

# GMO IMPORT BANS WOULD BE BOTH UNNECESSARILY COSTLY AND POINTLESS

## THE GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE

### GENETICALLY MODIFIED GRAIN IS STANDARD

The first genetically modified (GM) maize and soybean crops were harvested 20 years ago. Since then, GM crops have been rapidly adopted worldwide, because they help farmers produce better harvests with fewer resources, including land, water and energy, and provide economic benefits to the food chain and consumers.



### PRODUCT SAFETY REGULARLY CONFIRMED

Given that the European Food Safety Authority, along with the relevant authorities of other developed economies, have regularly found GM grain to be at least as healthy and nutritious as non-GM varieties, it has become an essential ingredient for food processors and livestock producers alike. Consumers worldwide have consumed trillions of meals that benefited from the use of safe, affordable GM ingredients or inputs.



#### UNITED KINGDOM: abc<sup>1</sup>

If imports of GM soya were to cease it would have huge negative consequences, including a **reduction in domestic meat production** and an **increase in consumer prices**.

#### GERMANY: Institut für Agribusiness, Gießen<sup>2</sup>

Stopping soy imports into the EU-28 would cause **total welfare losses of nearly €30 bn per year** for the EU. Stopping imports into Germany alone would cause losses of about €10 bn.

#### NETHERLANDS: Wageningen University<sup>3</sup>

The extra costs to Dutch livestock farmers over a period of 3 to 5 years are estimated at between **€60 and €100 million a year**, with approximately 80% being borne by poultry farmers. This would also increase the price for organic feed which would lead to more financial pressure on organic livestock farmers.

#### SPAIN: University of Reading<sup>4</sup>

GM soya imports from 2000-2014 led to savings of **€55 bn**. Attempting to replace GM soya imports with conventional soya would increase the prices of soybeans and soybean meal by 291% and 301% respectively, in the short term.

#### EU COMMISSION<sup>6</sup>

The EU is **70% dependent** on imports of protein rich crops and has a **self-sufficiency ratio of 3%** for its soybean and soymeal needs. For now, the EU's production of those products cannot on its own meet the EU's protein demand for feed.

#### ITALY: Istituto per la competitività (I-Com)<sup>5</sup>

A national ban would cost the Italian economy **€1.75 bn over a two-year period (2015-2016)**. A replacement for the GM soy used in 2013 would have entailed an increase in production costs of **around € 200M**. The GI (Geographical Indications) and AO (Appellation of Origin) would be the most affected sectors.

#### EU: COCERAL, FEDIOL and FEAC (representing commodity collection and trade, oilseed crushing and compound feed manufacturing)<sup>7</sup>

Not all soy in feed can be replaced by alternative protein sources. Substituting GM soy with non-GM soy would lead to an **increase in feed costs of around 10% for the livestock sector**, i.e. € 1.2 bn if France, Germany, Hungary and Poland opted out, or € 2.8 bn for the EU livestock sector if all EU countries opted out.

### PATCHWORK EUROPE?

In 2015, frustrated by EU Member States' systematic refusal to approve imports of new GM food and feed traits for the Union as a whole, the EU Commission proposed that individual EU Member States be allowed to ban imports of EU-approved GMOs on their territory. The Commission then resisted demands for an impact assessment of the legislation. However, one year later there is a significant body of evidence quantifying the economic damage that such bans would cause to European farmers and consumers.

**NO!**



### RISK FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Europe is highly dependent on imported protein sources for livestock production derived from grain such as soybeans. Without them, the competitiveness and viability of our livestock farming sector would be jeopardised. Most of those imported grain commodities consist of or contain GMOs. Non-GM maize and soybeans are more expensive, niche products purchased mainly for the organic sector. At the same time, years of anti-GM scaremongering by anti-GM campaigners has fuelled public fears about GM imports and ingredients.



<sup>1</sup> The Agricultural Biotechnology Council (abc), with expert input and advice from individuals and organisations across the agricultural technology, food and farming sectors. "Going Against the Grain", 2015

<sup>2</sup> Schmitz et al. Institut für Agribusiness, Gießen: Sektorale und volkswirtschaftliche Auswirkungen von EU-Strategien zur Begrenzung von eiweißreichen Importfuttermitteln bzw. zur Umstellung auf gentechnikfreie Futtermittel heimischer Herkunft (Agribusiness - Forschung Nr. 34), May 2015. Quote is translated from this summary article by the author of the study.

<sup>3</sup> C.P.A. van Wagenberg and R. Hoste. Wageningen University - Research Institute LEI: Effecten van een verbod op het gebruik van genetisch gemodificeerde soja als veevoedergrondstof, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Francisco Areal, University of Reading: "Genetically modified soy, an irreplaceable raw material in the EU. Assessment of alternatives and economic impact on the Spanish fodder industry and livestock farming sector", 2015

<sup>5</sup> ICOM-Istituto per la competitività. "Benefits under stress: an estimation of GMO economic value in the Italian Food Supply Chain", 2015

<sup>6</sup> EC Staff Working Document "Genetically modified commodities in the EU", SWD(2016) 61 final, March 2016

<sup>7</sup> Coceral, Fefac & Fediol: "Economic impact assessment on the European GM authorisation "opt-out" proposal", October 2015