

# GMOs in Italy

# Key crops grown in Italy (hectares/ annual turnover )

	<u>Mais</u>	<u>Durum wheat</u>	<u>Bread wheat</u>	<u>Barley</u>	<u>Soybean</u>	<u>Apple</u>
<u>Crops extension</u>	209.359 ha <i>(76.6% for grain, the remaining as silage feed)</i>	1.075.220 ha	448.245 ha	253.104 ha	159.511 ha	64.000 ha
<u>Annual turnover</u>	1,434 M€	864 M€	532 M€	151 M€	148 M€	763 M€

# Key challenges of main crops (pests and diseases)

	Mais	Durum wheat	Bread wheat	Barley	Soybean	Apple
Main challenges	European Corn Borer (insect) Corn Rootworm Weed control Mycotoxins Virus	Yield Quality for pasta making Fusarium (fungal disease)	Fusarium & Septoria (fungal diseases) Quality of flour Lodging Yield	Lodging Quality of grain	Weed control Drought tolerance Aphids	Venturia (fungal disease) Carpocapsa (insect)

# Ongoing and planned biotechnology research

- 1992- 2004 around 300 field trials carried out on many varieties.
- Field trials have been completely blocked since 2004.
- No approval for new trials in sight.

# Experiences of farmers with GM crops regulations and policies in Italy

- GM crops for commercial purposes cannot be cultivated in Italy without the MoAg approval.
- The compatibility of this national authorisation with the EU legislation is currently being examined by the Court of Justice of the EU.
- After a long series of trials in June 2011, Italian authorities have recognized that MoAg can't refuse the approval to plant GM crops registered in the EU common catalogue.

# Experiences of farmers with GM crops regulations and policies in Italy (2)

- In July 2003 conventional maize crops presenting some GM plants (under the 0,1 % of the total plants) have been destroyed by the regional authorities.
- The farmer who sowed transgenic maize in Friuli in 2010 without any authorization from the MoAg is still under investigation by the attorney's office in Pordenone.
- In August 2011 investigations were started against farmers in the FVG regions who are accused to have sowed transgenic maize without any authorization from the MoAg.

# Experiences of scientists with GM field trials, regulations and policies in Italy

- Italian laws added some extra requirements for authorizing GM varieties field trials.(i.e an evaluation of the impact of GMOs field trials on agro-biodiversity)
- Technical rules on how this evaluation should be carried out have not been adopted yet.
- Field trials must be carried out only in specific areas established by the regions but only two regions out of twenty have done it.
- Therefore GM field trials are blocked for the lack of some regulation required at national level and not foreseen by European legislation.

# Experiences of scientists with GM field trials, regulations and policies in Italy (2)

- In 2005 INRAN (*National research Institute for Food and Nutrition-Public Institute*) compared a conventional corn variety with two different varieties of GM Bt corn featuring MON 810 event.
- The trial showed that GM Bt corn varieties allowed higher yield (+28%) and presented fumonisin content between three and ten times lower than that of their conventional counterpart.

# Policy of the Government regarding GMOs

- The political climate is very hostile and totally committed to prevent any cultivation of approved events for commercial purposes.
- The main Government policy has been a de facto moratoria on GM crops cultivation based on a distorted implementation of European law and systematic delays in administrative and legislative procedures.
- The current minister of Agriculture Romano has made clear that GMOs undermine “made in Italy” products and are a market-related matter more than an environmental or safety concern.
- Mr. Romano has been asked to activate the safeguard clause to ban Mais MON 810 but in July he stated Italy has no new scientific evidence to invoke the safeguard clause.

# Policy of Futuragra regarding GMOs

- Lobbying MoAG/EC for the right implementation of the current European law framework in Italy.
- **ENGAGEMENT FOR FARMERS' RIGHT TO PLANT GM CROP IN ITALY ( legal actions-sowing requests)**
- Communication of benefits related to biotechnology and GMOs towards consumers, farmers and politicians.
- Coalition building with scientists and other NGOs

# Conclusion

- Political opposition to GMOs needs to be faced with common action by scientists, farmers and operators of the agro-food chain such as food and feed industries.
- Providing sound data on the socio-economic impact of GMOs and the restart of field trials should be the main focus of the common action.
- The legal actions undertaken have been successful but trials have lasted too long and the undergoing changes to EC law may nullify judicial achievements.