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From: Brian John [brianjohn4@mac.com]
Sent: 07 October 2012 23:28
To: LEFFLER-ROTH Carolyn
Cc: EVANS Jill OFFICE; LEPAGE Corinne
Subject: Petitions 0436/2010 and 0813/2008 and EFSA conspiracy

Attachments: Seralini_et_al_final_paper.pdf; EFSA review of Seralini paper.pdf; Neths Ministry.pdf; ATT5479686.txt


Seralini_et_al_final_paper.pdf...


EFSA review of Seralini paper....


Neths Ministry.pdf (4 MB)


ATT5479686.txt (5 KB)

Carolyn Leffler-Roth

Petitions Committee
European Parliament

7th October 2012

Dear Carolyn

Petitions 0436/2010 and 0813/2008 EFSA

EFSA conspiracy to "bury" Seralini rat feeding study

With reference to my two Petitions, you will recall that I wrote to you on 10th May asking that the two Petitions be kept alive, on the basis that EFSA had not adequately addressed my concerns, or those of my colleagues who joined me in Petition 0436/2010. In our view EFSA still acts in a manner that places the facilitation of GM consents above the protection of public health -- and in that regard it is still unfit for purpose. In my view, and that of many NGOs, the EFSA GMO Panel must be dissolved and reconstituted with a fresh group of individuals who have due regard for scientific ethics and the Precautionary Principle.

I now ask you to bring this matter back to the Petitions Committee as a matter of urgency, following the quite extraordinary manner in which EFSA has dealt with the new paper by Seralini and his team regarding the health effects of NK603 maize and Roundup on experimental mammals. (See PDF number 1, below) The French team showed that both the GM maize and Roundup residues (at low concentrations in drinking water) caused chronic toxic effects in experimental rats, including a greatly increased incidence of tumours. As many of us had predicted, as soon as EFSA got wind of the Seralini group's study, it slipped into "damage limitation" mode, apparently determined from the outset to find fault with the paper and to discredit the authors. This was in spite of the fact that the paper was published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal, and in spite of the fact that there were no "red warning lights" during the peer review process. In other words, the research findings were more honestly reported, analysed and scrutinized than any of the non-replicable and non-verifiable studies used in the approvals process for either NK603 or for Roundup herbicide. The paper should have been given careful consideration, just as Prof Seralini and his colleagues should have been accorded due respect as reputable and experienced scientists.

(After all, Prof Seralini has been a member of two French government commissions on GMOs (the Biomolecular Engineering Commission which oversees risk assessment, and on which he served for nine years, and the Biovigilance Committee looking at commercialised GMOs, on which he served for ten years). In 2003 he was appointed an expert advisor on GM to the European Commission in the context of its WTO dispute. And in 2008, Prof. Seralini was made a Knight of the French Order of Merit in recognition of his scientific research. He is neither a maverick nor a "campaigning environmentalist" -- and he knows far more about GM toxicity and animal feeding trials than any of the EFSA secretariat and GMO Panel members who are now involved in a campaign of personal vilification against him.)

I have looked at the EFSA review of the publication by Seralini et al, and find it to be full of points that are frankly quite stupid. They seem to have been copied and pasted from other "expert" opinions fed to them by the Science Media Centre and other

organizations. (See PDF number 2, below) The whole review is disrespectful, complacent and disingenuous. This is not surprising, since it was written, under the guidance of Per Bergman, by a small group of employees comprising Saghir Bashir, Danièle Court Marques, Claudia Paoletti, Manuela Tiramani, Didier Verloo and Elisabeth Waigmann, with reviews by Andrew Chesson (a member of the GMO Panel) and Alberto Mantovani (a member of the PPR panel). Quite incredibly, Andrew Chesson was one of those who made the original assessment of NK603 for EFSA in 2003! This was presumably the "multidisciplinary task force" charged with the task of damage limitation and asked to attack the Seralini study on as many fronts as possible. There was no way that EFSA could have contemplated anything different, since to admit to any merit in the Seralini study would have been to admit to serious shortcomings in the initial EFSA assessment of NK603 and to major failings in the EU assessment of Roundup herbicide as well. EFSA therefore decided to be judge, jury and executioner, and to align itself with the GM industry spokesmen in seeking to bury the Seralini study and to discredit its authors.

I now accuse EFSA of conspiring on 28th September 2012 with a small group of selected civil servants from four member states (France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Germany) to come to a common view on the Seralini study and to eliminate or suppress dissenting views (1). Where did their mandate come from, and by what right do they purport to give an authoritative EU assessment of the paper in question? Have the other member states been consulted, and have they agreed that their scientific opinions should be represented by the named individuals from these four states which have a long record of supporting GMOs? In the enclosed PDF number 3 (below) you will see, in the English-language minutes starting on p 21, that this group of carefully-selected and unelected civil servants from various ministries presumes to speak not just on behalf of EFSA but for the EC as well, since the EC asked for the EFSA opinion in the first place. As far as I can see, the "EFSA opinion" determined by this small group was promoted via an EFSA press release on 4th October without any approval from the member states, in the full knowledge that it would be accepted by a gullible media as the authoritative statement of the EFSA position. This is an outrageous abuse of power by this small group of civil servants who know next to nothing about the practicalities of long-term safety studies involving the use of mammals.

The strategy by Per Bergman to "avoid divergence" shows a complete disregard for scientific ethics and also a failure to understand how science works. It tells us a great deal about the prevailing mindset within EFSA.

I repeat -- this is a deliberate attempt to cover up the shortcomings of the EFSA assessment process for NK603 (and other materials which have obtained EC consents), to "rubbish" the recent rat feeding study, and to destroy the credibility of Professor Seralini and his team. This conspiracy is serious enough, but it pales into insignificance when set against the key findings of the Seralini study -- namely that NK603 maize and Roundup are toxic to mammals. These findings are not aberrations -- they simply confirm the evidence that has been coming into the public domain over the last decade from many different sources -- and especially from independent studies conducted in the face of unremitting hostility from the GM industry and from bodies like EFSA. Once again, EFSA shows itself to be criminally irresponsible in having no regard for public health issues. If the organization had any scientific credibility at all, it would accept that the Seralini study is cause for great concern; it would ask for a serious reassessment of all existing consents for GM products; and it would ask for a moratorium on all further GMO consents pending a repeat or improvement of the experiments conducted by the Seralini team.

I therefore ask the European Parliament to charge EFSA with conspiring with others to diminish the seriousness of the new research findings -- simply in order to protect its own GMO Panel from charges of serious and systematic scientific assessment failures. Because of these systemic shortcomings, EFSA has consistently favoured the interests of GMO consent applicants while placing the people of Europe increasingly at risk from toxic GM components in the food chain.

Brian John
7th October 2012

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(1) Per Bergman is reported as seeking collaboration with selected civil servants from member states (or selected member states) to discuss scientific concerns and to "avoid divergence". (Minutes, page 2, Teleconference 28 September, organized by EFSA