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Hidden Viral Gene Found in GMOs: Q&A

GM Freeze and the New York based Bioscience Resource Project today published a Q&A of key issues regarding the recent revelation that the majority of GM crops contain sequences encoding the viral Gene VI, which has not been fully assessed for safety.

Questions include:

- What's been discovered and by whom?
- Was Gene VI missed or ignored?
- Why worry?
- We have been eating Cauliflower Mosaic Virus for centuries, so what's the problem?
- Aren't Gene VI and its protein broken down during digestion?
- Who is to blame for failing to assess the possible risks associated with Gene VI?
- Does this reveal flaws in the GM regulatory systems?
- What should happen now to ensure Gene VI is safe?
- Who should take responsibility for dealing with this problem?

Dr Jonathan Latham of the Bioscience Research Project, who originally raised concerns about Gene VI in January 2013, [2] said:

"We are supposed to believe that EFSA and other GMO regulators are acting in the public interest and in accordance with the best scientific understanding. The belated discovery of Gene VI, and the subsequent actions of regulators, suggest this is not so. Regulators can begin to restore public confidence, however, by never again approving viral sequences and recalling transgenic events containing FMV and CaMV promoters."

Commenting Pete Riley of GM Freeze said:

"The presence of Gene VI in many commercial crops raises serious concerns about the safety of GM crops and the regulatory systems around the world. We are very concerned that it appears to have slipped through the regulatory system unnoticed and the response has been 'so what?'"

"GM foods and feeds are global commodities and therefore have the capacity to cause harm to millions of people or farm animals. This is one very good reason why the regulatory system must be thorough and based on the precautionary principle. No crop showing evidence of questionable safety should enter the environment or food chain."

ENDs

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Notes

[1] GM Freeze and Bioscience Resource Project, 11 March 2013. [Gene VI in GM Crops: What's happening and why you should know](#)

[2] Independent Science News, 21 January 2013. "[Regulators Discover a Hidden Viral Gene in Commercial GMO Crops](#)"