

Genetically modified food and feed

2001/0173(COD) - 25/07/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: To enshrine under one EU Regulation procedures and measures governing genetically modified food and feed. **CONTENT:** Based on Actions presented in the Commission's White Paper on Food Safety, the European Commission is proposing a new Regulation bringing together all aspects pertinent to genetically modified food. The objectives of the proposal are: - To provide the basis for a high level of protection of human life and health, animal health and welfare, environment and consumers' interest in relation to genetically modified food and feed. - To lay down Community procedures for the assessment, authorisation and supervision of genetically modified food and feed. - To lay down provisions for the labelling of genetically modified food and feed. Criteria for authorisation of genetically modified food and feed are also laid out. In order to obtain authorisation genetically modified food and feed: - Must not present a risk for human health, animal health or the environment. - Must not mislead the consumer or the user. - Must not differ from foods or feed which they are intended to replace to such an extent that their normal consumption would be nutritionally disadvantageous for consumers or animals. In terms of feed, it must not harm the consumer by impairing the distinctive features of the animal products. Concerning the scope of the Directive, the proposal covers food and feed containing, consisting of, or produced from genetically modified organisms (in the Regulation referred to as genetically modified food or feed). It does not refer to novel foods which are not genetically modified or aspects not related to the genetic modification of substances which are subject to an assessment and a regulatory process prior to their inclusion in a positive list or register (such as additives, flavourings, food supplements etc.) Equally, the proposed Regulation seeks to clarify and bring under one roof aspects relating to labelling. Currently, there are at least three EU Regulations laying out provisions for the labelling of genetically modified food. Nevertheless, an appropriate labelling system of GMO food and feed is regarded as one of the key issues in ensuring greater acceptance of the application of gene technology in the agro-food sector. This proposal extends the current labelling provisions to all GMO food and feed irrespective of the detectability of DNA protein food that consists of, contains or is produced from GMOs. This significant change to current Community legislation on the labelling of food produced from GMO foods will result in labelling of a number of foodstuffs, which are currently not required to be labelled, such as highly refined oils of GMO origin.