THE DRAFT REGULATIONS REQUIRE THE LABEL TO STATE THAT THE, "...PRODUCT MAY CONSIST OF GMO". THE INDUSTRY MAINTAINS THIS REQUIREMENT SHOULD BE DELETED BECAUSE IT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE. (NOTE: THIS ITEM WAS DELETED IN THE LATEST VERSION OF THE DRAFT REGULATIONS APPARENTLY IN RESPONSE TO THE INDUSTRY'S COMMENT. END NOTE.) THE INDUSTRY UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 WARSAW 009084

STATE FOR EUR/NCE (WOJTASIEWICZ, PHILPOT), EB/ATP DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USTR (SCHER, RDRISCOLL, NOVELLI) USDA FOR U/SEC SCHUMACHER, FAS FOR OA/GALVIN, ITP/MACKE, HESSE, AVIDOR, OFSTA/SLUTSKY, FAA/BURST POSTS FOR AGRICULTURE AND ECON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SENV,EAGR, ETAD, PL
SUBJECT: POLAND'S DRAFT GMO REGULATIONS ALARM FOOD AND BIOTECH INDUSTRY

WOULD LIKE TEXT TO BE CHANGED TO ELIMINATE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITION LABELING IN CASES OF APPROVED ADDITIVES TO FOOD PRODUCTS. THE INDUSTRY WOULD LIKE THE REQUIREMENT TO INCLUDE A STATEMENT DEFINING THE, "...GEOGRAPHICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE PRODUCT CAN BE USED ..." TO BE DELETED. THE INDUSTRY WOULD LIKE THE REQUIREMENT THAT PACKAGING OF A PRODUCT CONSISTING OF GMOS OR THEIR ELEMENTS SHOULD BE MARKED WITH "GENETICALLY MODIFIED PRODUCT" ON A CONTRAST BACKGROUND. MONSANTO NOTED THAT CONTRAST BACKGROUND IS NOT REQUIRED BY THE EU.

--GRACE PERIOD TOO SHORT. THE PPPP COMMENTED THAT THE NEW REGULATIONS SHOULD NOT COME INTO EFFECT FOR 12 MONTHS AFTER THEY ARE APPROVED AND PUBLISHED RATHER THAN THE 6 MONTH GRACE PERIOD PROPOSED IN THE DRAFT REGULATIONS.

6. IT APPEARS THAT FEW OF THE INDUSTRY'S COMMENTS WERE HEEDED. MONSANTO SUSPECTS THAT THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT INTENTIONALLY LIMITED DISTRIBUTION OF THE LATEST VERSION OF THE DRAFT REGULATION TO THE INDUSTRY BUT DISTRIBUTED IT BROADLY TO ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS TO SKEW THE COMMENTS.

7. AG COUNSELOR AND AG ATTACHE MET WITH MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE NEW REGULATIONS. THE MINISTRY OFFICIAL WE SPOKE WITH SAID THE MINISTRY WAS UNABLE TO INCLUDE A THRESHOLD LEVEL FOR LABELING IN THE REGULATIONS BECAUSE THE AMENDMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW REQUIRING DEVELOPMENT OF GMO REGULATIONS DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR SUCH A PROVISION. HE WENT ON TO ADD THAT THE MINISTRY RECOGNIZES THAT A NEW AMENDMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IS NECESSARY. THE AMENDMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE PREPARED IN 2000 AND IMPLEMENTED IN 2001. IN THE MEANTIME, THE GMO REGULATIONS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE APPROVED IN SEPTEMBER WILL APPLY. AGCOUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT

INTRODUCING CURRENT REGULATIONS AND THEN CHANGING THEM IN A YEAR WOULD RESULT IN UNNECESSARY COSTS TO FIRMS PRODUCING IN POLAND. ALTHOUGH THE MINENVIRON REPRESENTATIVE AGREED WITH THIS POINT, HE SAW NO WAY TO AVOID THE SITUATION.

8. COMMENT: IF ADOPTED AS CURRENTLY PROPOSED, THE DRAFT REGULATIONS WOULD PRESENT PROBLEMS FOR THE DOMESTIC FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY COMPANIES OPERATING IN POLAND, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO PACKAGING AND LABELING. U.S. COMPANIES EXPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO POLAND WOULD FACE THE SIMILAR PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON TRADE. THE MOST DAMAGING ASPECTS OF THE DRAFT REGULATIONS APPEAR TO BE THE LACK OF A THRESHOLD LEVEL OF GMO CONTENT AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR DETAILS ON, "..CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE PRODUCTS CAN BE RELEASED INTO THE ENVIRONMENT." TO DATE, POLAND HAS NOT NOTIFIED THE WTO ON THE NEW REGULATIONS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE WILL BE NO TRADE IMPACT ASSOCIATED WITH THE REGULATIONS. END COMMENT.

FRIED

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 02
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 02

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TOR: 990914070855 M4046571
<^TOR>990914071025 M4046575

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LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
OSRI: RUEHOT
DTG: 161950Z SEP 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9590
INFO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0656
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHHK/ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCNCAN/ALCAN COLLECTIVE
SUBJ: CANADA: GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS - GREENPEACE
TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 003353

DEPARTMENT FOR G, E, EB, OES, WHA/CAN

DEPARTMENT PASS USTR FOR DEPUTY USTR ESSERMAN AND MARY RYCKMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, EAGR, ETRD, GM
SUBJ: CANADA: GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS - GREENPEACE ENTERS FRAY, HIGHER PROFILE IN CABINET, GOC AGENCIES CONFIDENT

REF: (A) OTTAWA 2995 (B) BONN 3209

1. THIS IS A SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED CABLE. NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION, OR DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE USG CHANNELS OR TO PUBLIC MEDIA SOURCES, INCLUDING THE INTERNET.

SUMMARY
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2. (SBU) GREENPEACE AND ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR PUBLIC-AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN ORDER TO ENGAGE CANADIAN CONSUMERS IN THE DEBATE OVER THE SAFETY OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODSTUFFS. CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEIR EXISTING ACTION PLANS REMAIN CAPABLE OF ANSWERING WHATEVER GREENPEACE HAS IN STORE. NEVERTHELESS THE GOC IS CONSIDERING A REFINEMENT TO THEIR LABELING POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR GM FOODSTUFFS. THIS EFFORT IS STILL IN ITS NASCENT STAGES AND WHAT FORM THIS REFINEMENT WILL EVENTUALLY TAKE WILL DEPEND ON STAKEHOLDER VIEWS. THE NEW POLICY AND GUIDELINES WILL, IN

ANY CASE, STILL REFLECT THE PRINCIPLE OF VOLUNTARY LABELING FOR GM FOODS. ALTHOUGH SOME CABINET MINISTERS HAVE BEGUN TO SUGGEST THAT IN THE INTEREST OF CONSUMER PROTECTION LABELING FOR GM FOOD BE MANDATORY, THESE SENTIMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ATTENUATED AS THESE MINISTERS ARE EDUCATED ON THE GM ISSUE BY GOC AGENCIES AND THE DISCUSSION MOVES INTO FULL CABINET.

GREENPEACE JOINS THE FOOD FIGHT
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3. (U) IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 1999 GREENPEACE COMMENCED A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN CANADA THAT IS EXPECTED TO TARGET FOOD PROCESSORS AND GROCERY STORES, IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE CONSUMER AWARENESS OF THE PUTATIVE DANGERS OF GENETICALLY-MODIFIED FOODS. THE GOAL, ACCORDING TO GREENPEACE'S GENETIC-ENGINEERING CAMPAIGN MANAGER IN TORONTO, MICHEAL KHOO, IS TO FORCE GMO FOOD FROM THE STORE SHELVES - AN EFFORT AT WHICH GREENPEACE SUCCEEDED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

4. (U) HITHERTO, IN CANADA, THE ANTI-GMO TRENCHES HAVE BEEN MANNED LARGELY BY TROOPS FROM THE SIERRA CLUB OF CANADA AND THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS (A VOCIFEROUS ANTI-FREE TRADE ORGANIZATION) WITH THE CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (CBC) OCCASIONALLY BACKING THEM UP. INDEED A SERIES OF REPORTS BY CBC SCIENCE JOURNALIST (AND ONE-TIME GENETICS PROFESSOR) DAVID SUZUKI ON BIOTECHNOLOGY DURING THE EARLY SUMMER OF 1999 TOOK A TRANSPARENTLY ANTI-GMO STANCE.

5.(U) COMMENT: GIVEN GREENPEACE'S WORLD-WIDE EXPERIENCE IN THE GMO DEBATE, A)ARA 12). IN CONCERT WITH EXISTING EFFORTS, GREENPEACE WILL ACT AS A FORCE-MULTIPLIER WHICH WILL HEIGHTEN PUBLIC CONCERN AND INTENSIFY THE DEBATE BY TAKING DIRECT ACTION AT THE STOREFRONT AND CHECK-OUT COUNTER IN THE BATTLE FOR CONSUMER HEARTS AND MINDS. END COMMENT.

GOC DEPARTMENTS REMAIN CONFIDENT
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6. (SBU) ACCORDING TO A CONTACT AT THE CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY (CFIA), THE GREENPEACE INITIATIVE HAS PRODUCED NO NEW CONCERNS AT THAT ORGANIZATION. THE CFIA, IN CONCERT WITH OTHER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE "FOOD BIOTECHNOLOGY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK", ALREADY PROVIDE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MATERIAL FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION ON THE CFIA WEBSITE (WWW.CFIA-ACIA.AGR.CA). OUR INTERLOCUTOR AT THE CFIA EXPECTS THAT HIS ORGANIZATION WILL SIMPLY BECOME BUSIER TAILORING THE MESSAGE (I.E., GM FOOD IS SAFE, AND VOLUNTARY LABELING IS ADEQUATE) TO A BROADER SET OF CONSUMERS.

7. (U) OUR CFIA INTERLOCTOR NOTED THAT AS PART OF THE COMMUNICATIONS EFFORT THE "FOOD BIOTECHNOLOGY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK" WILL DISTRIBUTE PAMPHLETS WITHIN STORES WITH THE INTENTION OF PROVIDING A SOBER COUNTERPOINT TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY GREENPEACE.

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 OTTAWA 003353

DEPARTMENT FOR G, E, EB, OES, WHA/CAN

DEPARTMENT PASS USTR FOR DEPUTY USTR ESSERMAN AND MARY RYCKMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, EAGR, ETRD, GM
SUBJ: CANADA: GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS - GREENPEACE ENTERS FRAY, HIGHER PROFILE IN CABINET, GOC AGENCIES CONFIDENT

8. (U) HEALTH CANADA (WHICH IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CFIA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LABELING OF FOODSTUFFS) IS ALSO CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN DEAL WITH THE HEIGHTENED PROFILE WHICH GREENPEACE WILL BRING TO THE GM FOOD DEBATE. HEALTH CANADA'S EFFORT WILL FOCUS ON EXPLAINING TO CONSUMERS THE PROCESS FOR ASSESSING FOOD SAFETY. THE PRINCIPAL MEDIUM FOR INFORMATION DISSEMINATION WILL BE THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

BUT, POLICY ON GM FOOD LABELING BEING REVIEWED
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9. (U) THE CFIA (ALONG WITH HEALTH CANADA AND THEIR FOOD INDUSTRY PARTNERS) IS CONSIDERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE REFINED POLICY WITH RESPECT TO LABELING OF GM FOODSTUFFS. THIS INITIATIVE HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS IN RESPONSE TO A QUALITATIVE SURVEY OF CANADIAN CONSUMERS ON THE QUESTION OF "CONSUMER INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF VOLUNTARY LABEL MESSAGES AS THEY COULD BE APPLIED TO FOODS DERIVED THROUGH BIOTECHNOLOGY." THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED IN APRIL 1999 FOR THE CFIA BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NUTRITION OF OTTAWA, IT IS AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING URL:

WWW.CFIA-ACIA.AGR.CA/ENGLISH/PPC/BIOTECH/NINREPOR.HTM

10.(U) IN CANADA THE CURRENT GM FOOD LABELING POLICY, WHICH IS VOLUNTARY, ALLOWS A MANUFACTURER TO LABEL GM FOODSTUFFS AS THEY WISH PROVIDING THAT THE LABELING IS NOT MISLEADING OR FALSE.

11. (U) ACCORDING TO CFIA AND HC, THE REFINED POLICY AND GUIDELINES WILL STILL REFLECT THE GOC PRINCIPLE THAT MANDATORY LABELING OF FOOD WILL BE BASED ON HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS WHILE LABELING OF GM FOODS WILL REMAIN VOLUNTARY. OUR INTERLOCUTOR AT CFIA WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO TIMELINE ESTABLISHED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFINED POLICY AND GUIDELINES, AND THAT BECAUSE ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS MUST AGREE ON THE MANNER OF THE REFINEMENT, THE FINAL FORM OF THE POLICY AND GUIDELINES IS HARD TO PREDICT. OUR INTERLOCUTOR DID SPECULATE, HOWEVER, THAT THE REVIEW MIGHT SIMPLY ESTABLISH SOME GUIDELINES FOR WHICH PHRASES MIGHT BE USED AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES. OUR CFIA INTERLOCUTOR NOTED THAT INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES MAY ANNOUNCE IN LATE SEPTEMBER

THAT A "LABELING REVIEW" PROCESS IS BEING UNDERTAKEN.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND CABINET NOW INTERESTED

12. (SBU) OUR INTERLOCUTOR AT HC TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE GREENPEACE INITIATIVE HAS CAPTURED THE ATTENTION OF MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS AND AS A RESULT THEIR OFFICE HAS BECOME ENGAGED IN RESPONDING TO INFORMATION REQUESTS FROM THESE QUARTERS. ALSO, STAFF IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (THE POLITICAL EXECUTIVE WHICH SERVES PRIME MINISTER CHRETIEN) HAS SHOWN GREAT INTEREST ON THE SUBJECT OF GM FOODS AND HAS RECEIVED SEVERAL BRIEFINGS ON THE PROCESS OF FOOD SAFETY ASSESSMENT.

13. (SBU) OUR INTERLOCUTOR AT HC ALSO NOTED THAT DURING A BRIEFING LAST WEEK ON FOOD SAFETY ASSESSMENT PROVIDED TO A SUBGROUP OF CABINET MINISTERS, SOME OF THESE CABINET MINISTERS NOTED THEIR INTEREST IN MANDATORY LABELING OF GM FOODS "AS A FORM OF CONSUMER PROTECTION." OUR INTERLOCUTOR WOULD NOT ELABORATE ON WHOM PRECISELY WAS INVOLVED BUT HE CHARACTERIZED THE "PUSH FOR LABELING" AS COMING FROM "SOCIAL PORTFOLIO" MINISTERS. (COMMENT: PRESUMABLY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE WOULD NOT BE INCLUDED UNDER THIS RUBRIC, AND WHEREAS THE MINISTER OF HEALTH MIGHT BE, EMBOFF DID NOT GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS MINISTER WAS ONE OF THOSE MAKING THE SUGGESTION. END COMMENT.) OUR INTERLOCUTOR ADDED THAT HE EXPECTS THAT FURTHER DISCUSSION IN FULL CABINET WILL ATTENUATE THIS SENTIMENT, AND THAT AS A CONSEQUENCE THERE WILL BE NO MOVE AWAY FROM A VOLUNTARY LABELING POLICY FOR GM FOODS.

COMMENT

14. (U) THE CONCERN FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN CABINET IS NOT UNEXPECTED AND
UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 03 OTTAWA 003353

DEPARTMENT FOR G, E, EB, OES, WHA/CAN

DEPARTMENT PASS USTR FOR DEPUTY USTR ESSERMAN AND MARY RYCKMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, EAGR, ETRD, GM
SUBJ: CANADA: GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS - GREENPEACE ENTERS FRAY, HIGHER PROFILE IN CABINET, GOC AGENCIES CONFIDENT

INDEED IS SIMILAR TO CONCERNS OF THE USG. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY GLICKMAN, FOR EXAMPLE, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT OF GM FOOD SAFETY RECENTLY CALLED FOR A REVIEW OF THE WAY USDA APPROVES GM FOODS.

15. (U) THESE DEVELOPMENTS DO NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE GOC AND USG CONTINUE TO SHARE A COMMON VIEW OF THE UTILITY AND VALUE OF GMO TECHNOLOGY AND GM FOODS, AND THE TWO

COUNTRIES POLICIES IN THIS RESPECT ARE IN HARMONY. THE GOC AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS HAVE MAINTAINED (AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN) A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR USG ANALOGUES AND THERE REMAINS NO NEED TO INTERJECT A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORT INTO THE GMO DEBATE IN CANADA (REF A). END COMMENT.

GIFFIN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 03
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 03
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SSN: 3353
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OSRI: RUEHKO
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ORIG: AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6936
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 5834
INFO: RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0970
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0134
SUBJ: MAFF MINISTER NAKAGAWA PLEDGES GMO EDUCATION - FOR CONSUMERS IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR FOLEY

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

TEXT:

UNCLAS TOKYO 007707

SENSITIVE

STATE PLEASE PASS FOR USTR FOR SCHER, CUTLER, EARP, DWOSKIN
STATE PLEASE PASS FOR FDA FOR MARYANSKI, FLAMM
STATE PLEASE PASS FOR NEC FOR BRAINARD
STATE PLEASE PASS FOR USDOC
STATE FOR E; EAP/J; EB/DCT
GENEVA PLEASE PASS FOR USTR
USDA FOR GLICKMAN, SIDDIQUI, FRAZIER, SCHUMACHER, WOTEKI
USDA FOR FAS/OA/GALVIN; FAS/ITP/SHEIKH, HENKE, DEATON; FAS/FSTSD/SLUTSKY

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, WTRP, JA
SUBJECT: MAFF MINISTER NAKAGAWA PLEDGES GMO EDUCATION - FOR CONSUMERS IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR FOLEY

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. AT A SEPTEMBER 9 LUNCH MEETING HELD AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, AMBASSADOR FOLEY PRESSED MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND FISHERIES (MAFF) MINISTER SHOICHI NAKAGAWA FOR MAFF TO BECOME MORE PRO-ACTIVE IN ASSURING CONSUMERS THAT GMOS ARE SAFE. THE MEETING WAS HELD IN RESPONSE TO RAPIDLY DETERORIATING PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF GMOS IN JAPAN, WHICH HAS LED TO MANY JAPANESE FOOD MANUFACTURERS DECLARING THEY WILL SOON SWITCH TO NON-GM INGREDIENTS. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS, MINISTER NAKAGAWA

AGREED CONSUMER MISPERCEPTIONS ARE SPREADING AND PLEDGED TO FURTHER CONSUMER EDUCATION BY PROVIDING "CORRECT" INFORMATION ABOUT SAFETY. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) AT A SEPTEMBER 9 LUNCH MEETING WITH MINISTER NAKAGAWA HELD AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, AMBASSADOR FOLEY EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT GROWING FEARS TOWARD GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS AMONG CONSUMERS IN JAPAN. HE SAID THE FEARS ARE IRRATIONAL AND EMPHASIZED AN ACTIVE EFFORT BY MAFF TO INFORM CONSUMERS ABOUT SAFETY IS INDISPENSABLE TO REDUCING CONCERNS.

3. (SBU) IN RESPONSE, MINISTER NAKAGAWA SAID THAT WHILE AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY IS IMPORTANT TO JAPAN, THE GOVERNMENT'S MAIN RESPONSIBILITY IS ASSURING SAFETY. HE ADDED IF PRODUCTS ARE FOUND TO BE UNSAFE, THE GOVERNMENT (NOT PRODUCERS) WILL BE BLAMED (FOR ALLOWING COMMERCIALIZATION OF AN UNSAFE PRODUCT).

4. (SBU) TURNING TO MAFF'S PROPOSAL TO REQUIRE LABELING FOR SELECTED GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS, NAKAGAWA SAID THAT PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL IN APRIL, 2001, GIVEN THAT GMOS APPROVED BY THE GOVERMENT OF JAPAN ARE SAFE, MAFF MUST FURTHER EDUCATE CONSUMERS ABOUT THE SAFETY OF GMOS. HOWEVER, NAKAGAWA CAUTIONED AGAINST OVER-EMPHASIZING SAFETY AT THE PRESENT TIME AS CONSUMERS MAY REACT ADVERSELY. HE SAID IT "MAY TAKE TIME" FOR CONSUMERS TO OVERCOME THEIR FEARS, AND CONSUMER EDUCATION MUST BE CONDUCTED "CALMLY" IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE.

5. (SBU) RESPONDING TO MINISTER NAKAGAWA'S COMMENTS ABOUT MAFF'S LABELING PROPOSAL, AMBASSADOR FOLEY EXPRESSED HIS WISH FOR MAFF TO ADOPT VOLUNTARY LABELING. HE SAID MANDATORY LABELING WITHOUT EDUCATION WILL GIVE CONSUMERS THE IMPRESSION GM FOODS ARE UNSAFE.

6. (SBU) TURNING TO THE SITUATION IN THE EU, MINISTER NAKAGAWA MENTIONED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE EU HAVE "GONE TOO FAR" IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO GMOS. NAKAGAWA OPINED THAT WHILE THE EU BEGAN WITH A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH, EU CONSUMERS HAVE ADOPTED AN "IRRATIONAL" AND "UNREALISTIC" VIEW TOWARD THE TECHNOLOGY. BY COMPARISON, NAKAGAWA SAID, MOST CONSUMERS IN JAPAN UNDERSTAND THAT GMO FOODS ARE SAFE BUT SOME FEAR THE TECHNOLOGY AND ARE NOT SATISIFIED WITH MAFF'S LABELING PROPOSAL (I.E. THE DECISION TO LIMIT MANDATORY LABELING ONLY TO FOODS WHICH CONTAIN DETECTABLE FOREIGN DNA, WHICH EXCLUDES OILS AND MANY OTHER GM FOODS). NAKAGAWA CONCLUDED BY SAYING MAFF NEEDS TO PROMOTE CONSUMER EDUCATION BY PROVIDING "CORRECT INFORMATION" ABOUT THE SAFETY OF GMOS.
LAFLEUR

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 7707

TOR: 990917031823 M4053390

DIST:

SIT: HUSO KEITH LIEBERTHAL OSIUS PRITCHARD
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHOTA3413 2632005-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 202005Z SEP 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
OSRI: RUEHOT
DTG: 202005Z SEP 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9631
INFO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0661
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHHK/ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCNCAN/ALCAN COLLECTIVE
SUBJ: CANADA: GMO LABELING PROJECT ANNOUNCED
TEXT:

UNCLAS OTTAWA 003413

DEPARTMENT FOR G, E, EB, OES, WHA/CAN

DEPARTMENT PASS USTR FOR DEPUTY USTR ESSERMAN AND MARY RYCKMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, EAGR, ETRD, GM
SUBJ: CANADA: GMO LABELING PROJECT ANNOUNCED

REF: OTTAWA 3353

1. AS ANTICIPATED IN OUR REFTEL, LATE ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1999 THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF GROCERY DISTRIBUTORS (CCGD) AND THE CANADIAN GENERAL STANDARDS BOARD (CGSB) ANNOUNCED A PROJECT TO DEVELOP A "CANADIAN STANDARD FOR THE VOLUNTARY LABELING OF FOODS DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY". THE CANADIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LYLE VAN CLIEF, MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CCGD AND CGSB AND HAS PROMISED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE LABELING PROJECT THROUGH HIS DEPARTMENT'S AGRI-FOOD TRADE 2000 PROGRAM.

2. AS A COROLLARY, A REPORTER WHO INTERVIEWED THE MINISTER ON SEPTEMBER 17 TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE MINISTER HAS NOT RULED OUT MANDATORY LABELING STANDARDS AS A FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, ALTHOUGH THE MINISTER (WITHOUT BEING PROMPTED) OBSERVED THAT BRITAIN HAS FOUND MANDATORY STANDARDS IMPOSSIBLE TO ENFORCE.

3. THE CGSB WILL MANAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STANDARD ON BEHALF OF THE CCGD. THE STANDARD WILL BE DEVELOPED WITH PARTICIPATION FROM CONSUMER GROUPS, FOOD COMPANIES,

PRODUCERS (I.E., FARMERS), INTEREST GROUPS, AND GOVERNMENT REGULATORS THROUGH THE FORMATION OF A STANDARDS COMMITTEE WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN MEETING IN OCTOBER 1999. NO TIMELINE HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT.

4. THE CCGD REPRESENTS ABOUT 80& OF MAJOR FOOD RETAILERS IN CANADA AND IS INVOLVED IN PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY. OTHER MAJOR INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS HAVE INDICATED THEIR FULL ENDORSEMENT OF THE INITIATIVE INCLUDING THE FOOD AND CONSUMER PRODUCTS MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (WHOSE MEMBERS PROVIDE ABOUT 75& OF THE FOOD AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE TO CANADIAN CONSUMERS) AND THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT GROCERS (WHICH REPRESENTS SMALL, OFTEN RURAL, GROCERY RETAILERS).

5. THE CGSB IS AN "ACCREDITED STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION" WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. THE CGSB "DEVELOPS VOLUNTARY STANDARDS THROUGH CONSENSUS", AND DOES HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE IN THE REALM OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS - IN JUNE 1999 THE CGSB COMPLETED A NATIONAL STANDARD FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE WHICH CLARIFIES JUST WHAT ORGANIC MEANS. THE NEW ORGANIC AGRICULTURE STANDARD PROHIBITS THE USE OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED OR MODIFIED ORGANISMS.

6. MEANWHILE, IN RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT, GREENPEACE'S GENETIC ENGINEERING CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR, MICHEAL KHOO, DECLARED THAT "LABELING IS NOT A SOLUTION. IF THE FOOD IS NOT SAFE, IT SHOULD BE TAKEN OFF THE SHELF." KHOO TOLD EMBOFF THAT GREENPEACE (AND ITS SISTER NGOS WITH WHOM IT HAS TEAMED UP ON THIS ISSUE) WILL LIKELY NOT TAKE PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY STANDARD - BUT IF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE WERE ACCEPTABLE MIGHT CONSIDER PLAYING A ROLE. KHOO NOTED ALSO THAT THE ANTI-GMO PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN IN CANADA WILL BEGIN IN EARNEST IN EARLY OCTOBER 1999.

GIFFIN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 3413

TOR: 990920170017 M4057568

DIST:

SIT: BOWLES SANDALOW
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHFRA5125 2651612-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 221612Z SEP 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
OSRI: RUEHFR
DTG: 221612Z SEP 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4328
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1176
SUBJ: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S
TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 PARIS 015125

USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

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GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
EU POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
CONGEN MILAN PASS ATO
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
SUBJECT: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S

REF: PARIS 012239

1. SUMMARY: ON SEPTEMBER 16, THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED TO ISI SIDDIQUI, SPECIAL TRADE ADVISOR TO SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN, CONCERNS BY FRENCH OFFICIALS THAT U.S.-FRENCH DIFFERENCES ON GMOS MUST BE MANAGED CAREFULLY TO AVOID A SERIOUS CONFLICT IN TRADE RELATIONS. MARION GUILLOU, DIRECTOR FOR FOOD AT THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, TOLD SIDDIQUI AT A SEPARATE MEETING THAT REVISION OF THE EU DIRECTIVE GOVERNING THE APPROVAL PROCESS NEEDS TO CONSIDER TRACEABILITY AND LABELING. SIDDIQUI EXPLAINED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR THE U.S. IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADEQUATE THRESHOLD LEVEL FOR

NON-APPROVED VARIETIES BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, WHICH IS WORKING ON A PROPOSAL. FRENCH SCIENTISTS EXPLAINED DIFFERENCES IN THE U.S. AND FRENCH APPROACHES TO RISK ASSESSMENT OF GMO'S AND THE FRENCH NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TESTING. END SUMMARY

2. AT A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, SIDDIQUI REVIEWED U.S. PRIORITIES AND THE U.S. VIEWS ON CURRENT THINKING IN EUROPE ON GMOS. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE FRENCH HAVE TIED AGRICULTURE AND CULTURE TOGETHER, AND THAT THE DEBATE ON FOOD SAFETY IN FRANCE HAS COME TO BE DEFINED AS A CULTURAL ISSUE WITH LITTLE ROOM FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MANEUVER. THE DCM OUTLINED POINTS OF U.S. PRIORITY, INCLUDING THE NEED TO PREVENT BACKSLIDING ON APPROVALS, THE NEED FOR REGULATIONS THAT SET OUT APPROPRIATE LABELING REQUIREMENTS, AND THE NEED TO KEEP CULTURAL ISSUES SEPARATE FROM FOOD SAFETY ISSUES.

3. AT THE LUNCH MEETING, THE FRENCH PARTICIPANTS SAID THAT FRANCE'S PRIMARY GOAL IN THE EFFORT TO FIX THE EU AUTHORIZATION PROCESS FOR GMOS IS TO SIMPLIFY DIRECTIVE 90/220. THE FINAL STEP IN THE APPROVAL PROCESS, IN WHICH THE DOSSIER OF THE APPLICANT IS RETURNED TO THE SPONSORING MEMBER STATE FOR ONE LAST STAMP OF APPROVAL, IS UNNECESSARY AND SHOULD BE ELIMINATED. THE INCLUSION OF THIS STEP IN 90/220 RAISES THE ISSUE OF THE RELATIVE AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES. THIS QUESTION IS CURRENTLY BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE.

4. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH THRESHOLD TOLERANCES FOR GMOS IN NON-GMO SHIPMENTS TO EUROPE, AND FOR NON-EU-APPROVED VARIETIES THAT MAY BE FOUND IN SHIPMENTS OF EU-APPROVED VARIETIES. SIDDIQUI PROPOSED THREE TO FIVE PERCENT, WHILE GUILLOU MENTIONED ONE TO THREE PERCENT. SIDDIQUI MADE THE POINT THAT THE U.S. WANTS TO RESUME SHIPMENTS OF EU-APPROVED VARIETIES OF CORN, BUT THAT IN ORDER TO DO SO IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THRESHOLD TOLERANCE LEVELS.

5. THE FRENCH SEE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE HORMONE ISSUE AND THE GMO ISSUE. U.S. RETALIATORY TARIFFS ON PRODUCTS OF FRENCH GASTRONOMY, AS THEY ARE REFERRED TO HERE, HAS HARDENED FARMERS AND SOME OF THE PUBLIC AGAINST FURTHER LIBERALIZATION OF TRADE IN FOOD PRODUCTS.

6. SIDDIQUI SAID THAT THE U.S. HAS WAITED 18 YEARS FOR THE EU TO ALLOW U.S. BEEF IMPORTS. GUILLOU RESPONDED THAT THE FRENCH WAITED A LONG TIME ON TOMATOES (NOTE: WHICH NOW MAY BE EXPORTED FROM BRITTANY BUT NO OTHER PART OF FRANCE. END NOTE) AND ON PORK, WHICH SHOULD BE COVERED UNDER THE U.S.-EU VETERINARY EQUIVALENCY AGREEMENT.

DURING TH
E DISCUSSION OF THE EQUIVALENCY
AGREEMENT, SIGNED IN JULY IN BRUSSELS, THERE WAS
AGREEMENT THAT A U.S.-EU WORKING GROUP SHOULD BE
ESTABLISHED TO GET THE PROCESS MOVING AND TO BEGIN
UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 05 PARIS 015125

USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY
SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL;
ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER;
FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT;
OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER;
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EU POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
CONGEN MILAN PASS ATO
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
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WORK ON IMPLEMENTATION.

7. THE MEETING AT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MINAG) CONSISTED OF A SERIES OF PRESENTATIONS BY FRENCH SCIENTISTS AND MINAG OFFICIALS OF FRANCE'S APPROACH TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE GMO ISSUE. SEE PARAGRAPH 22 FOR FULL NAMES AND TITLES OF PARTICIPANTS.

8. THE FIRST PRESENTATION WAS MADE BY PROFESSORS BERNARD CHEVASSUS AND MARC FELLOUS OF THE INSTITUTE PASTEUR AND THE COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING (CGB) WHO SAID THAT THE FUNCTION OF THE CGB IS TO PROVIDE SCIENTIFIC RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR GMOS AS A CLASS. CHEVASSUS NOTED THAT THERE ARE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND U.S. SYSTEMS FOR EVALUATING GMOS, AND THERE ARE DIFFERENCES. THE CGB DOES NOT LOOK AT EACH GM VARIETY SEPARATELY, BUT RATHER IS ENGAGED IN ANALYZING THE QUESTION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. (NOTE: THAT IS, THE FRENCH APPROACH TO THE SCIENCE OF GMO APPROVALS TREATS GMOS AS A CLASS FOR APPROVAL PURPOSES. END NOTE) THE CGB ASSESSES GMOS ACCORDING TO WHETHER THEIR INTENDED USE IS EXPERIMENTAL OR COMMERCIAL. IT CREATES A GLOBAL CONSTRUCT WITHIN WHICH THE ASSESSMENT WILL TAKE PLACE. THIS FRAMEWORK MUST BE SIMPLE AND CLEAR. IN THIS LAST WAY IT DIFFERS FROM THE U.S. FRAMEWORK (NOTE: THE U.S. SYSTEM RELIES ON AN ASSORTMENT OF REGULATIONS ISSUED BY VARIOUS USG AGENCIES. END NOTE).

9. THE TWO FRENCH SCIENTISTS NOTED THAT THE U.S. AND THE EU USE THE SAME TOXILOGICAL CRITERIA, E.G., THE SAME METHODS FOR FORECASTING ALLERGENICITY. THE U.S.-FRENCH DIFFERENCE IN THIS CASE IS THAT THE FRENCH INSIST THAT AVAILABLE METHODS OF TOXILOGICAL ASSESSMENT ARE INSUFFICIENT FOR DETERMINING TOXICITY WITH CERTAINTY, WHILE THE U.S. RELIES ON THOSE METHODS TO APPROVE NEW PRODUCTS FOR COMMERCIALIZATION. FRENCH EXPERTS THINK THAT DATABASES ARE NOT LARGE ENOUGH, AND IN VITRO METHODS OF DETERMINING THE PROPERTIES OF THE GM PROTEIN ARE NOT YET WELL ENOUGH DEVELOPED, TO GIVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN THE RESULTS. IN THEIR ASSESSMENTS, FRENCH SCIENTISTS USE THE INTERNATIONALLY-ACCEPTED CONCEPT OF SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE, AS DO U.S. SCIENTISTS. MANY MORE TESTS MUST BE DONE ON ANIMALS, PARTICULARLY ON SPECIES CLOSE TO MAN, TO DETERMINE WHETHER GMOS ARE IN FACT SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT TO TRADITIONAL PLANTS. THE FRENCH HAVE SOME STUDIES IN PROGRESS AS PART OF THEIR EFFORT TO EVALUATE THE SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE QUESTION. ONE MAJOR POINT IS STANDARDIZATION OF TESTS. EXPERTS SAY THEY CAN DO THE TESTS, BUT THAT INTERPRETATION IS HARDLY VALID IN THE ABSENCE OF STANDARDIZATION OF TEST PROTOCOLS.

10. ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIDE, THE FRENCH NOTED THAT BIOVIGILANCE LEADS INTO THE TRACEABILITY QUESTION. (NOTE: THEY DID NOT GIVE EXAMPLES, NOR DID THEY EVER DEFINE TRACEABILITY, BUT FROM THIS PRESENTATION IT WAS CLEAR THAT TRACEABILITY IS ABOVE ALL AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION. THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE CURRENT U.S. UNDERSTANDING OF THE FRENCH VIEW OF TRACEABILITY AS PART OF THE FOOD SAFETY ISSUE. END NOTE) ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS, THE U.S. AND THE EU HAVE SOME SIMILARITIES AND SOME DIFFERENCES. WE ALL HANDLE NON-TARGET SPECIES THE SAME WAY. (NOTE: THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY STUDY. END NOTE) INCLUDING DISSEMINATION OF POLLEN AND RESISTANCE OF THE HARVEST. THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR APPROACHES APPEARS IN THE AREA OF GENE DISSEMINATION TO THE SAME OR COMPATIBLE SPECIES. MANY FRENCH SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT THE FORECAST OF WHAT HAPPENS TO GENES RELEASED INTO THE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT FULLY DEVELOPED IN EXISTING

USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
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MODELS. FOR GENES OF TRADITIONAL PLANTS SOWN EVERY YEAR, WE ALL AGREE. BUT FOR RAPESEED AND SUGAR BEETS, WHOSE SEEDS LAST A LONG TIME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO DISAGREE (NOTE: THE FRENCH LOOK AT SEEDS OF LONG PERSISTENCE AS A SEPARATE GROUP REQUIRING DIFFERENT FORECASTING EVALU
ATIONS. END
NOTE)

11. THE APPEARANCE OF A RESISTANT INSECT OR EVEN A RESISTANT PLANT IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. THERE EXIST A LOT OF STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF RESISTANT SPECIES IN THE ENVIRONMENT. THE FRENCH VIEW IS THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY HYPOTHESES HERE, TOO MANY ASSUMPTIONS, AND NOT ENOUGH ACTUAL WORK BEING DONE.

12. ON OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF GMOS, THE FRENCH ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE FRAMEWORK THAT IS BEING USED (BY THE U.S.). WE NEED A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT, NOT JUST CASE-BY-CASE SCENARIOS. THIS WILL REQUIRE LONG-TERM MONITORING. THEY FEEL THERE NEEDS TO BE ANOTHER STEP BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE AND COMMERCIALIZATION. RIGHT NOW, THERE IS A BIG HOLE BETWEEN THE FIELD TESTING STAGE AND CONSUMPTION OF THE FINAL PRODUCTS. THIS HOLE IS TO BE FILLED BY TRACEABILITY. BUT NO EXAMPLES WERE GIVEN.

13. SIDDIQUI REPLIED THAT U.S. SCIENTISTS HAVE DEVELOPED GOOD INFORMATION ON REFUGIA. OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR REGULATION OF GMOS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH. THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY STUDY, FOR EXAMPLE, TRIGGERED MORE U.S. RESEARCH. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE GLICKMAN HAS SAID THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO INCREASE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

14. SIDDIQUI THEN ASKED ABOUT THE FRENCH SCIENTISTS' RESULTS: IN ANY OF THE FRENCH STUDIES HAVE THERE EVER BEEN FOUND ANY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OR ON HUMAN HEALTH?

15. FELLOUS REPLIED THAT NO NEGATIVE EFFECTS HAVE BEEN FOUND YET, BUT THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL.
UNCLAS SECTION 04 OF 05 PARIS 015125

USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL;

ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER;
FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT;
OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER;
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STATE PASS USTR
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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
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INCLUDE THESE PRODUCTS. FRANCE WANTS TO ELIMINATE THE FINAL STEP UNDER THE CURRENT PROCESS, WHICH IS THE RETURN OF THE EU-APPROVED DOSSIER TO THE SPONSORING COUNTRY FOR A FINAL OK. FRANCE'S POSITION IS THAT THIS STEP IS UNNECESSARY, BUT THIS OPINION IS NOT SHARED BY ALL MEMBER STATES.

18. TRACEABILITY IS DEFINED AS WHAT WILL FILL THE HOLE THAT EXISTS BETWEEN PLANTING OF GMOS AND CONSUMERS' SEEING THE PRODUCTS ON THEIR SUPERMARKET SHELVES. ON TRACEABILITY, FRANCE'S POSITION IS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY EU CONSUMER GROUPS. JOINT GOF-PRIVATE SECTOR WORK IS BEING DONE TO DECIDE HOW TO PUT A TRACEABILITY SYSTEM INTO PLACE. AN IMPORTANT POINT THAT SEPARATES U.S. AND EU VIEWS ON TRACEABILITY IS THAT FRANCE'S POSITION IS THAT THE BASIS OF TRACEABILITY MUST BE THE GENETIC TRANSFORMATION EVENT ITSELF, AND NOT JUST THE INCLUSION OR NOT OF A GMO IN A FINAL FOOD PRODUCT. (NOTE: AT THE END OF THE MEETING, WHEN SIDDIQUI PRONOUNCED HIMSELF DISCOURAGED, HE WAS REFERRING PARTLY TO THIS CONCEPTION OF TRACEABILITY. MANY DIFFERENT VARIETIE
S OF CORN,
FOR EXAMPLE, CAN BE CREATED FROM ONE TRANSFORMATION EVENT. IN GENERAL, ONE EVENT WILL RESTRICT A FAR GREATER NUMBER OF PRODUCTS THAN WILL RESTRICTING ONE VARIETY. END NOTE) IT IS CONSIDERED BY THE FRENCH THAT THEIR FOCUS ON THE TRANSFORMATION EVENT, AS OPPOSED TO THE VARIETIES CREATED FROM THE EVENT, WILL SIMPLIFY THE APPROVAL PROCESS. FRANCE'S PRIORITY IS TO MAKE 90/220 SO CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT GET SUED AGAIN.

19. THE CURRENT DEADLOCK IN THE EU ON THE APPROVAL PROCESS EXISTS BECAUSE MEMBER STATES CANNOT AGREE ON THRESHOLD TOLERANCE LEVELS FOR SHIPMENTS OF GMOS AND GMO-CONTAINING PRODUCTS. TESTING METHODS AND TRACEABILITY ARE THE TWO STICKING POINTS. SIDDIQUI NOTED THAT THE LACK OF

DEFINITION OF A THRESHOLD IS A MARKET ACCESS BARRIER, AND IS POSING REAL PROBLEMS FOR THE U.S.

20. GUILLOU STRESSED TO SIDDIQUI THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEPARATE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF GMOS FROM CONSUMERS' REACTIONS. THE TWO ARE DIFFERENT. SHE SAID THAT THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL ON THE THRESHOLD LEVEL IS DUE SOON, AND THAT IN THE MEANTIME NO MEMBER STATE HAS THE RIGHT TO ISSUE REGULATIONS OF ITS OWN. FRENCH COMPANIES WANT A THRESHOLD LEVEL ESTABLISHED ALSO. IT IS NOT A CASE OF THE U.S. VERSUS FRANCE, IT IS RATHER THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT CANNOT MOVE ON THIS POINT UNTIL THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ISSUES ITS PROPOSAL ON THE LEVEL. GUILLOU ASKED SIDDIQUI TO TAKE THE MESSAGE TO THE COMMISSION IN BRUSSELS THAT EVENING, THAT THE U.S. AND FRANCE JOINTLY URGE THE COMMISSION TO MOVE QUICKLY ON THE DECISION ON A PROPOSED THRESHOLD LEVEL.

21. IN CLOSING, THE GLICKMAN/GLAVANY MEETING IN WASHINGTON WAS DISCUSSED AND CONFIRMED (NOVEMBER 8); AND AGREEMENT WAS REACHED TO BEGIN WORKING ON A JOINT REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF SIDDIQUI-GUILLOU MEETINGS ON GMOS.

22. MEETINGS, NAMES AND TITLES OF PARTICIPANTS:
AT MINAG, SIDDIQUI AND GUILLOU:
FOR U.S.:
ISI SIDDIQUI, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO US SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
FRANK PIASON, MINISTER COUNSELOR OF AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS
ALEX THIERMANN, APHIS, BRUSSELS
SALLY MCCAMMON, APHIS, WASHINGTON
SUSAN REID, AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, US EMBASSY

UNCLAS SECTION 05 OF 05 PARIS 015125

USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

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FOR FRANCE:

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

MRS. MARION GUILLOU, DIRECTOR, GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR FOOD
MR. HERVE REVERBORI, CHIEF OF BIOTECHNOLOGY AND FOOD REGULATION
MR. FRANCOIS HERVIEU, BIOTECHNOLOGY REPRESENTATIVE
MR. FRANCOIS DE LA GUERRONNIERE, CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SERVICE
MR. OLIVIER FAURIEL, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BUREAU OF THE AMERICAS AND THE PACIFIC,

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, FINANCE, AND INDUSTRY

MRS. MARIA VENES, REPRESENTATIVE, DIRECTION FOR COMPETITION, CONSUMPTION, AND FRAUD
MR. PATRICE DAUCHEZ, DEPUTY CHIEF OF BUREAU OF FAIRNESS, DIRECTION FOR COMPETITION, CONSUMPTION, AND FRAUD

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MR. FRANCIS COMBROUZE, IN CHARGE OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, POLLUTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTE PASTEUR/COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

PROF. MARK FELLOUS, PRESIDENT, COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING
PROF. BERNARD CHEVASSUS AU LOUIS, VICE PRESIDENT, COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING
LUNCH: U.S.: SIDDIQUI, PIASON. FRANCE: MARION GUILLOU PLUS REMI TOUSSAIN, DIRECTOR, POLICY AND ECONOMICS, MINAG; AND PHILIPPE MAUGUIN, TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR TRADE, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

AT EMBASSY: AMBASSADOR ROHATYN, DCM PEARSON, TRADE ADVISOR SIDDIQUI, AGMINCOUNS PIASON, ECONCOUNS RESSLER, AGATT REID.
ROHATYN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 05
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SIT: BLINKEN DAVIDSON DUNCAN GORDON HAMMONDS HOLTZAPPLE KASS LEE NORLAND SCHAEFER VONLIPSEY
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
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LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 231000Z SEP 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
OSRI: RUEHFR
DTG: 231000Z SEP 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4359
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1182
SUBJ: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S
TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 PARIS 015154

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USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

STATE PASS USTR
STATE PASS FDA
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
EU POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
CONGEN MILAN PASS ATO
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
SUBJECT: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S

REF: PARIS 015125

1. SUMMARY: ON SEPTEMBER 16, THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED TO ISI SIDDIQUI, SPECIAL TRADE ADVISOR TO SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN, CONCERNS BY FRENCH OFFICIALS THAT U.S.-FRENCH DIFFERENCES ON GMOS MUST BE MANAGED CAREFULLY TO AVOID A SERIOUS CONFLICT IN TRADE RELATIONS. MARION GUILLOU, DIRECTOR FOR FOOD AT THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, TOLD SIDDIQUI AT A SEPARATE MEETING THAT REVISION OF THE EU DIRECTIVE GOVERNING THE APPROVAL PROCESS NEEDS TO CONSIDER TRACEABILITY AND LABELING. SIDDIQUI EXPLAINED

THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR THE U.S. IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADEQUATE THRESHOLD LEVEL FOR NON-APPROVED VARIETIES BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, WHICH IS WORKING ON A PROPOSAL. FRENCH SCIENTISTS EXPLAINED DIFFERENCES IN THE U.S. AND FRENCH APPROACHES TO RISK ASSESSMENT OF GMO'S AND THE FRENCH NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TESTING. END SUMMARY

2. AT A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, SIDDIQUI REVIEWED U.S. PRIORITIES AND THE U.S. VIEWS ON CURRENT THINKING IN EUROPE ON GMOS. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE FRENCH HAVE TIED AGRICULTURE AND CULTURE TOGETHER, AND THAT THE DEBATE ON FOOD SAFETY IN FRANCE HAS COME TO BE DEFINED AS A CULTURAL ISSUE WITH LITTLE ROOM FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MANEUVER. THE DCM OUTLINED POINTS OF U.S. PRIORITY, INCLUDING THE NEED TO PREVENT BACKSLIDING ON APPROVALS, THE NEED FOR REGULATIONS THAT SET OUT APPROPRIATE LABELING REQUIREMENTS, AND THE NEED TO KEEP CULTURAL ISSUES SEPARATE FROM FOOD SAFETY ISSUES.

3. AT THE LUNCH MEETING, THE FRENCH PARTICIPANTS SAID THAT FRANCE'S PRIMARY GOAL IN THE EFFORT TO FIX THE EU AUTHORIZATION PROCESS FOR GMOS IS TO SIMPLIFY DIRECTIVE 90/220. THE FINAL STEP IN THE APPROVAL PROCESS, IN WHICH THE DOSSIER OF THE APPLICANT IS RETURNED TO THE SPONSORING MEMBER STATE FOR ONE LAST STAMP OF APPROVAL, IS UNNECESSARY AND SHOULD BE ELIMINATED. THE INCLUSION OF THIS STEP IN 90/220 RAISES THE ISSUE OF THE RELATIVE AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES. THIS QUESTION IS CURRENTLY BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE.

4. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH THRESHOLD TOLERANCES FOR GMOS IN NON-GMO SHIPMENTS TO EUROPE, AND FOR NON-EU-APPROVED VARIETIES THAT MAY BE FOUND IN SHIPMENTS OF EU-APPROVED VARIETIES. SIDDIQUI PROPOSED THREE TO FIVE PERCENT, WHILE GUILLOU MENTIONED ONE TO THREE PERCENT. SIDDIQUI MADE THE POINT THAT THE U.S. WANTS TO RESUME SHIPMENTS OF EU-APPROVED VARIETIES OF CORN, BUT THAT IN ORDER TO DO SO IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THRESHOLD TOLERANCE LEVELS.

5. THE FRENCH SEE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE HORMONE ISSUE AND THE GMO ISSUE. U.S. RETALIATORY TARIFFS ON PRODUCTS OF FRENCH GASTRONOMY, AS THEY ARE REFERRED TO HERE, HAS HARDENED FARMERS AND SOME OF THE PUBLIC AGAINST FURTHER LIBERALIZATION OF TRADE IN FOOD PRODUCTS.

6. SIDDIQUI SAID THAT THE U.S. HAS WAITED TEN YEARS FOR THE EU TO ALLOW U.S. BEEF IMPORTS. GUILLOU RESPONDED THAT THE FRENCH WAITED A LONG TIME ON TOMATOES (NOTE: WHICH NOW MAY BE EXPORTED FROM BRITTANY BUT NO OTHER PART OF FRANCE. END

NOTE) AND ON PORK, WHICH SHOULD BE COVERED UNDER THE U.S.-EU VETERINARY EQUIVALENCY AGREEMENT. DURING THE DISCUSS
ION OF THE EQUIVALENCY
AGREEMENT, SIGNED IN JULY IN BRUSSELS, THERE WAS
UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 05 PARIS 015154

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USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
SUBJECT: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S

AGREEMENT THAT A U.S.-EU WORKING GROUP SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO GET THE PROCESS MOVING AND TO BEGIN WORK ON IMPLEMENTATION.

7. THE MEETING AT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MINAG) CONSISTED OF A SERIES OF PRESENTATIONS BY FRENCH SCIENTISTS AND MINAG OFFICIALS OF FRANCE'S APPROACH TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE GMO ISSUE. SEE PARAGRAPH 22 FOR FULL NAMES AND TITLES OF PARTICIPANTS.

8. THE FIRST PRESENTATION WAS MADE BY PROFESSORS BERNARD CHEVASSUS AND MARC FELLOUS OF THE INSTITUTE PASTEUR AND THE COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING (CGB) WHO SAID THAT THE FUNCTION OF THE CGB IS TO PROVIDE SCIENTIFIC RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR GMOS AS A CLASS. CHEVASSUS NOTED THAT THERE ARE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND U.S. SYSTEMS FOR EVALUATING GMOS, AND THERE ARE DIFFERENCES. THE CGB DOES NOT LOOK AT EACH GM VARIETY SEPARATELY, BUT RATHER IS ENGAGED IN ANALYZING THE QUESTION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. (NOTE: THAT IS, THE FRENCH APPROACH TO THE SCIENCE OF GMO APPROVALS TREATS GMOS AS A CLASS FOR APPROVAL PURPOSES. END NOTE) THE CGB ASSESSES GMOS ACCORDING TO WHETHER THEIR INTENDED USE IS EXPERIMENTAL OR COMMERCIAL. IT CREATES A GLOBAL CONSTRUCT WITHIN WHICH THE ASSESSMENT WILL TAKE PLACE. THIS FRAMEWORK MUST BE SIMPLE AND CLEAR. IN THIS LAST WAY IT DIFFERS FROM THE U.S.

FRAMEWORK (NOTE: THE U.S. SYSTEM RELIES ON AN ASSORTMENT OF REGULATIONS ISSUED BY VARIOUS USG AGENCIES. END NOTE).

9. THE TWO FRENCH SCIENTISTS NOTED THAT THE U.S. AND THE EU USE THE SAME TOXILOGICAL CRITERIA, E.G., THE SAME METHODS FOR FORECASTING ALLERGENICITY. THE U.S.-FRENCH DIFFERENCE IN THIS CASE IS THAT THE FRENCH INSIST THAT AVAILABLE METHODS OF TOXILOGICAL ASSESSMENT ARE INSUFFICIENT FOR DETERMINING TOXICITY WITH CERTAINTY, WHILE THE U.S. RELIES ON THOSE METHODS TO APPROVE NEW PRODUCTS FOR COMMERCIALIZATION. FRENCH EXPERTS THINK THAT DATABASES ARE NOT LARGE ENOUGH, AND IN VITRO METHODS OF DETERMINING THE PROPERTIES OF THE GM PROTEIN ARE NOT YET WELL ENOUGH DEVELOPED, TO GIVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN THE RESULTS. IN THEIR ASSESSMENTS, FRENCH SCIENTISTS USE THE INTERNATIONALLY-ACCEPTED CONCEPT OF SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE, AS DO U.S. SCIENTISTS. MANY MORE TESTS MUST BE DONE ON ANIMALS, PARTICULARLY ON SPECIES CLOSE TO MAN, TO DETERMINE WHETHER GMOS ARE IN FACT SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT TO TRADITIONAL PLANTS. THE FRENCH HAVE SOME STUDIES IN PROGRESS AS PART OF THEIR EFFORT TO EVALUATE THE SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE QUESTION. ONE MAJOR POINT IS STANDARDIZATION OF TESTS. EXPERTS SAY THEY CAN DO THE TESTS, BUT THAT INTERPRETATION IS HARDLY VALID IN THE ABSENCE OF STANDARDIZATION OF TEST PROTOCOLS.

10. ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIDE, THE FRENCH NOTED THAT BIOVIGILANCE LEADS INTO THE TRACEABILITY QUESTION. (NOTE: THEY DID NOT GIVE EXAMPLES, NOR DID THEY EVER DEFINE TRACEABILITY, BUT FROM THIS PRESENTATION IT WAS CLEAR THAT TRACEABILITY IS ABOVE ALL AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION. THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE CURRENT U.S. UNDERSTANDING OF THE FRENCH VIEW OF TRACEABILITY AS PART OF THE FOOD SAFETY ISSUE. END NOTE) ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS, THE U.S. AND THE EU HAVE SOME SIMILARITIES AND SOME DIFFERENCES. WE ALL HANDLE NON-TARGET SPECIES THE SAME WAY. (NOTE: THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY STUDY. END NOTE) INCLUDING DISSEMINATION OF POLLEN AND RESISTANCE OF THE HARVEST. THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 05 PARIS 015154

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USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
SUBJECT: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S

APPROACHES APPEARS IN THE AREA OF GENE DISSEMINATION TO THE SAME OR COMPATIBLE SPECIES. MANY FRENCH SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT THE FORECAST OF WHAT HAPPENS TO GENES RELEASED INTO THE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT FULLY DEVELOPED IN EXISTING MODELS. FOR GENES OF TRADITIONAL PLANTS SOWN EVERY YEAR, WE ALL AGREE. BUT FOR RAPESEED AND SUGAR BEETS, WHOSE SEEDS LAST A LONG TIME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO DISAGREE (NOTE: THE FRENCH LOOK AT SEEDS OF LONG PERSISTENCE AS A SEPARATE GROUP REQUIRING DIFFERENT FORECASTING EVALUATIONS. END NOTE)

11. THE APPEARANCE OF A RESISTANT INSECT OR EVEN A RESISTANT PLANT IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. THERE EXIST A LOT OF STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF RESISTANT SPECIES IN THE ENVIRONMENT. THE FRENCH VIEW IS THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY HYPOTHESES HERE, TOO MANY ASSUMPTIONS, AND NOT ENOUGH ACTUAL WORK BEING DONE.

12. ON OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF GMOS, THE FRENCH ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE FRAMEWORK THAT IS BEING USED (BY THE U.S.). WE NEED A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT, NOT JUST CASE-BY-CASE SCENARIOS. THIS WILL REQUIRE LONG-TERM MONITORING. THEY FEEL THERE NEEDS TO BE ANOTHER STEP BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE AND COMMERCIALIZATION. RIGHT NOW, THERE IS A BIG HOLE BETWEEN THE FIELD TESTING STAGE AND CONSUMPTION OF THE FINAL PRODUCTS. THIS HOLE IS TO BE FILLED BY TRACEABILITY. BUT NO EXAMPLES WERE GIVEN.

13. SIDDIQUI REPLIED THAT U.S. SCIENTISTS HAVE DEVELOPED GOOD INFORMATION ON REFUGIA. OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR REGULATION OF GMOS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH. THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY STUDY, FOR EXAMPLE, TRIGGERED MORE U.S. RESEARCH. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE GLICKMAN HAS SAID THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO INCREASE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

14. SIDDIQUI THEN ASKED ABOUT THE FRENCH SCIENTISTS' RESULTS: IN ANY OF THE FRENCH STUDIES HAVE THERE EVER BEEN FOUND ANY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OR ON HUMAN HEALTH?

15. FELLOUS REPLIED THAT NO NEGATIVE EFFECTS HAVE BEEN FOUND YET, BUT THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL.
UNCLAS SECTION 04 OF 05 PARIS 015154

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USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

STATE PASS USTR
STATE PASS FDA
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
EU POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
CONGEN MILAN PASS ATO
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
SUBJECT: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S

LABELING OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING GMOS, AND TRACEABILITY. THE WEAKNESS OF THE CURRENT DIRECTIVE IS THAT IT CONTAINS NO LANGUAGE ON PRODUCTS MADE FROM OR CONTAINING GMOS, SUCH AS CORNSTARCH OR LECITHIN. FRANCE'S POSITION IS THAT THE SCOPE OF THE DIRECTIVE MUST BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THESE PRODUCTS. FRANCE WANTS TO ELIMINATE THE FINAL STEP UNDER THE CURRENT PROCESS, WHICH IS THE RETURN OF THE EU-APPROVED DOSSIER TO THE SPONSORING COUNTRY FOR A FINAL OK. FRANCE'S POSITION IS THAT THIS STEP IS UNNECESSARY, BUT THIS OPINION IS NOT SHARED BY ALL MEMBER STATES.

18. TRACEABILITY IS DEFINED AS WHAT WILL FILL THE HOLE THAT EXISTS BETWEEN PLANTING OF GMOS AND CONSUMERS' SEEING THE PRODUCTS ON THEIR SUPERMARKET SHELVES. ON TRACEABILITY, FRANCE'S POSITION IS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY EU CONSUMER GROUPS. JOINT GOF-PRIVATE SECTOR WORK IS BEING DONE TO DECIDE HOW TO PUT A TRACEABILITY SYSTEM INTO PLACE. AN IMPORTANT POINT THAT SEPARATES U.S. AND EU VIEWS ON TRACEABILITY IS THAT FRANCE'S POSITION IS THAT THE BASIS OF TRACEABILITY MUST BE THE GENETIC TRANSFORMATION EVENT ITSELF, AND NOT JUST THE INCLUSION OR NOT OF A GMO IN A FINAL FOOD PRODUCT. (NOTE: AT THE END OF THE MEETING, WHEN SIDDIQUI PRONOUNCED HIMSELF DISCOURAGED, HE WAS REFERRING PARTLY TO THIS CONCEPTION OF TRACEABILITY. MANY DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF CORN, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN BE CREATED FROM ONE TRANSFORMATION EVENT. IN GENERAL, ONE EVENT WILL RESTRICT A FAR GREATER NUMBER OF PRODUCTS THAN WILL RESTRICTING ONE VARIETY. END NOTE) IT IS

CONSIDERED BY THE FRENCH THAT THEIR FOCUS ON THE TRANSFORMATION EVENT, AS OPPOSED TO THE VARIETIES CREATED FROM THE EVENT, WILL SIMPLIFY THE APPROVAL PROCESS. FRANCE'S PRIORITY IS TO MAKE 90/220 SO CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT GET SUED AGAIN.

19. THE CURRENT DEADLOCK IN THE EU ON THE APPROVAL PROCESS EXISTS BECAUSE MEMBER STATES CANNOT AGREE ON THRESHOLD TOLERANCE LEVELS FOR SHIPMENTS OF GMOS AND GMO-CONTAINING PRODUCTS. TESTING METHODS AND TRACEABILITY ARE THE TWO STICKING POINTS. SIDDIQUI NOTED THAT THE LACK OF DEFINITION OF A THRESHOLD IS A MARKET ACCESS BARRIER, AND IS POSING REAL PROBLEMS FOR THE U.S.

20. GUILLOU STRESSED TO SIDDIQUI THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEPARATE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF GMOS FROM CONSUMERS' REACTIONS. THE TWO ARE DIFFERENT. SHE SAID THAT THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL ON THE THRESHOLD LEVEL IS DUE SOON, AND THAT IN THE MEANTIME NO MEMBER STATE HAS THE RIGHT TO ISSUE REGULATIONS OF ITS OWN. FRENCH COMPANIES WANT A THRESHOLD LEVEL ESTABLISHED ALSO. IT IS NOT A CASE OF THE U.S. VERSUS FRANCE, IT IS RATHER THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT CANNOT MOVE ON THIS POINT UNTIL THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ISSUES ITS PROPOSAL ON THE LEVEL. GUILLOU ASKED SIDDIQUI TO TAKE THE MESSAGE TO THE COMMISSION IN BRUSSELS THAT EVENING, THAT THE U.S. AND FRANCE JOINTLY URGE THE COMMISSION TO MOVE QUICKLY ON THE DECISION ON A PROPOSED THRESHOLD LEVEL.

21. IN CLOSING, THE GLICKMAN/GLAVANY MEETING IN WASHINGTON WAS DISCUSSED AND CONFIRMED (NOVEMBER 8); AND AGREEMENT WAS REACHED TO BEGIN WORKING ON A JOINT REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF SIDDIQUI-GUILLOU MEETINGS ON GMOS.

22. MEETINGS, NAMES AND TITLES OF PARTICIPANTS:
AT MINAG, SIDDIQUI AND GUILLOU:
FOR U.S.:
ISI SIDDIQUI, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO US SECRETARY OF
UNCLAS SECTION 05 OF 05 PARIS 015154

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USDA FOR OSEC GLICKMAN/SIDDIQUI; UNDER SECRETARY SCHUMACHER; FAS FOR OA/TGALVIN/PSTEEL; ITP/DA/PSHEIKH/JGRUEFF/RMACKE; CMP/DA/JPARKER; FAA/SEBRANEK/GEERKEN; OFSTS/LHARBERT; OFSTS/SLUTSKY/SCHWARTZ; CMP/DA/JPARKER; CMP/DLP/JREDDINGTON; APHIS/OA/CREED; FSIS/BILLY/PRUCHA

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, KSCA, EUN, FR
SUBJECT: U.S./FRENCH EXCHANGE ON GMO'S

AGRICULTURE
FRANK PIASON, MINISTER COUNSELOR OF AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS
ALEX THIERMANN, APHIS, BRUSSELS
SALLY MCCAMMON, APHIS, WASHINGTON
SUSAN REID, AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, US EMBASSY

FOR FRANCE:

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

MRS. MARION GUILLOU, DIRECTOR, GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR FOOD
MR. HERVE REVERBORI, CHIEF OF BIOTECHNOLOGY AND FOOD REGULATION
MR. FRANCOIS HERVIEU, BIOTECHNOLOGY REPRESENTATIVE
MR. FRANCOIS DE LA GUERRONNIERE, CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SERVICE
MR. OLIVIER FAURIEL, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BUREAU OF THE AMERICAS AND THE PACIFIC,

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, FINANCE, AND INDUSTRY

MRS. MARIA VENES, REPRESENTATIVE, DIRECTION FOR COMPETITION, CONSUMPTION, AND FRAUD
MR. PATRICE DAUCHEZ, DEPUTY CHIEF OF BUREAU OF FAIRNESS, DIRECTION FOR COMPETITION, CONSUMPTION, AND FRAUD

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MR. FRANCIS COMBROUZE, IN CHARGE OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, POLLUTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTE PASTEUR/COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

PROF. MARK FELLOUS, PRESIDENT, COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING
PROF. BERNARD CHEVASSUS AU LOUIS, VICE PRESIDENT, COMMISSION ON BIMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

LUNCH: U.S.: SIDDIQUI, PIASON. FRANCE: MARION GUILLOU PLUS REMI TOUSSAIN, DIRECTOR, POLICY AND ECONOMICS, MINAG; AND PHILIPPE MAUGUIN, TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR TRADE, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

AT EMBASSY: AMBASSADOR ROHATYN, DCM PEARSON, TRADE

ADVISOR SIDDIQUI, AGMINCOUNS PIASON, ECONCOUNS
RESSLER, AGATT REID.
ROHATYN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 05
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DIST:
SIT: BLINKEN DAVIDSON DUNCAN GORDON HAMMONDS HOLTZAPPLE LEE SCHAEFER
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHMLA3397 2720838-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 290838Z SEP 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
OSRI: RUEHML
DTG: 290838Z SEP 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5628
INFO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0371
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1098
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3457
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5912
SUBJ: PHILIPPINES - BILL TO REQUIRE GMO LABELING
INTRODUCED IN PHILIPPINE SENATE; BT CORN TESTING OK'ED

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 013397

STATE FOR EB/ATP (BRUNO), OES/ETC (ENRIGHT)

USTR FOR AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS

USTR ALSO FOR S.MURPHY

USDA FOR FAS/ITP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, SENV, TBIO, WTRO, RP
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INTRODUCED IN PHILIPPINE SENATE; BT CORN TESTING OK'ED

REF:

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

SUMMARY
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1. LEGISLATION REQUIRING THE MANDATORY LABELING OF "FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTS CONTAINING GENETIC-MODIFIED ORGANISMS" HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE PHILIPPINE SENATE BY SENATOR JUAN FLAVIER. THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND COMMERCE, AND THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH (WHICH SENATOR FLAVIER CHAIRS) HAVE YET TO SCHEDULE HEARINGS ON THE BILL. THE AMBASSADOR, JOINED BY ECON AND AG COUNSELORS, DISCUSSED THE BILL WITH FLAVIER ON SEPTEMBER 23. IN AUGUST, THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON BIOSAFETY OF THE PHILIPPINES

APPROVED FIELD TESTING OF BT CORN BY PIONEER HI-BRED AND AGROSEED, A SUBSIDIARY OF MONSANTO. THE DECISION ATTRACTED PRESS ATTENTION, ALTHOUGH A COMMITTEE MEMBER TOLD ECONOFF THAT THE DECISION WAS NOT CONTENTIOUS. A MONSANTO EXECUTIVE TOLD US THE COMMITTEE IN GENERAL "UNDERSTANDS AND IS SUPPORTIVE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY." END SUMMARY.

MANDATORY GMO LABELING LEGISLATION INTRODUCED
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2. SENATOR JUAN FLAVIER HAS INTRODUCED LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REQUIRE THE MANDATORY LABELING OF FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTS CONTAINING GMOS. SECTION 2 OF THE BILL, SB 1677, STATES: "IT IS HEREBY DECLARED THAT FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTS CONTAINING GENETICALLY-MODIFIED ORGANISMS, INCLUDING THOSE PRODUCED BY GENETIC ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES SHALL BE LABELED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT AND THE EXISTING REGULATIONS ISSUED BY THE CONCERNED DEPARTMENT." IN AN EXPLANATORY NOTE ACCOMPANYING THE BILL, FLAVIER STATES: "THE DEBATE GOING ON IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES POINT TO THE FACT THAT GMOS POSE A LOT UNCERTAINTIES TO HUMAN HEALTH... THIS LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL ACKNOWLEDGES THE FACT THAT THE PHILIPPINES LACK THE NECESSARY LAWS AND REGULATIONS TO ADDRESS THE GMO AND GMO TECHNOLOGY ISSUES, PARTICULARLY ON THE HEALTH ASPECT. THIS BILL THEREFORE AIMS TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONSUMER PROTECTION AGAINST UNCERTAINTIES OF GMO AND GMO TECHNOLOGY PRODUCED FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTS."

3. THE AMBASSADOR, JOINED BY AG AND ECON COUNSELORS MET WITH FLAVIER TO DISCUSS THE BILL. FLAVIER AND HIS CHIEF OF STAFF, RUDY QUIMBO, APPEARED QUITE POSITIVE ABOUT GMO ISSUES. FLAVIER APPEARS TO BE AWARE THAT MANY OF THE NGOS ARE PURSUING ADVOCACY, NOT SCIENCE, AND ALSO APPEARS TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE EXAGGERATION OF CLAIMS BY SOME NGOS. A FORMER SECRETARY OF HEALTH DURING THE RAMOS ADMINISTRATION, FLAVIER SEEMS TO SEE LABELING AS A HEALTH-RELATED ISSUE. WE EXPLAINED FDA'S APPROACH TO LABELING, AND THE ADVANTAGES OF GMOS IN TERMS OF REDUCED/MORE EFFICIENT USE OF FARM CHEMICALS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED YIELDS AND LOWER PRODUCTION COSTS. WE ALSO EXPLAINED HOW GMO RESEARCH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ADDRESS NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES. (COMMENT: WE MAY HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN STEERING FLAVIER BACK TO THE MAINSTREAM, BUT IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW LONG HE WILL REMAIN THERE. HIS STAFF TELLS US HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE BILL. END COMMENT.)

STATUS OF BILL
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4. SINCE THE PHILIPPINES HAS A SEPARATION OF POWERS SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS (COMPOSED OF A SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES) IS INDEPENDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THE PHILIPPINES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS NOT TAKEN A POSITION ON THE BILL.

5. THE BILL HAS BEEN REFERRED TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE TRADE AND COMMERCE. THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, WHICH SENATOR FLAVIER CHAIRS, HAS SECONDARY JURISDICTION OVER THE BILL. HEARINGS HAVE YET TO BE SCHEDULED. AS REPORTED IN REFTELS, TWO SEPARATE BILLS TO BAN GMOS WERE
UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 MANILA 013397

STATE FOR EB/ATP (BRUNO), OES/ETC (ENRIGHT)

USTR FOR AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS

USTR ALSO FOR S.MURPHY

USDA FOR FAS/ITP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, SENV, TBIO, WTRO, RP
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES - BILL TO REQUIRE GMO LABELING INTRODUCED IN PHILIPPINE SENATE; BT CORN TESTING OK'ED

INTRODUCED LATE IN 1998 BY BOTH SENATOR ROBERT JAWORSKI AND SENATOR GREGORIO HONASAN. MIGUEL UNSON, COMMITTEE SECRETARY (SENIOR STAFF MEMBER) OF THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES MODERNIZATION, TOLD US SEPTEMBER 27 THAT SENATOR HONASAN'S BILL IS "ON THE BACK BURNER." HE SAID HONASAN AGREED TO LET THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE "BE THE JUDGE OF HOW TO HANDLE GMOS." UNSON SAID THAT, AS FAR AS HE KNOWS, JAWORSKI HAS NOT PURSUED HIS BILL TO BAN GMOS.

BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE APPROVES FIELD TESTING OF BT CORN
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6. ON A MORE POSITIVE NOTE, THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON BIOSAFETY IN THE PHILIPPINES APPROVED IN AUGUST APPLICATIONS BY PIONEER HI-BRED AND AGROSEED (A SUBSIDIARY OF MONSANTO) TO THE FIELD TEST BT CORN. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, PHILIPPINE BIOSAFETY REGULATIONS, WHICH APPLY TO ALL BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH IN THE COUNTRY, ARE AMONG THE MOST RIGID IN THE WORLD. A MONSANTO EXECUTIVE TOLD US THE COMMITTEE IN GENERAL "UNDERSTANDS AND IS SUPPORTIVE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY," WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE MEMBER. THE LONE DISSENTER WAS ROBERTO VERZOLA, AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER BY TRAINING WHO WAS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE NGO COMMUNITY, AND IS A MEMBER OF VARIOUS ANTI-GMO NGOS. THE EXECUTIVE TOLD US THAT IN THE PAST, THE NCBP HAS ALWAYS MADE DECISIONS BY CONSENSUS, BUT THE DECISION IN THIS CASE WAS MADE BY MAJORITY VOTE. HE COMMENTED THIS IS SOMETHING "THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT WANT KNOWN BY THE PUBLIC."

7. THE NCBP DECISION ATTRACTED PRESS ATTENTION. SEVERAL NGOS, ASSERTING, INTER ALIA, THAT BT CORN "WOULD BE TOXIC TO HUMANS," HAD PRESSED THE COMMITTEE TO DENY THE APPLICATIONS. PRESS COVERAGE CENTERED ON ALLEGATIONS THAT AGROSEED AND PIONEER HI-BRED DID NOT HAVE "EMERGENCY

PLANS TO CONTAIN POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE FIELD TESTING." THE FIRMS, BACKED BY SEVERAL OTHER NCBP MEMBERS, SAID THAT PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES HAD BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE FIELD TESTING PROGRAM APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE. AN AGROSEED EXECUTIVE SAID "THE MEASURES WE PROVIDED ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO MITIGATE ANY ILL EFFECTS."

HUBBARD

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 02
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 02

SSN: 3397
<^SSN>3397

TOR: 990929044443 M4071755
<^TOR>990929044443 M4071756

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Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
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LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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OSRI: RUEHBS
DTG: 041429Z OCT 99
ORIG: USEU BRUSSELS
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN
RUEHAG/AMCONSUL HAMBURG
SUBJ: EU CONSIDERS ONE PERCENT GMO LABELING THRESHOLD

TEXT:

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 006104

PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR OSEC/SCHUMACHER & SIDDIQUI
FAS FOR OA/GALVIN; ITP/SHEIKH/MACKE/SLUTSKY
CMP/GFD/RIEMENSCHNEIDER, CMP/COTS/BLUM

PASS USTR FOR MURPHY/IVES

EUROPEAN UNION POSTS PASS AGRICULTURE

GENEVA PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EUN
SUBJECT: EU CONSIDERS ONE PERCENT GMO LABELING THRESHOLD

1. COMMISSION SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE (DG III) IS ABOUT TO CIRCULATE TO MEMBER STATES A PROPOSAL FOR A ONE PERCENT THRESHOLD FOR LABELING OF GMO FOODS, THE LONG-EXPECTED "IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS" OF REGULATION 1138/97 ON LABELING OF FOODS CONTAINING GMO CORN AND SOYBEANS.

2. MEMBER STATES WILL VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL AT THE OCTOBER 21 MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD. IF PASSED BY QUALIFIED MAJORITY, IT WILL GO INTO EFFECT. IF NOT, IT WILL GO TO COUNCIL FOR REVIEW AND POSSIBLE MODIFICATION.

3. SOURCES CONFIRM THAT THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT DEFINE A TESTING METHOD NOR DOES IT INCLUDE A NEGATIVE LIST (I.E. PRODUCTS EXEMPT FROM TESTING).

4. A COPY OF THE PROPOSAL WILL LIKELY BECOME AVAILABLE WITHIN A FEW DAYS AND WILL BE SENT TO WASHINGTON AGENCIES ON RECEIPT. MORNINGSTAR

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 6104

TOR: 991004112532 M4079753

DIST:

SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHHEA5508 2790858-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 060858Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
OSRI: RUEHHE
DTG: 060858Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0593
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
SUBJ: FINNISH PRESS ACCUSATIONS OF US-ORIGIN GMO TOBACCO SOLD IN FINLAND DURING THE 1980S.

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HELSINKI 005508

DEPT FOR EUR/ERA
FAS FOR OA/GALVIN, FAA/BURST, CMP/DA AND COTSD, ITP/FSTSD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ECON, ETRD, EAGR, PREL, FI
SUBJECT: FINNISH PRESS ACCUSATIONS OF US-ORIGIN GMO TOBACCO SOLD IN FINLAND DURING THE 1980S.

1. SUMMARY: A RECENT FINNISH PRESS REPORT THAT US CIGARETTES CONTAINING GMO ENHANCED FREE NICOTINE WAS SOLD IN FINLAND IN THE 1980S SPARKED HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION WHEN THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (ERKKI TUOMIOJA) RAISED THE MATTER WITH COMMERCE U/S DAVID AARON DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO FINLAND. TUOMIOJA ASKED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE USG, AS HE WAS CONCERNED THAT QUESTIONS WOULD BE ASKED BY THE PARLIAMENT. INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE EMBASSY BY FAS BRUSSELS AND WASHDC INDICATES THAT FINNISH PRESS REPORTS ARE ERRONEOUS AND NOT BASED ON FACT. ECONOFF AND USDA AGCOUN IN STOCKHOLM CONVEYED THESE FINDINGS IN A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH FINNISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

FINNISH PRESS ACCUSATIONS OF US-ORIGIN GMO TOBACCO

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2. ON SEPTEMBER 27 AGCOUN AND ECONOFF MET WITH A GMO EXPERT IN THE MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND WITH OFFICALS AT THE NATIONAL PRODUCT CONTROL AGENCY FOR WELFARE AND HEALTH (NPCAWH) REGARDING THE RECENT FINNISH PRESS PIECE ALLEGING THAT US CIGARETTE MANUFACTURERS GENETICALLY MANIPULATED TOBACCO TO INCREASE FREE NICOTINE (MORE ADDICTIVE THAN BOUND NICOTINE) WHILE LOWERING TOTAL

NICOTINE AND SOLD THESE CIGARETTES IN FINLAND IN THE 1980S. THE NPCAWH IS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH RESPONSIBLE FOR PERFORMING SEMI-ANNUAL TESTING OF CIGARETTES TO MEASURE LEVELS OF TAR AND NICOTINE. (NOTE: THERE IS NO EU LEGAL MAXIMUM FOR TOTAL NICOTINE, ALTHOUGH FINLAND HAD A MAXIMUM NICOTINE LEVEL BEFORE ENTERING THE EU.)

3. THE GMO EXPERT AT THE MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY EXPRESSED REGRET ABOUT PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF HEALTH RISKS FROM GMOS AND WAS SURE THERE WOULD BE QUESTIONS IN THE FINNISH PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE TOBACCO ARTICLE. SHE SPECULATED THAT MOST FINNS WEREN'T UPSET ABOUT THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE'S ALLEGED INCIDENT BECAUSE THERE WERE NO REGULATIONS BANNING GMOS DURING THE 1980S. SHE OPINED THAT THE PUBLIC PROBABLY WANTED TO PREVENT GMO PRODUCTS FROM ENTERING FINLAND IN THE FUTURE, THOUGH.

4. THE NPCAWH OFFICIALS EXPLAINED THAT BECAUSE THEIR AGENCY ONLY TESTS TOTAL TAR AND NICOTINE LEVELS, NOT FREE VS. BOUND NICOTINE, THEY ARE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THIS ISSUE. THEIR AGENCY ALSO IS NOT CONCERNED WITH HOW THE NICOTINE GETS INTO THE CIGARETTES (I.E. BY GENETIC ENGINEERING OR OTHER PROCESSES). HOWEVER, IF NEW LEGISLATION IS INTRODUCED THAT STIPULATED A NEW TYPE OF TESTING TO MEASURE LEVELS OF FREE NICOTINE, THEY WOULD IMPLEMENT THIS NEW TESTING.

5. THE FINNISH OFFICIALS SPECULATED THAT THE FINNISH CANCER SOCIETY PROBABLY PUT THIS IN THE PRESS TO STIR UP DISCUSSION IN THE RUN-UP TO IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW TOBACCO LEGISLATION IN FEBRUARY 2000. THEY ALSO OPINED THAT THE FINNISH CANCER SOCIETY MAY BE TRYING TO GET A DISCUSSION GOING REGARDING WHAT TO MEASURE (I.E. FREE NICOTINE VS. TOTAL NICOTINE) IN TOBACCO. THEY EXPLAINED THAT THE NEW LAW WAS ACTUALLY JUST AN AMENDMENT TO FINLAND'S TOBACCO LAW AND LIMITED THE AMOUNT OF SMOKE IN RESTAURANT AIR BASED ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY CONCERNS NOW THAT CIGARETTE SMOKE HAS BEEN PUT ON A LIST OF CARCINOGENS.

6. AGCOUN SHARED MATERIAL OBTAINED FROM USDA FAS OFFICES IN BRUSSELS AND WASHINGTON REFUTING THE ALLEGATIONS.

--NO GMO TOBACCO HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES, ALTHOUGH SOME GMO VARIETIES HAVE BEEN TESTED IN NORTH CAROLINA FOR DISEASE RESISTANCE.

--REGARDING ALTERED NICOTINE GMO TOBACCO, GMO VARIETIES WERE
TESTED LAST YEAR (1998) IN BRAZIL THAT YIELDED HIGHER NICOTINE LEVELS. BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (BAT) UNDERTOOK THESE BRAZILIAN TESTS. ACCORDING TO U.S. TOBACCO SOURCES, THESE BAT TRIALS DID NOT YIELD THE EXPECTED RESULTS AND ARE NO LONGER BEING GROWN.

--A USDA CONTACT WITH A NEW YORK-BASED TOBACCO INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE WITH PRIOR WORKING EXPERIENCE IN FINLAND

POINTED TO THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE MEDIA ALLEGATIONS WERE A CARRYOVER FROM REPORTS LAST YEAR (1998) CONCERNING BRAZILIAN TOBACCO.

--THE USDA'S OFFICE IN BRUSSELS HAS REVEALED THAT THE EU CURRENTLY HAS AN APPROVEL HERBICIDE TOLERANT GMO TOBACCO AND THAT--IN THEIR VIEW--THE CURRENT MEDIA SPECULATION
UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 HELSINKI 005508

DEPT FOR EUR/ERA
FAS FOR OA/GALVIN, FAA/BURST, CMP/DA AND COTSD, ITP/FSTSD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ECON, ETRD, EAGR, PREL, FI
SUBJECT: FINNISH PRESS ACCUSATIONS OF US-ORIGIN GMO TOBACCO SOLD IN FINLAND DURING THE 1980S.

STEMS FROM AN "ENHANCED NICOTINE" TOBACCO IMPORTED ILLEGALLY INTO THE UNITED STATES FROM BRAZIL SEVERAL YEARS AGO. (NOTE: THIS TOBACCO WAS NOT/NOT TECHNICALLY A GENETICALLY ENGINEERED PRODUCT, BUT RATHER ONLY DEVELOPED BY A GMO COMPANY. END NOTE.)

AGCOUN ALSO OFFERED TO PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION OF SCIENTISTS AT USDA WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH DIFFERENT TESTING TECHNIQUES.

7. COMMENT: WHILE THE WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS' REACTION TO THE PRESS ARTICLE WAS QUITE SUBDUED, THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE FINNISH PARLIAMENT'S REACTION TO THE ARTICLE REFLECTS SENSITIVITY TO THE POLITIZATION OF THE GMO DEBATE. THE FACT THAT THE TOBACCO IN QUESTION WAS NOT EVEN A GMO PRODUCT MAY, IF ANYTHING, BE AN IRRITATING DETAIL TO THOSE WHO WANT TO STIR THE LARGER DEBATE.

VAN VOORST

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 02
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 02

SSN: 5508
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TOR: 991006051544 M4083376
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RUEHHK/ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC COLLECTIVE
RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2061
RUCNCAN/ALCAN COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
SUBJ: GMO FOODS: UPDATE ON CANADA'S VOLUNTARY LABELING PROJECT

TEXT:

UNCLAS OTTAWA 003734

STATE FOR G, E, EB/TPP, WHA/CAN AND OES/ETC/ENRIGHT
STATE PASS USTR FOR SHARON BOMER LAURITSEN AND MARY RYCKMAN
STATE PASS FDA FOR OFFICE OF FOOD LABELING-JERRY MCCOWIN
USDA FOR FAS/RMIRELES AND APHIS/DORR

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, TBIO, ETRD, CA
SUBJECT: GMO FOODS: UPDATE ON CANADA'S VOLUNTARY LABELING PROJECT

REF: A) OTTAWA 3413 B) OTTAWA 3353

1. (U) THIS CABLE IS UNCLASSIFIED BUT SENSITIVE; NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION VIA THE INTERNET OR OTHER MEDIA.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: REFTELS OUTLINED EFFORTS BY CANADIAN INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO DEVELOP A VOLUNTARY LABELING SCHEME FOR FOODS THAT MAY CONTAIN GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOS). WHILE CANADA REMAINS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF LIBERAL TRADE RULES AND SCIENTIFICALLY BASED REGULATION OF GMO PRODUCTS, INCREASED INTEREST IN GMO LABELING REFLECTS GOC AND INDUSTRY CONCERN OVER THE THREAT OF AN UPSURGE IN ANTI-GMO CAMPAIGNING IN CANADA. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT A VOLUNTARY REGIME WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO PREEMPT ANTI-GMO ACTIVITY. ANTI-GMO PRESSURE ON RETAILERS/PACKAGERS AND THE THREAT THAT A MANDATORY REGIME COULD BE IMPOSED IF THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH VOLUNTEERS COULD RESULT IN A REGIME THAT IS LESS VOLUNTARY THAN INTENDED. WHATEVER ITS FORM, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT A LABELING REGIME COULD BE IN PLACE BY AS EARLY AS SPRING 2000.

END SUMMARY.

3. (SBU) ECONCOUNS REVIEWED PROGRESS ON CANADA'S VOLUNTARY GMO LABELING PROJECT (REPORTED REFTELS) WITH CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY (CFIA) LABELING EXPERT JERRY REASBACK ON OCTOBER 8. REASBACK SAID THE GOC WAS AIMING FOR A SCHEME THAT, WHILE VOLUNTARY, WOULD HAVE A FAIRLY TIGHTLY STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE CFIA'S PREFERRED APPROACH WOULD BE ALONG THE LINES OF "IF YOU DECIDE TO LABEL YOUR PRODUCT, HERE'S WHAT WE SUGGEST YOU USE, WHERE YOU SHOULD PLACE IT ON THE PACKAGING AND WHAT YOU CAN (OR CANNOT) SAY." HE HASTENED TO ADD THAT THE IMPETUS FOR A MORE STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK CAME FROM FOOD PACKAGERS AND RETAILERS, WHO WERE CONCERNED THAT THEY STAY AHEAD OF ANTI-GMO ACTIVISTS.

4. (SBU) ECOUNCOUNS NOTED PRESS REPORTS THAT HAD CITED AGRICULTURE MINISTER VANCLIEF AS FAVORING THE JAPANESE APPROACH TO GMO LABELING, WHICH IS MORE RIGID THAN THE SCHEME BEING DEVELOPED BY CANADA. REASBACK SAID THE MINISTER HAD BEEN QUOTED OUT OF CONTEXT; HE HAD CONGRATULATED THE JAPANESE ON MOVING AHEAD RELATIVELY QUICKLY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE, BUT HAD THEN GONE ON TO SAY CANADA FAVORED A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH. WHILE A VOLUNTARY SCHEME WOULD BE EASIEST TO IMPLEMENT, IN REASBACK'S VIEW, HE ADDED THAT SECTION 5.1 OF THE CANADIAN FOOD AND DRUG ACT GIVES THE CFIA BROAD POWERS TO MANDATE LABELING SHOULD IT SEE A NEED TO DO SO.

5. (SBU) COMMENT: EMBASSY EXPECTS THE GOC TO MOVE QUICKLY TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF GROCERY DISTRIBUTORS AND CANADIAN GENERAL STANDARDS BOARD, ONCE THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN FINALIZED. A VOLUNTARY LABELING SCHEME FOR FOOD PRODUCTS THAT MIGHT CONTAIN GMOS COULD BE IN PLACE BY AS EARLY AS NEXT SPRING. OBVIOUSLY, THE FASTER THE VOLUNTARY REGIME CAN BE PUT IN PLACE, THE EASIER IT WILL BE TO HEAD OFF PRESSURE FOR MANDATORY LABELING. HOWEVER, THE THREAT OF NGO ACTION AGAINST FIRMS THAT DO NOT LABEL AND THE CFIA'S POWER TO MANDATE LABELING IF IT MUST MAY LEAD TO A LESS VOLUNTARY SOLUTION THAN INITIALLY INTENDED.

GIFFIN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 3734

TOR: 991014160555 M4097625

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SIT: NSC

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OSRI: RUEHC
DTG: 151658Z OCT 99
ORIG: SECSTATE WASHDC
TO: ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS
INFO: RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0000
SUBJ: BIOTECHNOLOGY - OPUS III

GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
PARIS ALSO FOR OECD

TEXT:

UNCLAS STATE 195095

PASS ECONCOUNSELOR, AGCOUNSELOR, AND USIA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, TBIO, SENV, ECON, OIIP, KSCA
SUBJECT: BIOTECHNOLOGY - OPUS III

GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
PARIS ALSO FOR OECD

REF: A) USIA 16266 B) STATE 151442 C) STATE 113313

1. THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. SEE PARA 2.

2. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST. THIS CABLE PROVIDES UPDATES ON OUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CAMPAIGN (PARA 3). SEPTEL WILL PROVIDE SPANISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF MEGATALKERS (PARA 4). WASHINGTON REMAINS INTERESTED IN RECEIVING IDEAS ON HOW TO ADDRESS NEGATIVE CONSUMER CONCERNS OR RESTRICTIVE REGULATORY PRACTICES, AND UPDATES TO OUR CALENDAR OF BIOTECH EVENTS (PARA 5) AND LIST OF WEBSITES (PARA 6). USIA OFFICERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP BIOTECH PAGES ON THEIR POST WEBSITES DRAWING ON USIA'S NEW BIOTECH WEBSITE

(PARA 3). PLEASE SLUG COMMENTS ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL TO EB/TPP/STA - PATRICIA D. NORMAN (202-736-4440, FAX: 202-647-0892, EMAIL: NORMANP#STATE.GOV) AND USIA PATRICIA NEELY (TEL: 202-619-5668, FAX: 202-619-5646, EMAIL: NEELY#USIA.GOV). EU POSTS ARE SPECIFICALLY ASKED TO REPORT ON NEW FUNDING AND INVESTMENT INCENTIVES FOR BIOTECH

START-UP COMPANIES. (WE HAVE HEARD OF AN EU-WIDE 14 BILLION ECU FUND AND CREATION OF A NASDAQ-LIKE TRADING EXCHANGE). FOR THIS AND ALL OTHER BIOTECH TRADE ISSUES, PLEASE CONTACT EB/TPP/ATT - MARILYN BRUNO (TEL: 202-647-2062; FAX: 202-647-1894; EMAIL: BRUNOMJ#STATE.GOV). END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

3. UPDATE ON PUBLIC DIPLOMCY

-- REF A GIVES AN OVERVIEW OF THE LATESTPUBLIC DIPLOMACY EVENTS.
-- E U/S AL LARON HELD WORLD NET TELECONFERENCES AUGUST 17 (WTH TOKYO, SEOUL AND BANGKOK) AND SEPTEMBER 2 (WITH BRASILIA, BUENOS AIRES AND MEXICO CITY),AS WELL AS AN INTERVIEW WITH JAPAN'S NHK TELEISION ON SEPTEMBER 2. TRANSCRIPTS ARE AVAILABL ON USIA'S ELECTRONIC JOURNAL. POSTS INTERESED IN RECEIVING VIDEO TAPED COPIES OF THE TELECONERENCES OR HARD COPY OF THE TRANSCRIPTS SHOULD SO ADVISE.
-- U/S LARSON AND G U/S LOY HEL A MEETING WITH INDUSTRY AUGUST 17 TO APPRISE HEM OF OUR POSITION IN THE VARIOUS FORA (BIOSAETY PROTOCOL, CODEX, OECD). U/S LARSON HELDA MEETING WITH AG. INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES OCTOBER 8, WHERE DISCUSSIONS ON BIOTECH ISSUES PREDOMINATED.
-- UP AND RUNNING: USIA'S BIOTECH WEBSITE VIA THE INTERNET (HTTP://WWW.USIA.GOV/TOPICAL/GLOBAL/BIOTECH/). THE WEBSITE CONTAINS TEXTS OF USG SPEECHES AND OFFICIAL DECLARATIONS, NEWS STORIES, BACKGROUNDERS, FACT SHEETS, AND LINK TO OTHER WEBSITES (PER PARA 6), AND REAL-TIME AUDIO SHOWS (SUCH AT THE NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO'S AGRI BIOTECH PROGRAMS), TEXTS OF RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, LINK TO ELECTRONIC JOURNAL. IT WILL UPDATED DAILY, AS REQUIRED. NEW INPUT WILL BE FLAGGED.

4. MEGATALKERS

-- BIOTECHNOLOGY HAS BECOME AN ISSUE OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND CONCERN. UNFORTUNATELY, THE DISCUSSION HAS TENDED TO FOCUS ON THE RISKS, WITHOUT EQUAL CONSIDERATION OF THE MANY

BENEFITS, PARTICULARLY FOR IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL YIELDS AND REDUCING THE USE OF CHEMICAL PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES.

-- WHILE THIS IS A RELATIVELY NEW AND STILL DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY, THE UNITED STATES HAS OVER TWENTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH BIOTECHNOLOGY. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE TO HARNESS THE BENEFITS OF THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY, AND TO DEAL RESPONSIBLY WITH POTENTIAL RISKS.

-- PRESIDENT CLINTON HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION, WITH THE HELP OF OUR WORLD-CLASS REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS, WILL PROTECT FOOD SAFETY, AND THAT INCLUDES BIOTECHNOLOGY FOOD PRODUCTS. IF THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION FINDS A FOOD UNSAFE, IT IS NOT LABELED. WE SIMPLY DO NOT ALLOW IT TO BE SOLD.

-- WE APPLY THE SAME FOOD SAFETY CRITERIA TO BIOTECH FOODS AS WE DO TO OTHER FOODS, AND WE LOOK CAREFULLY AT POTENTIAL

RISKS. OUR SCIENTISTS HAVE FOUND THAT BIOTECH FOODS AND THEIR CONVENTIONAL COUNTERPARTS ARE NOT SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT. NO BIOTECH FOODS ARE CURRENTLY ON THE MARKET WHICH PRESENT ANY KNOWN FOOD RISKS, SUCH AS ALLERGIES. THEREFORE, WE HAVE NOT REQUIRED THEM TO BE LABELED.

-- HOWEVER, WE DO NOT OPPOSE LABELING PER SE. WE SUPPORT VOLUNTARY LABELING RELATED TO CONSUMER AND OTHER INTERESTS PROVIDED IT IS TRUTHFUL AND NOT MISLEADING. WE RESERVE MANDATORY LABELING FOR PROVIDING SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT COMPOSITION OR CHARACTERISTICS OF A FOOD.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT OTHER COUNTRIES ARE STILL DEVELOPING THEIR REGULATORY PROCEDURES, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE SURROUNDING THE USE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR FOOD PRODUCTION. SOME OF THIS CONCERN MAY RESULT FROM A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN BROADER FOOD SAFETY INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING IN EUROPE WHICH HAS RECENTLY EXPERIENCED SOME FOOD SAFETY SCARES.

-- IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR TRADE IN AGRICULTURE, FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND HEALTH. THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT ANY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON BIOTECHNOLOGY MUST BE SCIENCE-BASED.

-- THE WORLD COMMUNITY HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED DISTINCT INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES TO ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT BIOTECHNOLOGY. BIOTECHNOLOGY IS ON THE AGENDA IN OVER 15

INTERNATIONAL FORA, AND THE SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS INVOLVED SHOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO THESE CONCERNS. (FOR EXAMPLE, THE SAFETY OF BIOTECH FOODS IS BEING ADDRESSED IN SPECIAL WORKING GROUPS AT THE OECD AND CODEX ALIMENTARIUS; REGULATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF RAISING BIOTECH PRODUCTS IS BEING ADDRESSED IN THE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS.)

-- IT IS IMPORTANT TO US THAT THOSE EFFORTS BE OBJECTIVE AND INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF THE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY - INCLUDING ENHANCED FOOD SECURITY AND HEALTH BENEFITS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL DANGERS AND PRESSURE ON OUR PRECIOUS LAND AND WATER SYSTEMS. THEY MUST ALSO INCLUDE SCIENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION EFFORTS.

-- OUR GOAL IS TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD CAN SAFELY BENEFIT FROM THIS PROMISING NEW TECHNOLOGY.

(AS NEEDED)

-- WE BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE A WORKABLE, EFFECTIVE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL THAT ADDRESSES THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF CROSS-BORDER MOVEMENTS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS THAT ARE TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS SEEDS FOR PLANTING AND FISH FOR AQUACULTURE.

-- THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT NEGOTIATORS SHOULD STRIVE FOR A PROTOCOL THAT WILL PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT IMPOSING POTENTIALLY HEAVY COSTS ON FOOD AND OTHER CRITICAL GOODS AND SERVICES.

-- BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL TALKS, SCHEDULED TO FINALIZE BY JANUARY 28, SHOULD LEAVE THE FOOD SAFETY ISSUES TO EXISTING INTERNATIONAL FORA AND SEEK TO FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS FOR WHICH WE DO NOT YET HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK.

-- BIOTECHNOLOGY ITSELF MAKES THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY MORE NOT LESS IMPORTANT, AS IT RELIES ON THE PROPERTIES OF NATURE'S GENETIC MATERIAL FOR POTENTIAL ANSWERS TO SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST PRESSING FOOD AND HEALTH NEEDS.

-- MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, ARE GETTING INVOLVED IN BIOTECHNOLOGY. SCIENTIFIC AND

DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVE BIOTECHNOLOGY CAN BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO MEETING THE FOOD AND HEALTH NEEDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, BY INCREASING THE NUTRITIONAL CONTENT OF FOODS, IMPROVING THE PRODUCTIVITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF SMALL SCALE FARMING, AND PROVIDING NEW TOOLS TO ADDRESS CROP DISEASE AND AGRO-ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS OF TROPICAL AND SUB-TROPICAL AGRICULTURE.

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5. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

01-02 ASEAN SEOM - JAKARTA
02 WORLD NET - LATIN AMERICA
02 LARSON INTERVIEW NHK - JAPAN
02-03 HARVARD U. - CONFERENCE ON BIOTECH
02-03 UN COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP
03-08 BIOTECH 2000 SYMPOSIUM - BERLIN
06-10 3RD CONFERENCE ON ECOSYSTEMS - TRONHDEIM, NORWAY
08-16 GLOBAL CHANCE & PROTECTED AREAS - L'AQUILA, ITALY
09-12 APEC LEADERS MEETING - WELLINGTON
13 INST. OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS CONFERENCE - WASHINGTON
13 BIOTECH WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING - USIA
15 NATIONAL AGRI-MARKETING ASSN. CONFERENCE - WASHINGTON
14 OECD JOINT BUREAU MEETING
15-17 OECD NOVEL FOODS AND FEEDS TASK FORCE
15-19 BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL TALKS RESUME
16-17 USDOC U/S AARON VISIT TO LONDON
16 USDA BILATERALS WITH FRANCE ON U.S.-EU ISSUES
20 MEETING: USDA/FAS GALVIN-AUSTRIAN CONSUMER MIN. BOBEK
22 MEETING: USDA GLICKMAN-FRENCH AGMIN GLAVANY - D.C.
23 OECD COUNCIL MEETING
23 TRANSATLANTIC CONSUMER DIALOGUE
25 INSTITUTE OF SHORTENING & EDIBLE OILS - D.C.
27 ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERIAL
27-OCT.1 BIOSAFETY CONGRESS - RIO DE JANEIRO

OCTOBER

01-02 COLLOQUIUM - GMO RISKS AND REGS. - NYU SCHOOL OF LAW
03-06 COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE NUTRITION - PALM SPRINGS
08 U/S LARSON MEET WITH INDUSTRY REPS
11 UNEP WORKSHOP ON TRIPS - PARIS
11-15 FAO - INT'L FOOD TRADE BEYOND 2000 - MELBOURNE
12-13 GEORGETOWN U. CERES FORUM ON BIOTECH/FOOD - D.C.
14-15 U.S.-EU HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ENVIRONMENT - D.C.
14-15 TRANSATLANTIC ENVIRONMENTAL DIALOGUE - D.C.
18 OECD COUNCIL - WORK PLAN FOR G8 REQUEST - PARIS

21-22 WORLD BANK SYMPOSIUM ON BIOTECH - D.C.
23 USIA ELECTRONIC JOURNAL ON BIOTECH UP AND RUNNING
24-26 ASIAN REGIONAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM - COLOMBO
25-29 CGIAR INT'L CENTERS WEEK - WASHINGTON, D.C.

NOVEMBER
01 UNEP - TRADE AND AGRICULTURE ISSUES PANEL - BONN
08-10 WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORG. ON CBD - GENEVA
10-11 GEORGETOWN U. CERES FORUM ON BIOTECH/ENVIRON. - D.C.
11 MONARCH BUTTERFLY SEMINAR - CHICAGO
16-19 3RD EUROPEAN BIOTECH BUSINESS CONGRESS - MUNICH
18-19 BIOTECHNOLOGY LAW CONFERENCE - SEATTLE
22 RECOMBINANT GENE PRODUCTS EXPRESSION - NEW DELHI
29-30 ILSI REGIONAL SEMINAR ON FOOD AND BIOTECH - CAIRO
29-DECEMBER 3 - WTO AG ROUND - SEATTLE
TBD WORLD NET WITH SELECTED EUROPEAN POSTS

DECEMBER
17 FOOD & DRUG LAW INST. - SEMINAR ON BIOTECH - D.C.
TBD SEMINAR - U.S. SOCIETY OF ENTOMOLOGISTS

JANUARY
21 ROUNDTABLE ON BIOTECH - EMBASSY HAGUE
20-28 BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL - FINAL NEGOTIATIONS - MONTREAL
TBD USIA VISITORS PROGRAM

FEBRUARY

MARCH
30-APRIL 20 USIA INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAM
"U.S. AGRICULTURE AND THE WORLD ECONOMY."
TBD CODEX AD HOC TASK FORCE ON BIOTECH - TOKYO

APRIL

MAY
15-26 CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY 5TH COP - NAIROBI
TBD OECD REPORTS TO G8
TBD CODEX BIOTECH TASK FORCE

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 5095

TOR: 991015135022 M4099919

DIST:

SIT: ANDREASEN BELL BINNENDIJK BLACK BOUCHARD HARRIS PETERMAN PIMENTEL SAMORE SEGAL TUCKER WITKOWSKY
SIT: NSC

Cable

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CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: PAAUZYUW RUEHBKA2207 2910754-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
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OSRI: RUEHBK
DTG: 180754Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0282
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 4716
INFO: ////
SUBJ: GMO FLURRY - THAILAND TO CREATE TESTING AGENCY

TEXT:

UNCLAS BANGKOK 012207

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV AND EB

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, ECON, TH
SUBJECT: GMO FLURRY - THAILAND TO CREATE TESTING AGENCY

1. SUMMARY: A GATHERING FLURRY OF GMO (MIS)INFORMATION HAS INSPIRED THE RTG TO ESTABLISH AN INTERAGENCY ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF TESTING AND CERTIFYING GMO-FREE EXPORTS. A SENIOR THAI OFFICIAL ASSURES US, HOWEVER, THAT THE MOVE IS ONLY TO MEET CUSTOMER CONCERNS - CHIEFLY IN EUROPE - AND DOES NOT HERALD ANY LONG TERM POLICY CHANGE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH CONSIDERABLE HELP FROM EUROPEAN NGO'S, LOCAL NGO'S HAVE KEPT THE THAI PRESS WELL FED WITH GMO STORIES, OFTEN WITH AN ALARMIST TWIST. THE WEEKEND'S PRESS SAW PROMINENT COVERAGE OF A TEST BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR GENETIC ENGINEERING AND BIOTECHNOLOGY (BIOTEC) WHICH FOUND GMO MATERIAL IN A SHIPMENT OF U.S. WHEAT. ONLY CAREFUL READERS OF THE STORY IN THE NATION FOUND THAT THE BIOTEC LAB DIRECTOR BELIEVES THE TEST WAS A FALSE POSITIVE BECAUSE OF ERRORS IN SAMPLING TECHNIQUE.

3. THE PRESS HAS ALSO BEEN FOLLOWING REPORTS BY LOCAL NGOS OF BT COTTON BEING GROWN BY FARMERS IN AT LEAST TWO PROVINCES. THOUGH

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01
SSN: 2207
TOR: 991018041751 M4102151
DIST:

SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHBUA4871 2911950-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 181950Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
OSRI: RUEHBU
DTG: 181950Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO: SECSTATE WASHDC 8712
INFO: ////
SUBJ: ARGENTINE SEED ASSOCIATION SPEAKS OUT IN SUPPORT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 004871

INFO ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
USEU BRUSSELS
AMEBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA

ANEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC

WHA/BSC
OES/SEI

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL, SENV, TSPL EAGR, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE SEED ASSOCIATION SPEAKS OUT IN SUPPORT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS

1. IN THE WAKE OF RECENT CONTROVERSY IN ARGENTINA AND ABROAD REGARDING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO'S), THE ARGENTINE SEED ASSOCIATION (ASA) HAS TAKEN THE OFFENSIVE, THROUGH PRESS CONFERENCES AND TELEVISION INTERVIEWS, TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC AND WIN SUPPORT FOR GMO'S. ASA HAS 67 MEMBERS THAT SELL 97 OF THE SEEDS SOLD (AND ALL OF THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS SOLD) IN ARGENTINA.

PREVALENCE OF GMO'S

2. AS AN AGRICULTURAL EXPORTER, ARGENTINA IS TURNING INCREASINGLY TO GMO'S. IN 1998, ALMOST 50 OF THE SOY CROP AND 6 OF THE CORN CROPS WERE GENETICALLY MODIFIED. THE FIGURES FOR 1999 ARE EXPECTED TO BE OVER 70 FOR SOY AND 10 FOR CORN RISING TO 85 FOR SOY AND 35 FOR CORN IN 2000. ARGENTINA IS ALSO BEGINNING TO CULTIVATE GENETICALLY MODIFIED SUNFLOWERS, ALFALFA, WHEAT, COTTON, RICE, AND POTATOES. (NOTE: ARGENTINA IS THE WORLD'S LEADING EXPORTER OF SOY AND SUNFLOWERS).

REGULATORY MECHANISMS

3. ARGENTINE BIOSAFETY REQUIREMENTS ARE DEFINED BY THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FARMING BIOTECHNOLOGY (CONABIA). CONABIA, WHICH REPRESENTS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, WAS FORMED IN 1991 AS AN ADVISORY BODY TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR REGULATORY ISSUES RELATED TO GMO'S.

4. THE NATIONAL AGRIFOOD HEALTH SERVICE (SENASA) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TESTING THE SAFETY OF ALL PRODUCTS USED FOR HUMAN AND ANIMAL CONSUMPTION.

5. THE NATIONAL SEEDS INSTITUTE (INASE), RECEIVES APPLICATIONS TO PLANT GMO'S, AND INSPECTS FIELDS, BOTH PRE AND POST HARVEST.

THE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

6. ESTOFF MET OCTOBER 15 WITH VICTOR CASTRO, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ASA, AND JUAN KIEKEBUSCH, DIRECTOR OF BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR ASA AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SWISS MULTINATIONAL, NOVARTIS. THEY EXPLAINED THAT THERE IS RELATIVELY LITTLE AWARENESS BY ARGENTINES OF GMO'S IN AGRICULTURE. BECAUSE OF RECENT PUBLICITY IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS IN THE ARGENTINE MEDIA SURROUNDING GMO'S, ASA DECIDED TO UNDERTAKE A CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF GMO'S. ACCORDING TO KIEKEBUSCH, THE PURPOSE IS TWOFOLD: (1) TO CONVINCE THE PUBLIC THAT AGRICULTURAL GMO'S ARE SAFE; AND (2) TO ASSUAGE THE FEARS OF FARMERS THAT THEIR EXPORTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

7. KIEKEBUSCH SAID THAT THE GMO'S NOW BEING PRODUCED IN ARGENTINA HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION. THEREFORE, ASA HAS BEEN ABLE TO TELL FARMERS THEIR CROPS WILL CONTINUE TO FIND MARKETS IN EUROPE.

GMO'S IMPORTANT TO ARGENTINE COMPETITIVENESS

8. KIEKEBUSCH CASTRO BOTH COMPLAINED THAT THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS IS U.S. AND EU SUBSIDIES. TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE, ARGENTINA MUST UTILIZE GMO'S TO PRODUCE MORE AT LESS COST.

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 004871

INFO ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
USEU BRUSSELS
AMEBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA

ANEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC

WHA/BSC
OES/SEI

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL, SENV, TSPL EAGR, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE SEED ASSOCIATION SPEAKS OUT IN SUPPORT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS

9. CASTRO SAID THAT ASA'S POSITION IS THAT LABELING OF GMO'S IS UNNECESSARY SINCE THEY ARE INHERENTLY SAFE. NEVERTHELESS, ARGENTINA WILL FOLLOW THE DICTATES OF THE MARKET AND WILL BE PREPARED TO LABEL IF CONSUMERS ULTIMATELY DEMAND IT.

PRESSURE FROM UNCLE SAM
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10. CASTRO MILDLY REPROACHED THE U.S. AND U.S. MULTINATIONALS FOR PRESSURING, RATHER THAN WORKING COOPERATIVELY WITH ARGENTINA, ON AGRICULTURAL MATTERS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THE U.S. INTEREST IN WIDESPREAD ADOPTION OF GMO'S IS BASED ON THE U.S. FEAR THAT, IF OTHER COUNTRIES DO NOT ADOPT GMO'S, THE MARKET WILL DEVELOP AROUND NON-GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS TO THE EXCLUSION OF U.S. PRODUCTS. THE U.S. HAS BEEN HEAVY HANDED IN URGING ARGENTINA TO ADOPT GMO'S. INSTEAD, HE SAID, THE U.S. SHOULD ADOPT A MORE COOPERATIVE POSTURE AND WORK WITH ARGENTINA ON ISSUES SUCH AS IDENTITY PRESERVATION AND LABELING (SHOULD IT BE REQUIRED IN THE FUTURE).

ARGENTINE AGRICULTURAL POLITICS

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11. CASTRO STATED THAT BILLS ARE CURRENTLY PENDING IN THE SENATE AND LOWER HOUSE THAT WOULD REQUIRE LABELING. ACTION IS UNLIKELY BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. WITHIN BOTH THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, THERE ARE WIDELY VARYING ATTITUDES TOWARD GMO POLICY RANGING FROM THOSE WHO WOULD STRICTLY REQUIRE GMO'S TO BE LABELED TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IT UNNECESSARY. HE NOTED THAT SENATOR ANTONIO BERHONGARAY, THE PRESENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION, IS A LIKELY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE SHOULD THE ALLIANCE PARTY WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. ACCORDING TO CASTRO, BERHONGARAY'S ADVISORS ARE GENERALLY POSITIVE TOWARD THE USE OF GMO'S.

ROCHA

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 02
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 02

SSN: 4871
<^SSN>4871

TOR: 991018160940 M4103486
<^TOR>991018161016 M4103487

DIST:

SIT: ARMSTRONG AVERY DUNCAN HAMMONDS HOLTZAPPLE LEE ORFINI SCHAEFER SHANNON VALENZUELA
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: IMMEDIATE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: OAAUZYUW RUEHBKA2396 2950952-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: O 220952Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
OSRI: RUEHBK
DTG: 220952Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0404
INFO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
SUBJ: GMO DEBATE IN THAILAND HEATS UP

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGKOK 012396

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EAP/PD, OES AND EB/OFP

FAS FOR SHEIKH, SIMMPONS, SLUTSKY/ITP

USDOC FOR OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

STATE PASS USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, SENV, ETRD, OIPP, OEXC, TH
SUBJECT: GMO DEBATE IN THAILAND HEATS UP

REF: BANGKOK 12207

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

SUMMARY
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1. (SBU) RECENT EVENTS HAVE BROUGHT A LONG-SIMMERING DEBATE OVER GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS GMOS NEARLY TO THE BOILING POINT IN THAILAND. THE FIRST SHOCK WAS THE REJECTION BY EUROPEAN IMPORTERS OF SEVERAL THAI FOOD SHIPMENTS BECAUSE THAILAND COULD NOT CERTIFY THEY WERE GMO-FREE. THEN CAME ALLEGATIONS THAT MONSANTO'S GMO BT COTTON SEED -- STILL ONLY APPROVED FOR FIELD TESTING IN THAILAND -- IS BEING GROWN BY REGULAR FARMS. MOST RECENTLY, A THAI LAB TEST SHOWED -- APPARENTLY ERRONEOUSLY -- GMO WHEAT IN A RECENT SHIPMENT FROM THE US. THE THAI GOVERNMENT HOSTED A NATIONAL SEMINAR

TO DISCUSS GMO POLICY ON SEPTEMBER 27, FORMED A COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE ALLEGED LEAKAGE OF BT COTTON, AND PLANS TO SET UP A BODY TO CERTIFY GMO-FREE PRODUCTS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS AS REQUESTED BY THAI EXPORTERS. MANDATORY LABELING REQUIREMENTS OR PROHIBITIONS ON GMO COMMODITY IMPORTS ARE NOT IN THE OFFING, ALTHOUGH THE CABINET REAFFIRMED AN EXISTING BAN ON IMPORTATION OF GMO PLANTS AND SEEDS FOR COMMERCIAL USES. US WHEAT ASSOCIATES IS READY TO HAVE WHEAT SAMPLES LAB TESTED IN THE US TO ALLAY CONSUMER FEARS.

2. (SBU) THAILAND IS DOING ITS OWN BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH, AND THAI OFFICIALS GENERALLY SEE GMOS AS THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE. OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS HAVE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF A CAREFUL, SCIENCE-BASED APPROACH TO REGULATION OF IMPORTS AND PRODUCTION OF GMOS. RADICAL NGOS WHO OPPOSE ALL USE OF GMOS ENJOY EXTENSIVE AND FAVORABLE MEDIA COVERAGE, BUT RECENT MEDIA ARTICLES HAVE SHOWN REMARKABLE BALANCE. BUSINESS IS IN THE MIDDLE, RECOGNIZING THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS BUT WORRIED ABOUT THE DANGER TO ITS MARKETS IN EUROPE. POST HOPES TO STEER THE DEBATE IN A SCIENCE-BASED DIRECTION THROUGH EDUCATION OF THE MEDIA AND KEY POLICY-MAKERS. FUNDS TO SUPPORT VISITS BY INFLUENTIAL SPEAKERS AND TO SEND KEY DECISION-MAKERS FOR STUDY TOURS IN THE US ARE A KEY REQUIREMENT OF THAT STRATEGY. END SUMMARY.

EUROPEAN REJECTION OF THAI EXPORTS SPURS GMO DEBATE
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3. (U) THAI EXPORTERS HAVE BEEN SHOCKED AND CONFUSED RECENTLY BY THE REJECTION BY EUROPEAN IMPORTERS OF SEVERAL FOOD SHIPMENTS BECAUSE OF CONCERNS THAT THE FOOD MIGHT CONTAIN GMOS. THIS ISSUE FIRST SURFACED IN 1998, WHEN A EUROPEAN IMPORTER DEMANDED THAT A THAI EXPORTER CERTIFY THAT THE WHEAT IN ITS CRACKERS WAS GMO-FREE. MORE RECENTLY, IN AUGUST 1999, REPORTS SAID A DUTCH COMPANY HAD DELAYED ITS IMPORT OF CANNED TUNA FROM THAILAND, INSISTING THAT THE EXPORTER CERTIFY THAT THE VEGETABLE OIL USED IN PACKING THE TUNA IS GMO-FREE. IN SEPTEMBER, A SHIPMENT OF SOYBEAN PRODUCT FROM THE DOI KHAM ROYAL PROJECT WAS INITIALLY REJECTED BY THE GERMAN IMPORTER, WHO CLAIMED IT CONTAINED GMOS.

4. (U) ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE THAI RICE EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION SAID IT HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE EU RICE MILLERS ASSOCIATION WARNING IT NOT TO EXPORT GMO RICE TO THE EU. IT REPLIED THAT THAILAND PRODUCES NO GMO RICE. THE HEAD OF THE THAI ASSOCIATION ALSO WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THE EU JUST WANTED TO USE THE GMO ISSUE AS A TRADE BARRIER. AN AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY OFFICIAL WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THAILAND HAS BEEN DOING RESEARCH ON GMO RICE BECAUSE "...BIOTECHNOLOGY IS THE NEW TREND IN THE WORLD AND WE HAVE TO STUDY IT."

MONSANTO'S GMO COTTON SEED PLANTED ILLEGALLY?
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5. (U) THE NEXT SHOE TO DROP WAS THE ALLEGATION BY AN NGO

THAT MONSANTO COMPANY'S GMO "BT COTTON" SEED, HITHERTO ALLOWED TO BE PLANTED IN THAILAND ONLY FOR TEST PURPOSES, WAS ACTUALLY BEING GROWN ILLEGALLY ON THOUSANDS OF ACRES IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST. TWO NGOS, "BIOTHAI" AND "ALTERNATIVE
AGRICULTURAL NETWORK (AAN)," WHICH SHARE THE SAME OFFICE IN BANGKOK AS WELL AS AN ANTI-WESTERN, ANTI-MODERN AGRICULTURE BIAS, HAVE SPEARHEADED THE ALLEGATIONS. BT COTTON HAS BEEN UNDERGOING EXPERIMENTAL TRIALS FOR CLOSE TO FIVE YEARS. MONSANTO REPEATEDLY HAS SOUGHT PERMISSION FOR USE OF THE SEED TO BE DECONTROLLED. THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE RECENTLY DECIDED TO EXTEND THE TESTING PERIOD FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION, REPORTEDLY BECAUSE OF FEARS ABOUT OPPOSITION FROM NGOS LIKE THE ABOVE TWO, WHO HAVE LED THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST APPROVAL OF BT COTTON.

6. (U) IN RESPONSE TO THE ALLEGATIONS, DEPUTY MINISTER OF
UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 BANGKOK 012396

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EAP/PD, OES AND EB/OFP

FAS FOR SHEIKH, SIMMPONS, SLUTSKY/ITP

USDOC FOR OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

STATE PASS USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, SENV, ETRD, OIPP, OEXC, TH
SUBJECT: GMO DEBATE IN THAILAND HEATS UP

AGRICULTURE NEWIN APPOINTED A COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE ISSUE. MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE TRAVELED TO LOEI, PETCHABUN, AND
LOPBURI PROVINCES ON OCTOBER 18 TO VISIT AREAS WHERE THE BT COTTON REPORTEDLY WAS PLANTED. BIOTHAI AND AAN BOYCOTTED THE OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIVE TRIP AND MADE THEIR OWN SEPARATE TRIP. POST CONTACTS APPEAR TO CONFIRM THAT BT COTTON HAS REACHED ORDINARY FARMERS, ALTHOUGH REPORTS DIFFER AS TO WHETHER AS A RESULT OF LEAKAGE FROM THE MONSANTO TESTS OR THROUGH OTHER ROUTES. WE REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH
MONSANTO AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT MEMBERS OF THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE.

US GMO WHEAT-- NOT LIKELY
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7. (U) MOST RECENTLY, NEWSPAPER STORIES THE WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 16-17 CLAIMED THAT THE NATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE (BIOTECH) DNA LAB HAD FOUND GMO WHEAT IN SAMPLES OF US WHEAT TAKE FROM A THAI FLOUR MILL. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS POINTED OUT THAT GMO WHEAT IS NOT COMMERCIALLY GROWN IN THE US, BUT ONLY ONE, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "NATION", ALSO INITIALLY REPORTED THAT THE LAB DIRECTOR HAD SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE LEGITIMACY OF HIS LAB'S TEST, AS HE FELT THE SAMPLES PROBABLY HAD BEEN CONTAMINATED BY SOYBEAN OR CORN FLOUR.

SUBSEQUENT
PRESS REPORTS THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 18 WERE MORE BALANCED, FULLY REPORTING SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE TEST'S LEGITIMACY.

8. (U) THE EMBASSY AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE HAS SPOKEN WITH THE
IMPORTERS CONCERNED, US WHEAT ASSOCIATES, AND BIOTECH ABOUT THE INCIDENT. ALTHOUGH WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE POSITIVE WAS A MISTAKE,
US WHEAT ASSOCIATES IS SO CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE FALLOUT THAT IT
HAS SAID IT IS PREPARED TO PAY FOR TESTING OF US WHEAT SAMPLES FROM LEADING THAI FLOUR MILLS AT A LAB IN THE US.

REINVENTING THAI POLICY ON GMOS
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9. (U) THESE VARIOUS SCARES ALL HAVE LED TO HEIGHTENED ATTENTION TO GMO ISSUES BY THAI GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND CONSUMERS. ON SEPTEMBER 27, THE GOVERNMENT HOSTED A NATIONAL SEMINAR ON GMO POLICY, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY 700 PEOPLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND NGOS. THE EMBASSY FSN WHO ATTENDED SAID IT WAS A FAIRLY BALANCED EVENT, WITH BOTH SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF GMOS HEARD. EMBASSY MEDIA REPORTING DIFFERED WIDELY. SOME STRESSED THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT VIEW THAT GMOS ARE INEVITABLE AND CAN BENEFIT THAILAND, BUT
THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS TO TAKE A RIGOROUS, SCIENCE-BASED REGULATORY
APPROACH ON INTRODUCTION OF GMO SEEDS. OTHER REPORTS STRESSED THE NGOS' "NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS" APPROACH.

10. (U) GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT THE SEMINAR FLOATED THE IDEA OF DESIGNATING AREAS OF THAILAND AS GMO-FREE AREAS WHERE NO BIO-ENGINEERED CROPS COULD BE GROWN. IN RESPONSE TO BUSINESS CONCERNS THAT THERE IS NO AGENCY IN THAILAND THAT CAN PROVIDE THE "GMO-FREE" CERTIFICATION THAT MANY EUROPEAN IMPORTERS ARE NOW REQUIRING, THE GOVERNMENT SAID IT WOULD ESTABLISH SUCH AN AGENCY. ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT AND OTHER SOURCES, THERE IS ONLY ONE LAB IN THAILAND -- THE BIOTECH LAB IN NAKHON PATHOM WEST OF BANGKOK -- THAT CAN DETECT THE PRESENCE OF GMOS.

ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THAI FOOD PROCESSORS AND FEED INDUSTRY TOLD A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OCTOBER 13
THAT THEY OPPOSED MANDATORY LABELING OF GMO PRODUCTS. THE PRESS HAS
CARRIED SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES FROM THE THAI FOOD INDUSTRY WARNING THAT ANY LIMITATIONS ON IMPORTS OF GMO COMMODITIES TO THAILAND WOULD BE VERY HARMFUL TO THEIR BUSINESSES.

11. (U) ON OCTOBER 18, THE RTG'S INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE -- CHAIRED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL-TO-BE SUPACHAI -- MET TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE.
COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE MINISTRY OFFICIALS TOLD US THE OUTCOME WAS ESSENTIALLY AN AFFIRMATION OF EXISTING POLICY: IMPORTS AND PLANTING

OF FORTY KNOWN GMO SEEDS AND PLANTS ALLOWED ONLY FOR RESEARCH NOT COMMERCIAL USE; LABELING OF EXPORTS DONE ONLY ON THE BASIS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EXPORTER AND IMPORTER; NO DOMESTIC LABELING REQUIRED. THE ONLY INNOVATION WAS TO AFFIRM THAT THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY WILL PROVIDE GMO-FREE CERTIFICATION TO EXPORTERS UPON REQUEST, AND BASED UPON TESTING DONE AT BIOTECH'S DNA LABORATORY. THE
OCTOBER 19 CABINET MEETING REAFFIRMED THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION.
ALTHOUGH THE ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTED THIS DECISION AS A "NEW' BAN ON
GENETICALLY-MODIFIED CROPS, THE POLICY HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR SEVERAL
YEARS. THUS FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSION OF ISSUES
SUCH AS IMPORTS OF PHARMACEUTICALS WHICH CONTAIN GMOS OR IMPORTED MEAT/DAIRY PRODUCTS FROM ANIMALS FED ON GMOS.

COMMENT AND NEXT STEPS: INFLUENCING THE THAI DEBATE
UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 03 BANGKOK 012396

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EAP/PD, OES AND EB/OFP

FAS FOR SHEIKH, SIMMPONS, SLUTSKY/ITP

USDOC FOR OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

STATE PASS USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, SENV, ETRD, OIPP, OEXC, TH
SUBJECT: GMO DEBATE IN THAILAND HEATS UP

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12. (SBU) AS REPORTED REFTEL, MEDIA REPORTS THAT THE CABINET WOULD DEFINE A NEW GOVERNMENT-WIDE POLICY ON PRODUCTION, IMPORT, AND EXPORT OF GMOS AT THE OCTOBER 19 CABINET MEETING WERE OVERBLOWN. STAFFING A GOVERNMENT-WIDE POLICY WILL TAKE MORE TIME THAN THE THREE WEEKS THAT HAVE TRANSPIRED SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 27 SEMINAR. NOR HAS ANY LEGISLATION ON GMOS YET BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE PARLIAMENT. WE EXPECT THE TEST RESULT SHOWING US-SHIPPED GMO WHEAT TO BE PROVEN WRONG, BUT ARE LESS CERTAIN OF THE OUTCOME ON LOCALLY PLANTED, POSSIBLY BT COTTON.

13. (SBU) AS WE NOTE ABOVE, THAI GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND FARMERS ALL APPEAR TO RECOGNIZE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF GMOS AND SUPPORT COMMERCIALIZATION IN THAILAND IN PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER, THEY ARE CONCERNED BOTH BY THE POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF EUROPEAN MARKETS TO THEIR EXPORTS AND BY THE OUTCRY FROM AN APPARENTLY SMALL, BUT WELL ORGANIZED ANTI-GMO LOBBY. BUSINESS IN PARTICULAR MUST WEIGH WHETHER IT STANDS TO GAIN MORE FROM DEVELOPING, GROWING AND EXPORTING FUTURE GMO PRODUCTS LIKE RICE (WHERE THAILAND IS ALREADY THE WORLD'S LARGEST EXPORTER), CORN, AND COTTON (AS CLOTHING) THAN IT MIGHT LOSE IF

EXISTING MARKETS ARE CLOSED TO PROCESSED THAI EXPORTS (SUCH AS CANNED
TUNA, NOODLES, POTENTIALLY EVEN POULTRY AND SEAFOOD) THAT INCLUDE
(OR WERE FED ON) IMPORTED GMOS.

14. (SBU) THE DEBATE IN THAILAND ON THIS ISSUE HAS REALLY JUST BEGUN AND WE MUST BE PREPARED TO PLAY A ROLE IN IT TO PROTECT US INTERESTS, INTER ALIA AS THE EXPORTER OF USD 500 MILLION
MILLION IN FOOD PRODUCTS TO THAILAND ANNUALLY. POST WILL CONTINUE SUPPORTING THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF GMOS AND FAVOR A SCIENCE-BASED APPROACH, WHILE WORKING TO EDUCATE THOSE IN THE MEDIA
AND ELSEWHERE WHO ARE SWAYED BY SCARE-MONGERING ABOUT "FRANKENFOODS."

15. (SBU) WE WILL PURSUE A DIALOGUE WITH AGRICULTURE, SCIENCE,
HEALTH, AND COMMERCE MINISTRY OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS TO ENSURE THEY UNDERSTAND OUR POSITION AND THE SCIENTIFIC RATIONALE FOR IT. WE ALSO WILL HOLD PRESS ROUNDTABLES WITH THE MEDIA TO EDUCATE THEM AND EXPLAIN OUR POSITION. OUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE IS DOING OUTREACH TO
MEDIA USING INFORMATION AND ARTICLES ON BIOTECHNOLOGY TRANSLATED INTO THAI. THAILAND, A MEMBER OF THE CAIRNS FOOD EXPORTERS GROUP, GENERALLY HAS ASSOCIATED ITSELF WITH THE MIAMI GROUP IN THE BIOSAFETY NEGOTIATIONS. WE WILL URGE THEM TO CONTINUE THAT ASSOCIATION AND HOPE
US DELEGATIONS TO THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL MAKE THEM FEEL WELCOME IN THE MIAMI GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

16. (SBU) ALMOST EVERY POINT MADE AND STRATEGY SUGGESTED BY EMBASSY MANILA IN ITS EXCELLENT GMO STRATEGY CABLE (REF B) APPLIES TO THAILAND. WE TOO LACK THE EXPERTISE AND STATURE IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY TO SWAY OPINION MAKERS HERE. WE WILL NEED VISITS BY THE GIANTS IN THE FIELD -- PEOPLE LIKE NORMAN BORLAUG -- TO HELP US KEEP THE DEBATE FOCUSED ON SCIENCE RATHER THAN PSEUDO-SCIENCE. TO THE EXTENT OUR EXISTING RESOURCES PERMIT, WE WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL SPEAKER PROGRAMS ON GMOS. WE ALSO WILL SEEK TO IDENTIFY KEY OFFICIALS TO SEND TO THE US ON EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. OUR AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE IS SETTING UP MEETINGS WITH FDA FOR BIOTECH OFFICIALS VISITING THE US NEXT MONTH AND HOPES TO ARRANGE A US PROGRAM ON BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR KEY THAI OFFICIALS THROUGH THE COCHRAN PROGRAM. WE
ALSO WILL BE SEEKING US SPEAKERS FOR A THAI WORKSHOP ON BIOTECHNOLOGY EARLY NEXT YEAR. WE MAY BE ABLE TO USE A PLANNED VISIT BY SENATOR BOND IN JANUARY TO DISCUSS GMO ISSUES AT HIGHER LEVELS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT.

HECKLINGER

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 03
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 03
<^SECT>SECTION: 03 OF 03

SSN: 2396
<^SSN>2396

<^SSN>2396

TOR: 991022062218 M4111359
<^TOR>991022062553 M4111364
<^TOR>991022062717 M4111367

DIST:
SIT: HUSO KEITH LIEBERTHAL OSIUS PRITCHARD
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHBSA6518 2951507-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 221507Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM USEU BRUSSELS
OSRI: RUEHBS
DTG: 221507Z OCT 99
ORIG: USEU BRUSSELS
TO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN
RUEHAG/AMCONSUL HAMBURG
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW
SUBJ: GMO THRESHOLD REGULATION PASSES

TEXT:

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 006518

USDA FOR OSEC/SIDDIQUI
FAS FOR OA/GALVIN, ITP/SHEIKH/MACKE, OFSTS/SLUTSKY
STATE PASS USTR FOR MURPHY/IVES, NOVELLI/SANFORD, TROJE
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
CONGEN MILAN PASS AGR OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EUN , WTRO, TBIO
SUBJECT: GMO THRESHOLD REGULATION PASSES

REF: BRUSSELS 6104

1. THE EU'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOODSTUFFS ON OCTOBER 21 APPROVED AN IMPLEMENTING REGULATION ESTABLISHING A ONE PERCENT THRESHOLD FOR GMO'S IN CERTAIN FOODS.

2. UNDER NEW COMITOLOGY PUBLISHED JUNE 1999, THE REGULATION MUST BE PROCEDURALLY REVIEWED BY THE PARLIAMENT BEFORE A ROUTINE ACCEPTANCE BY THE COMMISSION, THEN PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL. IT WILL GO INTO FORCE 90 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION, PROVIDED PARLIAMENT DOES NOT DECLARE THAT THE REGULATION EXCEEDS THE COMMISSION'S IMPLEMENTING AUTHORITY. IN THAT CASE, THE PARLIAMENT COULD DEMAND THAT THE COMMISSION PREPARE NEW LEGISLATION THROUGH CO-DECISION.

3. ACCORDING TO A HIGHLY PLACED COMMISSION SOURCE, THE

PROPOSAL WAS AMENDED SLIGHTLY FROM THE DRAFT TEXT THAT USEU FAXED TO WASHINGTON AGENCIES TWO WEEKS AGO (REF). THE PRINCIPLE CHANGE WAS EXTENSION OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE FROM 20 TO 90 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION, AND ADDITION OF AN EXPLICIT STATEMENT THAT PRODUCTS ALREADY ON THE MARKET NEED NOT BE WITHDRAWN. POST WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE DOCUMENT AS APPROVED.

4. THE PROPOSAL ADDS IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL BY AMENDING COMMISSION REGULATION 1139/98, IN FORCE SINCE SEPTEMBER 1998 BUT WITHOUT SPECIFICS, ON LABELING FOODS MADE FROM OR CONTAINING INGREDIENTS DERIVED FROM ROUND-UP READY SOYBEANS AND NOVARTIS BT-CORN. THE NEW REGULATION SETS A ONE PERCENT THRESHOLD FOR ADVENTITIOUS(UNINTENTIONAL) CONTAMINATION, BUT ONLY WHEN MANUFACTURERS CAN DEMONSTRATE BEST EFFORTS TO OBTAIN NON-GMO SOURCES. BOTH THE TOTAL PRODUCT AND EACH INGREDIENT MUST MEET THE THRESHOLD. FURTHER, THE THRESHOLD FOR ADVENTITIOUS CONTAMINATION APPLIES ONLY TO GMO VARIETIES APPROVED IN THE EU; UNAPPROVED VARIETIES STILL FACE A ZERO TOLERANCE. . IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS NOT/NOT A BLANKET MEASURE EXEMPTING ALL PRODUCTS WITH LESS THAN ONE PERCENT MODIFIED PROTEIN FROM LABELING, NOR DOES IT DEFINE "GMO-FREE."

5. NO TESTING OR ANALYTICAL METHODS ARE DEFINED. A COMMISSION SOURCE RECENTLY TOLD AGATT THAT THIS WAS A DELIBERATE DECISION BECAUSE TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING SO RAPIDLY THAT ANY DEFINITION WOULD QUICKLY BE OUTDATED. HE ALSO TOLD AGATT THAT MEMBER STATE EXPERTS WILL MEET IN A FEW WEEKS TO REVIEW A REPORT ON TESTING VALIDATION FROM THE COMMISSION'S JOINT RESEARCH COUNCIL.

6. COMMENT: MANY BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COMMISSION WERE SURPRISED THAT THE MEASURE PASSED, AS SOME MEMBER STATE REPS REPORTEDLY FOUND THE LEVEL TOO LOW AND OTHERS TOO HIGH. SOME MEMBER STATES ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE VOTE NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE WTO TBT 60-DAY COMMENT PERIOD EXPIRES. ALTHOUGH EXACT VOTES ARE NOT RELEASED ONE SOURCE SAID THAT AT THE END 14 MEMBER STATES VOTED IN FAVOR AND ONLY ONE (UNIDENTIFIED) ABSTAINED.

7. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT PROCEDURAL APPROVAL BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WILL BE A RUBBER STAMP. ANTI-GMO GROUPS ALREADY HAVE BEGUN ATTACKING THE THRESHOLD AS TOO HIGH, DEMANDING THAT LEVELS BE SET AT 0.1 PERCENT OR EVEN LOWER. SOME MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAVE ALSO CALLED FOR A THRESHOLD MUCH LOWER THAN ONE PERCENT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MAY USE ITS NEW COMITOLOGY POWER TO CLAIM THE COMMISSION IS MAKING NEW POLICY WITH THIS IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL AND TO DEMAND THAT THE COMMISSION INSTEAD DRAFT NEW CO-DECISIONAL LEGISLATION, WHERE THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WOULD HAVE A VOICE ON THE SUBSTANCE.

CLOUD

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 6518

TOR: 991022131051 M4112368
DIST:
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: IMMEDIATE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: OAAUZYUW RUEHBYA3623 2980427-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: O 250427Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
OSRI: RUEHBY
DTG: 250427Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5209
RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO: RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0731
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 1016
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 9718
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE PRIORITY 3112
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 1280
SUBJ: HEALTH MINISTERS DEFER DECISION ON GMO LABELING REGIME

TEXT:

UNCLAS CANBERRA 003623

GENEVA FOR USTR

DEPARTMENT PASS USTR

USDA/FAS BERNICE SLUTSKY AND BSIMMONS

DEPARTMENT FOR EB/TPP MARILYN BRUNO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, SENV, TBIO, NZ, AS
SUBJECT: HEALTH MINISTERS DEFER DECISION ON GMO LABELING REGIME

REF: A) CANBERRA 003599; B) STATE 195702; C) WELLINGTON 001506

1. PER REF A, ON OCTOBER 22 AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND HEALTH MINISTERS DEFERRED THE ADOPTION OF A LABELING REGIME FOR GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS PENDING A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SUCH A REGIME.

2. THE VOTE TO DEFER WAS PROPOSED BY AUSTRALIAN PM JOHN HOWARD. EARLIER IN THE WEEK HOWARD HAD WRITTEN TO THE MINISTERS, ASKING THAT THE VOTE BE DEFERRED SO AS TO ALLOW AN "ALL GOVERNMENT APPROACH" THAT TOOK COSTS AND EXPORT IMPLICATIONS INTO ACCOUNT. A PRELIMINARY REPORT COMMISSIONED

BY THE AUSTRALIAN NEW ZEALAND FOOD AUTHORITY (ANZFA) HAD ESTIMATED COMPLIANCE COSTS AT USD2 BILLION FOR THE FIRST YEAR AND USD1 BILLION ANNUALLY THEREAFTER.

3. THE VOTE TO DEFER PENDING A MORE DETAILED COST ANALYSIS MEANS THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY FURTHER ACTION BY THE VOTING BODY (THE AUSTRALIAN NEW ZEALAND FOOD SAFETY COUNCIL) WILL BE TAKEN UNTIL EARLY 2000, POSSIBLY LATER. ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY LABELING REGIME IS UNLIKELY TO OCCUR UNTIL 2001 AT THE EARLIEST.

HOLMES

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 3623

TOR: 991025003026 M4114604

DIST:

SIT: BERNARD DUNCAN HAMMONDS HOLTZAPPLE HUSO KEITH LEE LIEBERTHAL OSIUS PRITCHARD SCHAEFER
SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: IMMEDIATE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: OAAUZYUW RUEHBYA3634 2990336-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
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OSRI: RUEHBY
DTG: 260336Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5217
RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUCPCIM/CIMS NTDB WASHDC
SUBJ: HEALTH MINISTERS DEFER DECISION ON GMO LABELING REGIME

TEXT:

UNCLAS CANBERRA 003634

GENEVA FOR USTR

DEPARTMENT PASS USTR

USDA/FAS BERNICE SLUTSKY AND BSIMMONS

DEPARTMENT FOR EB/TPP MARILYN BRUNO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, SENV, TBIO, KTDB, NZ, AS
SUBJECT: HEALTH MINISTERS DEFER DECISION ON GMO LABELING REGIME

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3. THE VOTE TO DEFER PENDING A MORE DETAILED COST ANALYSIS MEANS THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY FURTHER ACTION BY THE VOTING BODY (THE AUSTRALIAN NEW ZEALAND FOOD SAFETY COUNCIL) WILL BE TAKEN UNTIL EARLY 2000, POSSIBLY LATER. ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY LABELING REGIME IS UNLIKELY TO OCCUR UNTIL 2001 AT THE EARLIEST.

HOLMES

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 3634

TOR: 991025233938 M4116548

DIST:

SIT: BERNARD DUNCAN HAMMONDS HOLTZAPPLE HUSO KEITH LEE LIEBERTHAL OSIUS PRITCHARD SCHAEFER
SIT: NSC

Cable

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CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
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RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN 4379
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES 3053
SUBJ: GMO'S: DISCUSSING ITS LABOR DIMENSION WITH ITALIAN
TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 007519

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR G, DRL/IL, EUR/WE, EB/ATP
USDOC FOR 3133/USFCS/OIO/EUR/PBUCHER
4212/IEP/EUR/SED/ITALY/ACORRO/DDEFALCO
FAS FOR ITP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, SENV, ILO, WHO, IT, US
SUBJECT: GMO'S: DISCUSSING ITS LABOR DIMENSION WITH ITALIAN
TRADE UNION LEADERS

REF: ROME 5420

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

SUMMARY
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1. (U) LABCOUN MET 10/21 WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ITALIAN FOOD AND FOOD PROCESSING WORKER UNIONS TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL TRADE UNION SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING GMO RESEARCH. ROME ILO OFFICE DIRECTOR MAURIZIO SACCONI ALSO ATTENDED. LABCOUN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCING POTENTIAL RISKS WITH POTENTIAL BENEFITS (REDUCING THE ROUTINE EXPOSURE OF MILLIONS OF THIRD WORLD AGRICULTURAL WORKERS TO PESTICIDES) AND URGED THAT LABOR LEADERS ADD THIS ELEMENT TO EUROPE'S ONGOING PUBLIC DEBATE. SACCONI SAID PESTICIDE EXPOSURE IS ONE OF THE "WORST" FORMS OF CHILD LABOR TO WHICH NEWLY ADOPTED CONVENTION 182 REFERS. LABOR LEADERS RESPONDED BY DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN GMO RESEARCH THAT LEADS TO THE ELIMINATION OF PESTICIDES AND RESEARCH OF LESSER SOCIAL

VALUE AND CALLED FOR TRANSPARENCY, THE SHARING OF RESEARCH RESULTS, AND REGARD FOR FOOD SAFETY.
2. (SBU) IN THE EXPECTATION THEIR COMMENTS MAY FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE HUMAN ADVANTAGE OF REDUCING WORKER EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES, POST WILL INVITE THESE LABOR LEADERS (AND THE ILO'S ROME OFFICE DIRECTOR) TO FUTURE GMO EVENTS. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY ADDITIONAL MATERIAL THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE, ESPECIALLY VIDEOCASSETTES, FROM ILO AND WHO HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA. WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A 10/21 ROME STOPOVER BY AFL-CIO VICE PRESIDENT JACK JOYCE TO REQUEST HELP FROM U.S. LABOR AND WOULD WELCOME DEPARTMENT FOLLOW-THROUGH ON THIS CONTACT. END SUMMARY.

GMO'S AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH RISKS
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3. (U) LABCOUN MET FIVE ITALIAN TRADE UNION LEADERS 10/21 TO REVIEW THE HITHERTO UNDISCUSSED LABOR DIMENSION (REFTEL) TO EUROPE'S ONGOING GMO DEBATE. THOSE ATTENDING WERE: STEFANO MANTEGAZZA AND ENRICO TONGHINI (UIL), ALBINO GORINI AND ENRICO ORSOMANDO (CISL), AND GIANFRANCO BENZI (CGIL). ROME ILO OFFICE DIRECTOR MAURIZIO SACCONI ALSO ATTENDED.

4. (U) LABCOUN NOTED THAT THIRD WORLD WORKERS, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, FACE A WIDE ARRAY OF WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH RISKS. CONSTANT EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES SHORTENS LIFE EXPECTANCY, DEGRADES QUALITY OF LIFE, AND (VIA CONTAMINATION OF CLOTHES, SKIN, HAIR, BREATH) IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FIELD BUT TRAVELS TO WORKERS' HOMES AND IS SHARED WITH DEPENDENTS. "PRECAUTIONS" COUNT FOR LITTLE - PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS RARELY AVAILABLE AND PESTICIDE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS ARE USELESS WHEN (AS OFTEN IS THE CASE) WORKERS ARE ILLITERATE. NOR CAN KNOWLEDGE OF HANDLING RISKS BE HEEDED WHEN WORKERS MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN PRESERVING JOBS (AND INCOME) TODAY VERSUS PRESERVING ONE'S HEALTH TEN OR TWENTY YEARS INTO THE FUTURE. IN SUM, NO WORKPLACE PRACTICES OR TECHNOLOGIES ARE AVAILABLE TODAY TO REDUCE THE RISK THIRD WORLD WORKERS FACE OF EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES. LABCOUN STRESSED THAT ONLY A NEW TECHNOLOGY - GENETICALLY MODIFYING CROPS TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN PEST PROTECTION - OFFERS HOPE FOR IMPROVING THESE WORKERS' LOT.

5. (U) ILO ROME OFFICE DIRECTOR SACCONI REFERRED TO RECENTLY ADOPTED ILO CONVENTION 182 (ON ELIMINATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR) AND NOTED THAT MANY OF THE THIRD WORLD'S AGRICULTURAL LABORERS ARE MINOR CHILDREN. THE PESTICIDE RISKS THEIR GROWING BODIES FACE ARE EVEN GREATER, ESPECIALLY AS ILLITERATE WORKERS TEND TO EQUATE PESTICIDE QUANTITY WITH FATIGUE REDUCTION (MORE PESTICIDES MEANS LESS WORK).

ITALIAN UNI
ON RESPONSE
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6. (U) IN RESPONDING, STEFANO MANTEGAZZA AND GIANCARLO BENZI BOTH NOTED THAT THE SITUATION OF ITALIAN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DIFFERS GREATLY FROM THAT OF THOSE IN THE THIRD WORLD. THE PESTICIOE PROBLEM IN ITALY WAS DEALT WITH MANY YEARS AGO, ANO TOOAY'S WORKERS ARE NOT AT RISK. FOR THIS

REASON, ITALIAN UNIONS LOOK ON THE GMO ISSUE FROM THE STANOPOINT OF CONSUMERS AND CONSUMER SAFETY. "MAD COW" DISEASE AND DIOXIN-CONTAMINATED CHICKEN FORM THE BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH FOOD SAFETY ISSUES ARE BEING EXAMINED.
UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 ROME 007519

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR G, DRL/IL, EUR/WE, EB/ATP
USDOC FOR 3133/USFCS/OIO/EUR/PBUCHER
4212/IEP/EUR/SED/ITALY/ACORRO/DDEFALCO
FAS FOR ITP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, ETRD, TBIO, SENV, ILO, WHO, IT, US
SUBJECT: GMO'S: DISCUSSING ITS LABOR DIMENSION WITH ITALIAN TRADE UNION LEADERS

NEVERTHELESS, AS STATEO BY LABCOUN, BETWEEN POTENTIAL RISKS AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS (REDUCING THE ROUTINE EXPOSURE OF MILLIONS OF THIRD WORLD AGRICULTURAL WORKERS TO PESTICIDES), AN OPPORTUNE MEDIAN MUST BE FOUND. THE OPPORTUNITIES GMO RESEARCH OFFERS SHOULD NOT BE DISMISSED OUT OF HAND - PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN BUTTERFLIES.

7. (U) THE LABOR LEADERS EMPHASIZED THAT, FROM THEIR STANDPOINT, GMO RESEARCH NEEDS TO BE MARKED BY TRANSPARENCY, THE SHARING OF RESEARCH RESULTS, AND REGARD FOR FOOD SAFETY. GENETICALLY MODIFYING FOOD AND OTHER CROPS TO REDUCE PESTICIDE DEPENDENCY IS ONE THING, INTRODUCING POTENTIALLY RISKY MODIFICATIONS FOR LESS SOCIALLY NECESSARY PURPOSES IS ANOTHER. THE BENEFITS OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH, THEY EMPHASIZED, MUST BE SHARED BROADLY, NOT "SEQUESTERED" BY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES.

COMMENT
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8. (SBU) LABCOUN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF AFL-CIO VICE PRESIDENT JACK JOYCE'S 10/21 STOPOVER IN ROME (EN ROUTE TO A LABOR MEETING IN TERNI) TO DISCUSS GMO'S AND OTHER ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN. POST WOULD WELCOME GMO FEEDBACK FROM U.S. UNIONS (PERHAPS VIA FOLLOW-UP TO JOYCE MEETING) THAT WE CAN SHARE WITH LOCAL CONTACTS. WE PROPOSE TO INVITE THESE FIVE UNION LEADERS (AS WELL AS ILO ROME OFFICE DIRECTOR SACCONI) TO FUTURE GMO EVENTS. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (ESPECIALLY VIDEOCASSETTES) THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE FROM ILO AND WHO HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA, DESCRIBING STATISTICALLY AND PICTORIALLY THE CONSEQUENCES OF PESTICIDE EXPOSURE FOR RURAL WORKERS IN THE THIRD WORLD.

FOGLIETTA

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 02
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 02

SSN: 7519
<^SSN>7519

TOR: 991027111327 M4119825
<^TOR>991027111341 M4119826

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SIT: NSC

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PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
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LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 271630Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM USEU BRUSSELS
OSRI: RUEHBS
DTG: 271630Z OCT 99
ORIG: USEU BRUSSELS
TO: RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN
RUEHAG/AMCONSUL HAMBURG
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW
SUBJ: REGULATORY COMMITTEE SLATES GMO VOTE

TEXT:

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 006606

USDA FOR OSEC/SIDDIQUI
FAS FOR OA/GALVIN, ITP/SHEIKH/MACKE, OFSTS/SLUTSKY
STATE PASS USTR FOR MURPHY/IVES, NOVELLI
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE
POSTS PASS AGCOUNSELOR
CONGEN MILAN PASS AGR OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EUN , TBIO
SUBJECT: REGULATORY COMMITTEE SLATES GMO VOTE

1. ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, A COMMITTEE OF MEMBER STATE REPRESENTATIVES IS SCHEDULED TO MEET AND VOTE ON APPROVAL OF THREE GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROP VARIETIES: A FODDER BEET AND TWO VARIETIES OF CANOLA (RAPESEED).

2. THIS WILL BE THE REGULATORY COMMITTEE'S FIRST VOTE TAKEN ON AN APPLICATION UNDER DIRECTIVE 90/220 ON DELIBERATE RELEASE OF GMO'S SINCE LAST JUNE'S ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL ENDED WITH INCONCLUSIVE CALLS FOR A MORATORIUM ON NEW APPROVALS.

3. NEITHER MONSANTO, MAKER OF THE FODDER BEET, NOR AGREVO, MAKER OF THE CANOLAS, IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE VOTING. HOWEVER, IN A POSITIVE STEP, COMMISSION TECHNICAL SERVICES HAVE INVITED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMPANIES TO ATTEND THE MEETING TO GIVE PRESENTATIONS ON THEIR CROPS AND TO ANSWER

QUESTIONS.

4. COMMENT: THAT THIS VOTE IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE AT A REAL MEETING, RATHER THAN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE WHERE MEMBER STATES MAIL IN THEIR VOTES, SHOWS THAT THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO KEEP CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES DESPITE POLITICAL OPPOSITION FROM SEVERAL MEMBER STATES.

5. UNDER THE 90/220 DIRECTIVE, IF THE PRODUCTS ARE NOT APPROVED OR REJECTED BY QUALIFIED MAJORITY, THE COMMISSION IS SUPPOSED TO PASS THEM TO THE COUNCIL FOR ANOTHER VOTE. HOWEVER, IN SEVERAL PREVIOUS CASES THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO DO THIS, FOR IF THE PRODUCTS AGAIN FAIL TO BE APPROVED OR REJECTED, THE DOSSIER RETURNS TO THE COMMISSION FOR A DECISION ON ITS OWN. END COMMENT.

CLOUD

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 6606

TOR: 991027123546 M4120028

DIST:

SIT: NSC

Cable

PREC: ROUTINE
CLASS: UNCLASSIFIED
LINE1: RAAUZYUW RUEHLOA9171 3010838-UUUU--RHEHAAX.
LINE2: ZNR UUUUU ZZH
LINE3: R 280838Z OCT 99
LINE4: FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
OSRI: RUEHLO
DTG: 280838Z OCT 99
ORIG: AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0421
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0853
SUBJ: THE UK'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GMO THRESHOLD REGULATION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OUTSIDE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT CHANNELS

TEXT:

UNCLAS LONDON 009171

BRUSSELS FOR USEU

STATE FOR EUR/UBI, EB/TPP/ATP, EUR/ERA
DEPT PASS USTR ELECTRONICALLY FOR JMURPHY AND RIVES
DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY FOR U/S SCHUMACHER;
FAS/OA/GALVIN/PSTEEL;
FAS/ITP/SIMMONS/RMACKE/SHEIKH;FAS/OFSTS/LHARBERT;
FAS/CMP/JPARKER;FAS/CMP/COTS/BLUM;
FAS/CMP/GFD/RIEMENSCHNEIDER;FAA/GEERKEN;
FAS/ERS/WES/MADELL; APHIS/OA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EUN, UK
SUBJECT: THE UK'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GMO THRESHOLD REGULATION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OUTSIDE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT CHANNELS

1. POST CONTACTED THE NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES BRANCH OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD (MAFF) CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GMO THRESHOLD REGULATION, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE EU'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOODSTUFFS ON OCTOBER 21.

2. A MAFF OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES OR THE TRADING STANDARDS DEPARTMENTS OF COUNTY COUNCILS HAVE ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY FOR THIS NEW REGULATION. NONETHELESS, THE NOVEL FOODS

AND PROCESSES BRANCH OF MAFF WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING A REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, WHICH WILL STUDY HOW THIS NEW REGULATION INFLUENCES THE FOOD INDUSTRY AND THE ENFORCEMENT BODIES. HMG WILL USE THIS ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE IF THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO ALLOCATE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS NEW REGULATION. THE IMPACT STUDY SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE TIME THE NEW REGULATION IS PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL. LADER

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 9171

TOR: 991028073537 M4121680

DIST:

SIT: BLINKEN DAVIDSON GORDON KASS NORLAND VONLIPSEY YEE
SIT: NSC

Cable

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RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 0223
INFO: RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0249
SUBJ: REPORT GIVES BOOST TO GMO/BIOTECH IN IRELAND

THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE TREAT ACCORDINGLY.

TEXT:

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 005867

SENSITIVE

FAS FOR ITP/SHIKH/GRUEFF
GENEVA FOR USTR; ALSO AGRICULTURE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, SENV, PGOV, EI
SUBJECT: REPORT GIVES BOOST TO GMO/BIOTECH IN IRELAND

THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE TREAT ACCORDINGLY.

REFS: A) DUBLIN 2196 B) DUBLIN 2974 C) DUBLIN 3229

1. (U) SUMMARY. THE RESULTS OF THE IRISH DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT'S PUBLIC "CONSULTATION" PROCESS ON GMOS (REF C), PROVIDED A SURPRISINGLY STRONG ENDORSEMENT FOR GMO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN IRELAND. THE REPORT, WRITTEN BY FOUR GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED INTERLOCUTORS (REF B), OPPOSES ANY MORATORIUM ON GMO RESEARCH OR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY. THE REPORT ALSO RECOMMENDS CONTINUING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR GMO PRODUCTION IN IRELAND, CALLING THE BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY A "VITAL" ELEMENT OF THE IRISH ECONOMY. ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DEMPSEY ENDORSED THE REPORT, BUT STRESSED THAT FUTURE GM PRODUCT AUTHORIZATIONS WILL STILL BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AMENDED EU DIRECTIVE 90/220/EEC. PUBLIC REACTION TO THE REPORT HAS BEEN MUTED: ANTI-GMO FORCES DISMISS THE REPORT AS "IRRELEVANT" WHILE GMO PROPONENTS QUIETLY CELEBRATE WHAT THEY SEE AS A SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC

RELATIONS VICTORY. THOUGH THE IRISH BIOTECH INDUSTRY HAS CLEARED A MAJOR HURDLE, THE REPORT IS JUST THE FIRST STEP IN THE GOI'S EFFORTS TO CREATE A GMO POLICY POSITION. END SUMMARY.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT FINDS POTENTIAL GMO RISKS "VERY SMALL" AND URGES IRELAND NOT MISS BIOTECH TRAIN

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2. (U) IRISH ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DEMPSEY ANNOUNCED, OCTOBER 8, THE PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRING PANEL (INDEPENDENT INTERLOCUTORS) FOR "THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION DEBATE ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS AND THE ENVIRONMENT," CONDUCTED EARLIER THIS YEAR (REFS). AMONG THE REPORT'S KEY CONCLUSIONS ARE:

-- THE CASE FOR A MORATORIUM ON GMOS "DOES NOT EXIST" AND THE POTENTIAL RISK FROM GM FOODS IS "VERY SMALL."

-- THE GOI SHOULD CONDUCT ITS OWN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ON GMOS. TO DO THIS THE GOI NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITIES OF THE IRISH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IN THE AREA OF GENETIC TECHNOLOGY.

-- THE GOI MUST FACTOR IN THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF BIOTECH WHEN EVALUATING APPROVAL OF BIOTECH PRODUCTS. "NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN THE AREA OF DELIBERATE RELEASE OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING OR CONSISTING OF GMOS SHOULD...BE POSITIVE...(AND) REFLECT THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF GENETIC ENGINEERING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG, PROACTIVE BIOTECHNOLOGY SECTOR."

-- ATTEMPTING TO KEEP GM-RELATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OUT OF THE IRISH MARKET THROUGH "SEGREGATION" IS NOT FEASIBLE. "THE POLICY OF MIXING CONVENTIONAL AND GENETICALLY-MODIFIED PRODUCE IN NON-EU NATIONS, PARTICULARLY COUNTRIES WITH WHOM IRELAND AND THE EU HAVE IMPORTANT TRADE RELATIONS, SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, IS A REALITY WHICH MUST BE FACED AND WHICH REQUIRES A MORE PRACTICAL POLICY APPROACH THAN SEGREGATION."

3. THE REPORT REPEATEDLY UNDERLINES THE POTENTIAL VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF GMOS TO THE IRISH ECONOMY, SAYING: "IN PURE ECONOMIC TERMS, IF IRELAND REJECTS OR IGNORES BIOTECHNOLOGY, IT CANNOT EXPECT TO REMAIN ATTRACTIVE TO HIGH-TECH BASED INVESTMENT." THIS ASPECT OF THE REPORT RECEIVED CRITICISM FROM EVEN THE PRO-GM IRISH PRESS WHICH HAS CHARGED THAT THE ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL POLICY ASPECTS OF BIOTECH WERE OUTSIDE THE MANDATE OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS, WHICH WAS TO EXAMINE THE "ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER SAFETY ASPECTS OF GMOS."

IRELAND STILL TO APPROVE GMO PRODUCTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH EU DIRECTIVES

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4. (U) IN A POLICY DOCUMENT ISSUED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE REPORT, MINISTER DEMPSEY DECLARED THAT THE GOI WILL ACCEPT THE REPORT'S CONCLUSIONS AND ACT ON ITS

RECOMMENDATIONS. HE NOTED IN THE DOCUMENT, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOI WILL CONTINUE TO CONSIDER GM PRODUCT AUTHORIZATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AMENDED EU DIRECTIVE 90/220/EEC AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH EU POLICIES.

PUBLIC REACTION TO REPORT IS MUTED

5. (SBU) THERE HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY LITTLE PUBLIC REACTION TO THE REPORT. INITIAL PRESS COVERAGE WAS MUTED

SENSITIVE

FAS FOR ITP/SHIKH/GRUEFF
GENEVA FOR USTR; ALSO AGRICULTURE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, SENV, PGOV, EI
SUBJECT: REPORT GIVES BOOST TO GMO/BIOTECH IN IRELAND

BECAUSE OF THE REPORT'S RELEASE OVER A WEEKEND. GMO OPPONENTS EVIDENTLY CONCLUDED THE BEST REACTION TO THE REPORT WAS TO DISMISS IT AS "TOO LATE IN THE DAY" TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THE LEADING ANTI-GMO GROUP, GENETIC CONCERN, FOR EXAMPLE, CALLED THE REPORT "IRRELEVANT" SAYING ANY IMPORTANT DECISIONS ABOUT GMOS ARE "NOW BEING MADE AT THE EU-LEVEL." GMO PROPONENTS WERE QUIETLY PLEASED WITH WHAT THEY SEE AS A VICTORY FOR BIOTECH IN IRELAND. MONSANTO REPRESENTATIVES TOLD POST THAT THE COMPANY WILL USE THE REPORT AND MINISTER DEMPSEY'S CONSULTATION PROCESS AS "ROLE MODELS" FOR ITS EFFORTS TO SECURE THE ADOPTION OF GM-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN OTHER EU MEMBER STATES.

6. (SBU) COMMENT. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT'S REPORT GIVES A BOOST TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY IN IRELAND. IRISH PUBLIC OPINION, THOUGH STILL LESS ANTI-GMO THAN PUBLIC OPINION IN NEIGHBORING EU STATES, IS STILL UNDECIDED ON THE ISSUE AND THE REPORT SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN INFLUENCING THEIR VIEWS. THIS PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT IS, HOWEVER, THE FIRST STEP IN THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A FORMAL POLICY ON GMOS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPOINTED AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP HEADED BY TANAISTE (DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) AND MINISTER FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT, MARY HARNEY, TO FORMULATE A NATIONAL GMO POLICY BY YEAR'S END. THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE IS LIKELY TO FOLLOW THE REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS BUT THE ULTIMATE POLICY MAY NOT BE AS "POSITIVE" AS ADVOCATED BY THE REPORT. MINISTER DEMPSEY'S DECLARATION THAT NO NEW GM PRODUCTS WILL BE AUTHORIZED FOR DEVELOPMENT OR SALE IN IRELAND UNLESS APPROVED UNDER THE CRITERIA OF THE AMENDED EU DIRECTIVE 90/220/EEC IS A REMINDER THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IS NOT GOING TO BE MORE FORWARD LEANING ON GMOS THAN THE POLICY COMING OUT OF BRUSSELS. THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY IN IRELAND SCORED A VICTORY WITH THIS REPORT, ESPECIALLY IN THE BATTLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF IRISH CONSUMERS, BUT THE WINNER OF THE LARGER "WAR" BETWEEN THE BIOTECH

INDUSTRY, EUROPEAN CONSUMERS, AND BRUSSELS REMAINS
UNDECIDED. END COMMENT.
SULLIVAN

SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 02
<^SECT>SECTION: 02 OF 02

SSN: 5867
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TOR: 991029074919 M4123894
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