

GMOs : EU reinforces controls on Chinese rice products

The European Union decided yesterday to reinforce its controls on imports of Chinese rice products. In a move to respond to an increasing detection of products contaminated with unauthorised genetically modified (GM) rice, Member States endorsed a European Commission Decision to that effect at the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH). The Commission based the Decision on an audit carried out in China by its Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) in March 2011 and on the continuing notifications through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). The mission's initial findings indicate an uncertainty as to the level, type and number of GM events, which may have contaminated rice products originating in, or consigned, from China. They also indicate that there is a risk of further introductions of non-authorised GMOs in such rice products. The endorsed Decision provides for the use of a screening method that can detect up to 26 GM rice events potentially present in the food and feed chain in China. The existing obligation for the Chinese authorities to provide a pre-export analytical report to demonstrate the absence of GM rice events is maintained. However, the analytical report's verification is reinforced from the current random requirement to 100% of all consignments of rice products originating from China. Since September 2006 rice products originating in or consigned from China contaminated with the unauthorised GM rice Bt63 have been notified through the RASFF. To address this issue, the Commission adopted an emergency measure ([2008/289/EC](#)) in April 2008 to facilitate controls on rice products from China entering the Union. Despite measures announced by the Chinese authorities to control the presence of unauthorised GM rice, alerts continued to be notified by Member States, and in March 2010 new GM rice events were found. In light of these findings, the continuing alerts, and taking into account that no GM rice products are authorised in the Union, it is considered necessary to extend the scope of the original decision and to reinforce controls prior to free circulation of the such products onto the market. The endorsed measure will be reviewed in six months. For more information please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biotechnology/index_en.htm