

Supplementary Evidence: Science and Technology Committee inquiry on GM foods and application of the precautionary principle in Europe

6 November 2014



The following points are supplied to the committee in response to questions asked of Liz O'Neill by Pamela Nash MP, during the oral evidence session on 15 October 2014.

Defining independent research

The principle behind GM Freeze's concern about the lack of independent research on GM is that, especially in a field as controversial as GM, research that is to be trusted must be carried out in the public interest rather than within the context of commercial gain. For example, those carrying out biosafety research should be free of links with related industries, including having projects or positions funded by industry. Those carrying out, funding, overseeing and commissioning a study must be disinterested in the material success of a particular product or outcome. All of these parties must be free from conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment. It is hard to see how researchers or institutions who themselves hold potentially lucrative intellectual property rights could be considered independent when considering the patented products or processes under consideration.

Research that shows risk from the consumption or usage of GM products

In general, it is important to note that the nature of the debate around GM appears to discourage the discourse, dissent and counter-expertise that lies at the heart of good science. Many studies showing cause for concern have not been picked up by others and replicated, as good science would command, in order to critique, verify or build on the findings. Instead there is a tendency to ignore such studies, leaving the questions they raise unanswered. This does a disservice to both sides of the debate, and to the progress and responsibility of science, and is of great concern to GM Freeze.

Specific studies to which we would draw the committee's attention are listed below. We would be happy to provide more information on any of these at the request of the committee or any individual members.

El-Shamei et al, 2012, "Histopathological changes in some organs of male rats fed on genetically modified corn (Ajeeb YG)" *Journal of Americal Science*, 8(10)

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Mesnage R et al, 2013 “Cytotoxicity on human cells of Cry1Ab and Cry1Ac Bt insecticidal toxins alone or with a glyphosate-based herbicide” *Journal of Applied Toxicology* 33(7): 695-9
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22337346>

Hilbeck A, McMillan JM, Meier M, Humbel A, Schläpfer-Miller J, Trtikova M, 2012 “A controversy re-visited: Is the coccinellid *Adalia bipunctata* adversely affected by Bt toxins?” *Environmental Sciences Europe*. 2012;24(1):10. doi:10.1186/2190-4715-24-10.
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