

International Workshop

on the consequences of the ECJ judgement on GM pollen in honey for GM crop releases and cultivation in Germany and the EU

Berlin, December 13-14, 2011

Dr. Christine Eichner

Lower Saxony State Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety, State Food Laboratory Braunschweig, Dresdenstr. 2 und 6, 38124 Braunschweig, Germany
christine.eichner@laves.niedersachsen.de; www.laves.niedersachsen.de

Christine Eichner, PhD, is a scientist at the working group for molecular biology and protein differentiation. The State Food Laboratory Braunschweig is the Lower Saxony's competence center for analyzing and detecting GMO (genetically modified organisms) in food, seed and feed. Further areas are species differentiation of bacteria, animals and plants in feed and food and the official control of seed (monitoring according to the concept for seed analysis of the federal Länder joint committee on genetic engineering (LAG)).

Honey analysis in Lower Saxony

Because of the judgement of the European Council (06.09.2011), 42 honey-samples of European and non-European origin were analyzed for the existence of GMO-pollen by molecular biological and microscopical methods.

In eight samples DNA of the genetically modified soybean Roundup Ready™ was detected. In order to decide whether labeling based on Art. 12 or 13 of VO(EU) 1829/2003 was required, the ratio between GMO content and the corresponding reference value (e.g. GMO soya vs. non GMO soya) had to be determined.

According to the StALuT conference of 24.10.2011 the reference value for estimating the GMO content should be the total amount of pollen. Until now, there are no methods available to differentiate between GMO-pollen and non-GMO-pollen, neither microscopically nor on the molecular biological level. Therefore, a reliable quantitative estimation of the GMO content of the pollen fraction is not possible. Consequently, an assessment based on Art 12 and 13 of VO(EG) 1829/2003 is not feasible.

Our current approach to cope with this situation considering the analytical results on the one hand and the legal situation on the other hand will be discussed.

Scientific support by

and