

## **Press Release**

### **GMO: INRAN REPLY**

Prof Carlo Cannella was appointed President of INRAN only few months ago, therefore he would like to give a prompt answer to the Minister through a statement released by the coordinator of the project “GMO in agriculture” Dr. Giovanni Monastra,

“In respect to the recent preposterous and groundless controversy between SAgRI/Prof. Maggiore-INRAN, is made known that:

#### **1. Role of Prof. Maggiore within the research**

In 2005 INRAN drew up an agreement with Professor Tommaso Maggiore within the project “GMO in agriculture”. Prof Tommaso Maggiore within his role as supervisor of the “Angelo Menozzi” Experimental Agriculture Farm (Landriano, Pavia) of the University of Milan, was involved in the supervision of farming the transgenic maize MON810 and, as control the conventional isogenic strain. I would like to underline that **Prof. Maggiore was never and under any circumstances appointed to test the presence of mycotoxin ( fumonisins or further) in the specific GMO maize.** Professor Maggiore, as supervisor of the Experimental Agriculture Farm, was in charge of supervising the agronomic issues related to maize’s farming and the attack of pyralid and to collect the pertinent data.

Professor Marina Miraglia, Head of the Department “GMO and Xenobiotics of Fungin Origin” of the National Centre for Food Quality and Hazard of the “Istituto Superiore di Sanità”, was in charge of the issues related to the presence of mycotoxins.

INRAN was never aware that Professor Maggiore was testing the presence of mycotoxins in maize obtained with the trials within the project “GMO in Agriculture”.

#### **2. The alleged concealment of data**

With particular reference to the accusation made by SAgRI towards INRAN for having failed to communicate the data on the fumonisins levels collected by Professor Maggiore and for having prevented him to do it, is made known that:

a In the above mentioned Agreement, **as in any agreement concerning research activities**, the commissioning and funding Board (in this case, INRAN) claims the ownership of the experimental data and, therefore, claims the right to “authorize” the dissemination of the data in scientific articles by the other partners involved.

For this very reason the statement made by SAgRI to the press is truly bewildering as a request for an authorization to publish has never been made, neither by Professor Maggiore nor by other members of his team. Moreover, as we never had any knowledge of the fact that Professor Maggiore had some data concerning the presence of fumonisins or other mycotoxins, is unjustifiable to suggest that INRAN prevented the dissemination of the pertinent data.

b In the final report, forwarded to INRAN by Professor Maggiore, we can find the agronomic data **without any reference to the presence of fumonisins or other mycotoxins**. As commonly known in the scientific community, the scientist who obtains the data usually writes a scientific report in order to submit it to the project coordinator that can authorize its publication. Once again I would like to underline that the team of Professor Maggiore has never made any request for scientific publication to INRAN.

c Lastly, it is important to point out that the data collected by Professor Marina Miraglia (the only results we have knowledge of) have been long ago included in the European Project “Safe Food” and they will be published in within this project together with other data from field trials performed in different European Countries.

Last but not least, regarding the so called “dangerousness” of the conventional maize used in this project, I would like to point out that, as stated in the CE Regulation 1126/2007 of the European Commission, the highest degree of fumonisins in non-engineered maize is of 4000 ppb, a level far greater than the amount detected both in the transgenic (1350ppb) and in the conventional maize (2450 ppb) used in the field trial.

“I truly hope, dott. Monastra concludes, that this statement may help to put an end to this groundless speculation. On the contrary, if Professor Maggiore has some data on fumonisins obtained from INRAN’s field trials, I urge him to publish and compare them with the official data of the “GMO Project”

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