

# 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)

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

# 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.