

Üplingen, 6th September 2011

Agricultural Biotechnologies in FRANCE

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Farmer

Carcans, 50 kilometres North West of Bordeaux

Problems with maize cultivation

- Atlantic Ocean winds can cause serious damage to crops at early stages of development.
- Main weeds:
summer graminas (crabgrass, panic),
perennial plants (quackgrass, nutsedge edible)
- Pest : sesamia (pink caterpillar)
→ three generations during summer.

Which solution?

- Against strong sandy wind in spring, we have started to change our agronomical practices: developing no-till.
- But weeds and sesamia infestations have prevented us from continuing.

New technologies like Bt and herbicide tolerant maize.

As a farmer, if I want to deliver quality production, without mycotoxins for example.

I need innovation.

Maize is a sustainable crop

GM Maize (Bt):

-nearly + 10% of yield:

non GMO : 14,7 tons/ha

GMO: 16 tons/ha

-Bt maize not attacked by sesamia

-> better grain quality (less mycotoxins).

->plants in better shape -> improvement of water use (less stress).

Scientific programs organized by French maize growers association

(AGPM / Maizeurop)

The main conclusions are:

- increased yield between 7 to 10% on average but can reach 30%.
- improvement of grain quality : less 30 to 60 % of fumonisins.
- preservation of insect biodiversity compared to chemical uses against sesamia.

Coexistence

- study on buffer zone and coexistence management.
- We have managed coexistence using separation distances (25 to 50 meters) between fields and rows of non-GM varieties around GM fields (12 to 24 rows).
- no cross pollination with other plant species under European condition.
- Coexistence is easy to built.

2 questions to EU

- Does EU legislation accompany a really sustainable agriculture?
- Does EU legislation authorize true competition in productions such as corn inside Europe and with importation ?

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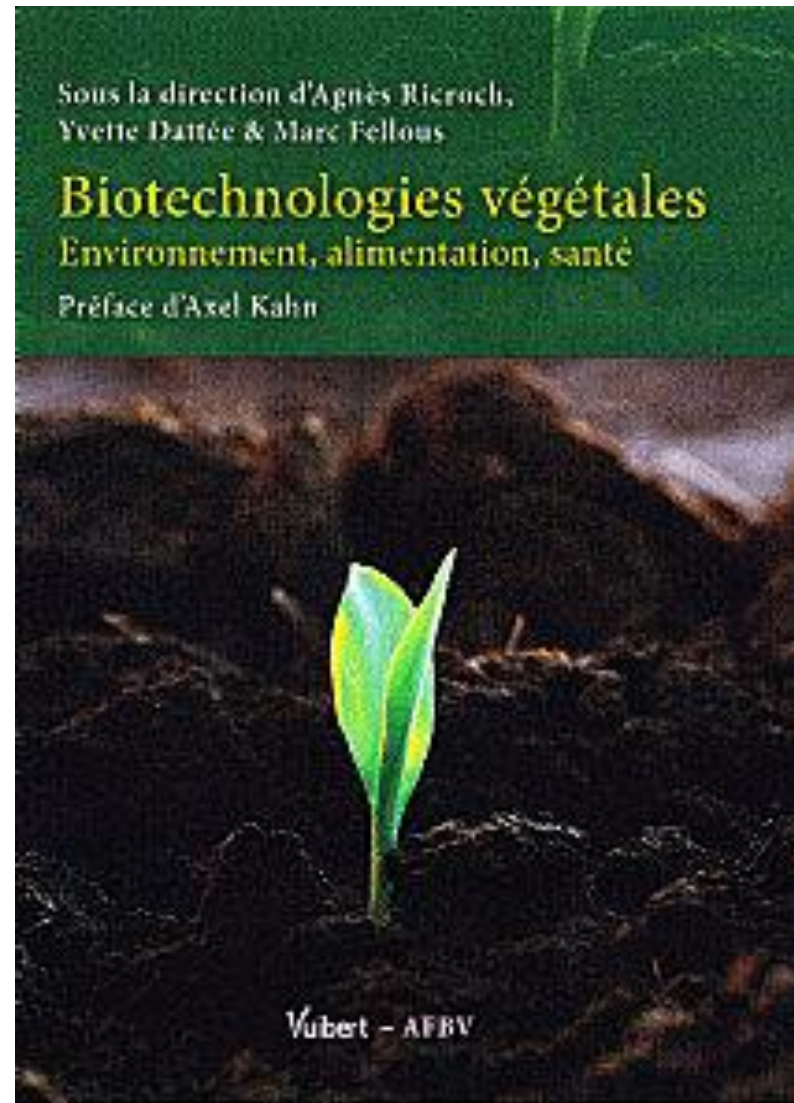
<http://www.marcel-kuntz-ogm.fr>

Association Française des Biotechnologies Végétales (AFBV)

Scientists + Farmers
association

Just published:

***Plant Biotechnologies,
environment, food
& health***



GMO field trials

- **Applying for field trial is theoretically possible.**
- **Regulatory system (slowly) completed (13 July 2011)**
- **No application has been filed in the last 2-3 years (system not tested).**
- **Many unknowns**, including:
 - data protection,
 - attitude of „*Social, Economic and Ethical*“ committee (CEES) of the Haut Conseil sur les Biotechnologies (HCB),
 - lack of clarity of decision making process.
- **Field trials systematically vandalized**
(including public research, even when extensive stakeholder dialogue process had been implemented like for grapevine in Colmar).

Policy of the Government regarding GMOs

- **February 7, 2008**, French government suspended the authorization of MON810 cultivation.
- The French Food Safety Agency (AFSSA) and EFSA both found **no scientific basis**, in agreement with other scientists.
- Government's decision was part of a political agreement with environmentalists that ensured the French nuclear industry not to be targeted in France's national environment debate (*"Grenelle de l'environnement"*).
- **No re-authorization expected before 2012** general elections. Ban will continue if Left wins (deal between Socialist Party and Ecologists).

Conclusions

- GM maize is a sustainable crop
- No scientific basis for its ban