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Bt10: Commission requires certification of US exports to stop unauthorised GMO entering the EU

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IP/05/437

Brussels, 15 April 2005

Bt10: Commission requires certification of US exports to stop unauthorised GMO entering the EU

The Member States today voted in favour of a Commission proposal to adopt an emergency measure requiring imports of corn gluten feed and brewers grain from the United States of America to be certified as free of the unauthorised GMO Bt10, as these are the imported products considered most likely to be contaminated.

EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou said: *"This is a targeted measure which is necessary to uphold EU law, maintain consumer confidence and ensure that the unauthorised GMO Bt10 cannot enter the EU. Imports of maize products which are certified as free of Bt10 will be able to continue, but at the same time we cannot and will not allow a GMO which has not gone through our rigorous authorisation procedures to enter the EU market. This measure is designed to affect trade as little as possible."*

The emergency measure specifies that consignments of corn gluten feed and brewers grain from the USA can only be placed on the EU market if they are accompanied by an analytical report by an accredited laboratory which demonstrates, based on a suitable and validated method, that the product does not contain Bt10.

EU Member States are responsible for controlling the imports entering each EU country, preventing any contaminated consignments from being placed on the market and for random sampling and analysis of products already on the market. Business operators importing feed from the USA are responsible for ensuring that they are certified as free of Bt10, in accordance with the principle in EU food law that operators are responsible for the safety of the food or feed that they place on the market.

According to current information from the US authorities and the European food industry, food products in the EU are not affected and they are therefore not included in the scope of the emergency measure at this stage. However, the measure agreed today requires the Member States to monitor whether GM food products are present on their market, whether these have been contaminated by Bt10 and to inform the Commission. The Commission is actively monitoring the situation and will consider additional measures on food if the evidence requires it.

The inadvertent export of the unauthorised GMO Bt10 was first notified to the

European Commission by the US authorities on 22 March. The vote was taken today in an emergency meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, made up of representatives of the EU Member States and the European Commission.

The measure will now be adopted by the Commission and will enter into force when the written procedure expires early next week. The measure will be reviewed by the Commission by the end of October 2005.

For information: 'brewers grain' is known as 'dreches de brasserie' in French and is a type of animal feed which is a by-product of the production of ethanol. Corn gluten feed is known as 'gluten de maïs destiné à l'alimentation animale' in French.