

Thin Ice



Feed me the Truth
campaign launched!

See inside for more...



Campaigners highlight difficulty in finding eggs from non GM-fed chickens

New GM maize threat on the horizon

In October the European Commission proposed approving 3 GM maize crops for cultivation in Europe. It was backed by a few pro-GM Member States. The crops include two new insecticidal maize plants – Pioneer's 1507 and Syngenta's Bt11 – and a reauthorization request for Monsanto's MON810 which is the only GM crop currently allowed to be grown in the European Union and is also modified to be pest resistant.

If the Commission gets its way then these would be the first authorisations for GM cultivation in Europe in 18 years.

This proposal is the first test of how anti-GM nations will vote now that they have been able to 'opt out' of EU authorised GM crops – a situation we have always considered risky (see [Thin Ice 38](#) and [37](#)). It will also be the first big GM vote since the UK voted to leave the European Union. The UK Government's [Agriculture Minister George Eustice MP](#) has already stated



that after Brexit he wants to see GM crops grown across England. However, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales all have policies against GM crops and have opted out of the crops being considered for EU cultivation. The UK's usual pro-GM stance will not therefore reflect the very publicly stated different opinions of the four UK countries. Scotland and Wales in particular have

cause for concern given the potential for cross-contamination across land borders with England. The three crops up for approval this time are not likely to be grown in England as we do not suffer from the pests that attack them, but after 18 years of stalemate the approval of any GM crop is likely to lead to a rush of further applications that could make it very difficult for Scotland and Wales to protect their GM free farmers and produce.

European Parliament is resisting

The European Parliament has already expressed its objection to the Commission's proposal. The Parliament voted against the Commission after its Environment Committee proposed that the Commission should withdraw its draft decision to approve these GM crops. That vote is not legally binding

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This October GM Freeze launched our much anticipated campaign on animal feed. *Feed me the Truth* highlights the extent to which consumers are being kept in the dark about GM crops being fed to the animals who produce our eggs, meat and dairy products.

We ranked supermarkets against a five-star standard on:

- their policy commitment to supporting and developing non-GM supply lines
- the information they provide to consumers
- the availability of non GM-fed products in their stores

A shocking nine out of ten performed so poorly they received a zero rating with no non GM-fed products available outside their organic ranges and no plans to do better. Only Waitrose did well, scoring two of a possible five stars.

GM crops are grown in ways that harm people, animal and the environment. Please help us put pressure on the supermarkets to *Feed me the Truth*.

Non GM-fed is possible!

Waitrose announced on 1 November that some of its pork products will come from animals partly fed on non GM, European-grown soya. This is great news for our campaign as it shows that supermarkets can demand GM free and that doing so will lead to less GM in the field.

GM Freeze in the public eye

[Our comments on Rothamsted Research's proposed new GM wheat trial](#) (see page 4) made it into [the Times](#) and [the Telegraph](#), while [our take on Waitrose's adoption of non-GM feed for its pigs](#) was featured in the [Daily Mail](#), [Farming UK News](#) and the [Somerset County Gazette](#).

Also in early November, a poll commissioned by Bayer (of Monsanto merger fame!) allegedly showed that a majority of UK consumers now support the growing of GM crops. Further analysis showed that just over half of respondents actually said they would be okay with GM crops that showed no negative consequences for human health of the environment. As no such crops yet exist, [we said that "the agrochemical giant asked people to vote for a figment of its own imagination"](#) in [the Times](#) and [RT](#) (Russia Today's UK news website).

Back in October, our *Feed me the Truth* campaign launch was reported in [Food and Drink Industry Magazine](#), the [Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management](#), [Natural Product News](#) and lots and lots of social media.

Away from the media, 1 November saw GM Freeze Director Liz O'Neill take part in a [Royal Society panel debate in Cardiff](#). The event asked participants to choose between GM and a range of other potential solutions to a fantastical future scenario of massively reduced land mass and a still growing population. Liz proposed that waste reduction, poverty eradication and the ethical solution to population growth (educating girls in the poorest communities) should come much higher up anyone's list of solutions than GM crops.

FEEDMETHE TRUTH.ORG	5 Star Standard										GM FREEZE	22 Nov 2016
Policy / Information / Products Key: Met criteria	Aldi	Asda	Coop	Iceland	Lidl	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsbury's	Tesco	Waitrose		
Recognises GM-fed as an area of concern.												
GM Freeze can access basic information about GM-fed products.												
Non GM-fed own brand products available.												
1 Star Standard ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	
Commitment to investigating and developing non GM-fed.												
GM Freeze can access detailed information AND consumers can access basic information about GM-fed products.												
Non GM-fed own brand products available in 3 categories.												
2 Star Standard ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	
Commitment to exclude GM-fed from some products.												
Consumers can find detailed information about GM-fed products.												
Non GM-fed own brand products available in 4 categories AND all own brand products in 1 category are non GM-fed.												
3 Star Standard ★ ★ ★ ★ ★												
Commitment to phasing out GM-fed.												
Non GM-fed own brand products in all categories AND all own brand products in 3 categories are non GM-fed.												
4 Star Standard ★ ★ ★ ★ ★												
Commitment to exclude GM-fed.												
All own brand products non GM-fed.												
5 Star Standard ★ ★ ★ ★ ★												

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but does send a strong signal to the Commission. We would like to thank our supporters who took part in an urgent action to contact Members of the European Parliament in October. Unfortunately this vote was announced too late to be included in the last issue of *Thin Ice*, so was only sent round by email. If you can, please make sure you are on our email list at www.gmfreeze.org/emails as these things often come up without much notice.

What next?

The Council of Ministers (representatives of each Member State) were due to vote on the Commission's proposal on 16 November but this was now been downgraded to a discussion on the crops instead. We understand that the Council will vote on 9 December, in the busy run up to Christmas. Please do sign up to our emails for any urgent actions that could help sway future votes.

TAKE ACTION

A focus on Sainsbury's

In September last year Sainsbury's was able to give us a list of its non-organic non GM-fed products, which included Taste the Difference chicken, turkey and duck; Taste the Difference and Omega-3 eggs and all its farmed salmon.

Asked for similar information this October it says it does *'not have a specific list available'* but that it will account for customer feedback when it next reviews its corporate policy.

Please write to Sainsbury's head office asking for more non GM-fed products, particularly turkey or duck if that's what you like for Christmas. Let them know you will shop elsewhere if it can't commit to meeting this need for you.

Mike Coupe, Chief Executive
J Sainsbury Plc
33 Holborn
London EC1N 2HT

If you have access to a computer then see our website for more campaign ideas, including taking photos of yourself blindfolded, with a supermarket's own brand product or bag-4-life and join us on social media! www.feedmethetruth.org



Supermarket	Eggs	Milk	Dairy Products	Poultry	Red meat	Farmed fish
Aldi	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed
Asda	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed
Coop	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed
Iceland	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed
Lidl	?	?	?	?	?	?
Marks & Spencer	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed
Morrisons	?	?	GM-Fed	?	GM-Fed	?
Sainsbury's	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed	GM-Fed
Tesco	GM-fed	GM-fed	?	?	GM-fed	?
Waitrose	ALL *Non-GM	GM-Fed	?	*Non-GM chicken and turkey	*Non-GM New Zealand lamb (fresh, frozen and ready meals)	*Non-GM includes frozen salmon

■ GM-Fed = the animals producing these foods are reared on at least some GM-feed.

■ Non-GM = the company has stated (via its own publications/website or a reply to a written question) that GM feed may not be given to the animals that produce this range.

? GM Freeze has not been able to confirm details



22 Nov 2016

STOP PRESS

After the spectacular failure of its “whiffy” GM wheat that didn’t deter pests, Rothamsted Research is hoping to put a new GM wheat trial into the ground this Spring. Its application was logged by Defra on 4 November, while a press conference stated that the crop is intended to increase yields to help avoid “an impending major food shortage crisis” and, bizarrely, that it has been “sprinkled with gold dust”.

Gold particles are routinely used in “gene gun” techniques for inserting DNA so the gold dust comments are meaningless spin but the claim that GM crops are the answer to feeding the hungry must be challenged. In

our own statement to the press, GM Freeze Director Liz O’Neill said that *“Rothamsted’s researchers have totally missed the point. World food production already far exceeds the needs of generations to come but people still go hungry. Techno-fixes like GM wheat won’t change that because they don’t address the real problems. GM is a bogus solution sucking up funding that could make a real difference if it was spent on waste reduction and poverty eradication. Then we could all eat food that was produced responsibly, fairly and sustainably.”*

GM Freeze will scrutinise this application and participate in a public

consultation, which is open until 21 December. It is important that we aren’t the only voice speaking out against this crop so please respond if you possibly can. Details are published online at www.gov.uk/government/publications/genetically-modified-organisms-rothamsted-research-16r0802

We will share our analysis and details of our planned submission with supporters and member organisations by email so do join up online if you are able to at www.gmfreeze.org/emails. If you would like more details by post, please call Raoul on 0845 217 8992.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A spotlight on India

GM Mustard debate burns on

 At the time of writing, the [Indian Supreme Court](#) was due to hear a case on GM mustard on 14 November. Environmentalist Aruna Rodrigues filed a plea to prohibit open field trials and the commercial release of GM mustard. Whilst the Government opposes the plea, it has nonetheless told the Supreme Court that it will not proceed without the Court’s go-ahead. One of the grounds of the plea is that only a summary of the biosafety dossier has been made publicly available.

Earlier in October protests against GM mustard intensified, with farm

activists from 20 Indian states and members of nearly 130 organisations taking part. These organisations represent farmers unions, political parties, civil society groups and trade unions and all protested the government’s plans to commercially release GM mustard. They gathered at the Jantar Mantar landmark (a historical astronomical observatory) to pledge and declare that they will continue to fight efforts to introduce GM crops in India.

Bt cotton growing falls

BT cotton, genetically modified to be resistant to the American bollworm, was first introduced in 2003 and was widely adopted. However, the growing season of 2016-17 has seen a steep

35% decline in the number of acres dedicated to Bt cotton, compared to last year. This is largely because it is less immune to other pests that attack the cotton, such as white-fly and the leaf-curl virus. Farmers suffered extensive white-fly damage last year leading many to revert to native varieties as well as to other crops like pulses and oilseeds.



GM Freeze is working to help create a world in which our food is produced responsibly, fairly and sustainably. We consider and raise the profile of concerns about the impact of genetic modification. We inform, inspire, represent and support those who share our concerns. We campaign for a moratorium on GM food and farming in the UK. We oppose the patenting of genetic resources.



A referenced version of this newsletter is available online – www.gmfreeze.org/thinice

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We use an 0845 phone number to protect the privacy of our staff, who work from home. Calls to this number will cost 3p per minute plus your telephone company’s Access Charge.

 GM Freeze

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