



ABIC 2004

12-15 September, Cologne, Germany

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CALL FOR POSTERS

Best three posters will win one delegate ticket.

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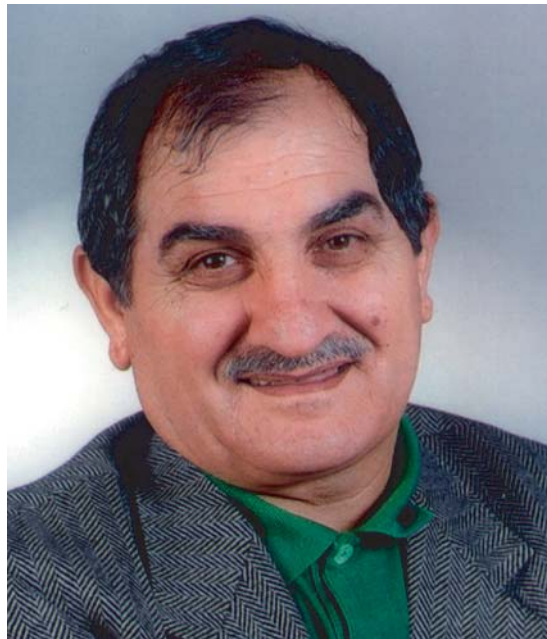
ABIC is the acronym for

AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



MPIZ | Field

▶▶▶ CONTACT INFOS



Prof. Dr. Francesco Salamini

Cologne, 14/03/2004

Why to be present in Cologne next September

ABIC 2004 is not a scientific meeting: the event was not, in fact, designed to please only scientists, but rather to create an occasion for plant biotech people to meet and discuss. Is this discussion a real need? We do not know.

All will depend from what will happen in the next months in Europe. Current questions, in fact, will have to be answered: Does Europe still have a chance in plant biotech?

What is the role of public institutions, of regulators, of private companies? Why can plant science not find the support in Europe it deserves? Is this caused by the poor acceptance of plant biotech products?

If so, why are we not able to communicate our ideas better on the agricultural systems to be adopted in the future? And why are so many opinion groups against a technology that is capable to approach

Prof. Dr. Francesco Salamini

Prof. Salamini plant geneticist and molecular breeder. Born in Italy and active at Max-Planck-Institute for Breeding Research, Cologne, where he is the Director of the Department of Plant Breeding and Yield Physiology. His main scientific interests are crop genomes, molecular breeding and the analysis of application related crop traits.



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scientifically the problems of the sustainability of intensive agriculture? All these questions are waiting for answers, and those listed are only examples.

Many others will be raised at ABIC 2004 in September and the Congress will update the list while contributing some answers. More important, ABIC 2004 has the potential to create a European opinion platform that represents all of those who believe in a scientific approach to current agricultural needs and problems as the only option to shape the future of agriculture.

This is the main goal of ABIC 2004, and the contribution of as many as possible plant scientists and technologists will be needed to shape the opinion platform and make it visible. It is, in fact, time that the scientific and industrial components of our societies stand up and present their view on the role and potentials of plant agbiotechnology.

Again, ABIC 2004 will be the best place to start this discussion and define the state and role of European plant biotechnology.

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▶▶▶ NEWS

Spanish Study shows that Coexistence is possible



Maize | Photo: Visipix

Coexistence of GM crops is possible if certain conditions are applied. This is according to a new study into the coexistence of GM and conventional crops carried out by the Spanish Institute for Agriculture & Food Research and Technology (IRTA)

The report entitled "Buenas Prácticas Agrícola" (Good Agricultural Practices) recommends separating crops by 25 meters or four rows for fields smaller than one hectare. It also recommends planting 4 row barriers of non-GM maize if the surface of the neighbouring crop is less than 1 hectare. If the neighbouring field is larger than one hectare, no labelling will be required, as the total percentage of GM content will be lower than 0.9%.

The findings are based on the results of field trials undertaken in 2003. 'Compa' Bt maize was sown in a 50x50 meter square in a 7.5-hectare field. The rest of the field was planted with 'Brasco' conventional maize.

The two varieties are completely compatible and were chosen to guarantee the maximum level of cross-fertilisation between both crops. Both have the same life cycle and both flower at the same time. After the time of pollination and fertilization, once the crops entered the ripening process, 205 samples of maize were taken at a 1, 2, 5 and 10 meters from all of the sides of the square that had been sown with Bt maize; other samples were also taken from the rest of the field. Individual kernels were crushed and analysed for the presence or absence of the Bt gene.

Gene Flow in Maize: Final Results

NOTE: the references shown in the graph are the squares lined in red, blue and green

Main Results

- With northeast prevailing winds, the average presence of the Bt gene in analysed samples from maize grown at a distance of 10 meters from the GM maize, was less than 0.9%
- In headwinds, the average presence of the Bt gene was less than 0.9% in samples taken at a distance of 2 meters from the GM maize crop
- The average cross-pollination throughout the field was less than 0.2%. There was no apparent relationship to wind direction or speed at further distances from the GM crop

About the field trials

In July 2003, a research team from the IRTA institute in Cambrils (Barcelona), together with IRTAgen and the Department of Agriculture, Cattle and Fishing of the Government of Cataluña, carried out a field trial to evaluate cross-fertilization, and therefore flow of genes, between genetically modified Bt maize crops and conventional maize crops. The producer company Syngenta also collaborated in the study by providing seeds and management of the maize crop.

Future field trials

This particular field trial has demonstrated the effect of winds during the flowering period. IRTA plans to carry out further field trials to confirm these data and to study other variables (e.g the size of the GM crop, the behaviour of variety, the coincidence of the flowering period, and other influences such as machinery, storage or the presence of fertile seeds in the field for future cycles).

For more information:

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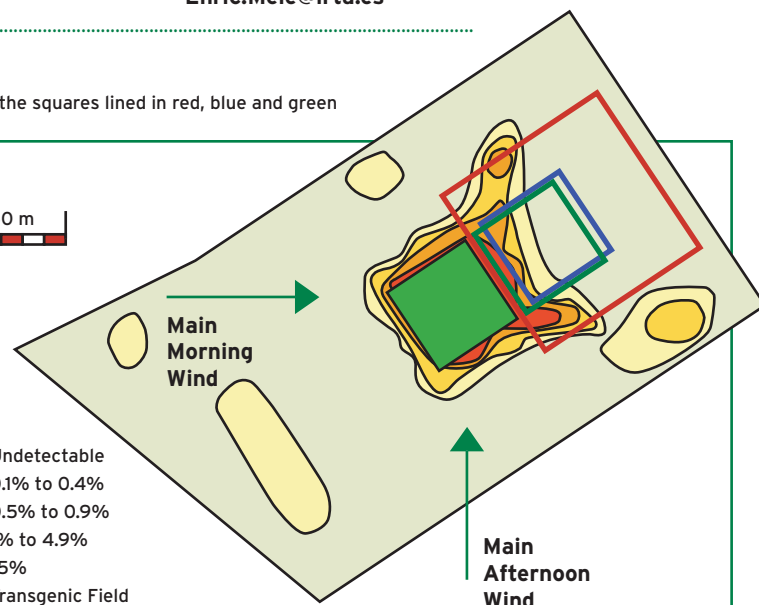
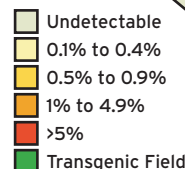
▶▶▶ EXPLANATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

 The red square represents a field one hectare in size situated to the northeast of the GM crop (the area of the prevailing winds). The average flow of Bt maize pollen across the field is 0.83%
Farmers should NOT have to label this crop as transgenic*.

 The green square represents a 0.25 hectare field situated to the northeast of the transgenic crop, the average flow of Bt maize pollen across this field is 1.77%.
Farmers WOULD have to label this crop as transgenic if no measures are taken to prevent cross-fertilization.

 The blue square represents a 0.25-hectare field situated to the northeast of the GM crop. This crop has been cultivated 6 meters away from the GM crop, the average flow of Bt maize pollen across the field is 0.77%.
Farmers should NOT have to label this crop as transgenic.

* Under current European Union legislation, it is compulsory to label a crop as genetically modified if the measured percentage of GM maize is more than 0.9%



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Photo: Visipix

London, UK, 09/03/2004

British Government approves commercial Planting of GM Crops

On Tuesday, March 9th, Great Britain's Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett announced that the government approves, after three-year long trials, the growing of herbicide tolerant maize. This gives, in principle, the green light to first commercial planting of GM crops in the UK.

British scientists had concluded in October 2003, after a three-year research project, that growing herbicide-tolerant maize under trial conditions had not had an adverse effect on surrounding plants and wildlife.

A government-appointed committee had broadly agreed with that finding in January. Yet earlier in March, a committee of lawmakers said the trials were "unsatisfactory" and urged the government not to make a decision until further testing had taken place.

Beckett said that "there is no scientific case for a blanket approval of all uses of GM but equally there is no scientific case for a blanket ban on the use of GM". This statement was supported by the announcement by the British Medical Association (BMA) that "there is very little potential for GM foods to cause harmful health effects" and "many of the concerns expressed apply with equal vigor to conventionally derived foods".

In an apparent U-turn over its policy to GM foods, the British Medical Association said there was no reason not to go ahead with commercial planting of GM maize.

Sir David Carter, chairman of the British Medical Association's Board of Science, said it was necessary to "move away from the hysteria that has so often been associated with GM foods".

Asked if he would be 100% behind a decision to allow GM maize for animal feed, he said: "I would say so".

The BMA had called for an open-ended moratorium in 1999 on all commercial planting of GM crops until more was known about their effects on human health.

In an updated report it said that rather than a blanket ban it now wanted individual crops to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Though more research was needed, there appeared to be no evidence that eating GM food had harmful health effects, said the BMA. This assessment was based on cumulative data from countries such as the United States where the population had been exposed to GM foods for a long time.



First Press Conference on ABIC 2004

On March, 30th, Mr. Fritz Schramma, mayor of the City of Cologne will host a press conference pre-announcing ABIC 2004 to journalists from local press and industry.

The Press Conference is scheduled to start at 12:30 p.m.

▶ LATEST NEWS

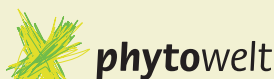
Sir David said: "It's no longer sensible to impose a moratorium on all aspects of GM foods and their planting".

Margaret Beckett said that the maize crop will probably not be grown commercially before April 2005. She added that the government opposed the commercial cultivation of varieties of GM beet and oil-seed rape, which had fared badly in the trials.

The licenses to grow the genetically modified corn will expire in October 2006, Beckett said. Those companies holding a license to grow the corn will have to carry out scientific analysis during cultivation to renew their planting rights.

The decision was welcomed by numerous scientists world-wide. The Chairman of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council (abc), Dr. Julian Little said: "The Government's decision is supported by a wealth of evidence including the findings of the Science Review, the Economic review, the Farm Scale Evaluations, ACRE recommendations and re-analysis of aspects of the FSEs published in Nature last week". The abc was set up in 2002 to provide a forum for the debate and education surrounding GM technology in the United Kingdom.

- ▶ Presently, Spain is the only EU country to plant significant amounts of biotech crops, with 32,000 hectares of biotech corn last year, which means an increase by a third compared to 2002.
- ▶ Also on March 9th, European Union officials said EU agriculture ministers will make a last-ditch attempt in April to rule on whether to approve a brand of genetically modified sweet corn for sale.
- ▶ The application to approve canned sweet corn from a strain developed by Syngenta will be discussed at a ministerial meeting in Luxembourg April 26th and 27th.



Hosted by Phytowelt
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CALL FOR POSTERS

Best three posters will win one delegate tickets.

You are invited to take part in the ABIC Poster Session competition.

The contest is open to all non-commercial institutions. The subject of the work presented should be in relation to the topics of the program (see below).

The best 3 posters selected by an independent committee will be awarded with a free ABIC 2004 delegate ticket. The deadline for poster submission is July 2nd, 2004.

For more details please contact the ABIC Organisation Office or mail to:

posters@abic2004.org

Trade Fair Conditions and Rates

Complementary with the conference, the business of AgBio-technology will have the unique chance to present products and services. The Trade Fair will take place in the localities of the Cologne Fair. Main Sponsors will present in the especially well located exhibition area at the Auenplatz, which is the central place of the Congress Center West. Due to its immediate vicinity to the Netherlands, Belgium and France and being less than one flight-hour from Great Britain, the Cologne Fair is the place of choice to get in contact with European Customers and partners.

**BOOTH RATES**

In HALL 3 50 pre-equipped booths of 9 m² will be available. The price per square meter is Euro 250,- (+ V.A.T.). In addition, raw space is available with minimum size of 15 m²; the price for the raw space will be Euro 190,- (+ V.A.T.) per square meter.

9m² booth: Euro 2250,- (pre-equipped) + V.A.T.

15m² booth: Euro 2850,- (raw space) + V.A.T.

The full exhibitors manual will be sent to you on request.

DELEGATE REGISTRATION RATES

Prices include Breakfast, Lunch and Beverages

Regular Rate: Euro 750,- + V.A.T.

(after July 2nd 2004)

Academic Rate*: Euro 375,- + V.A.T.

Student Rate*: Euro 250,- + V.A.T.

One Day Delegate Rate: Euro 250,- + V.A.T.

Exhibitor Delegate Rate: Euro 250,- + V.A.T.

Group Discounts: 3-5 Delegates: - 10 %
6 or more Delegates: - 15 %

Early Bird Rates:

(all before July 2nd 2004)

Early Bird Regular Rate: Euro 675,- + V.A.T.

Early Bird Academic Rate*: Euro 350,- + V.A.T.

Early Bird Student Rate*: Euro 200,- + V.A.T.

* Academic and Student Delegates: You must provide verification of academic or student status to qualify for the Academic or Student rate.

Special Partnering Event

One session of the Conference program will be fully dedicated to the subject of Business Partnering (see program below). Approximately 20 companies will be given time and technology to appropriately present themselves as part of the **Premium Partnering Package**. Throughout ABIC a special area in the trade fair hall will provide optimized partnering procedures for registered partnering event participants. In addition a special section of the ABIC website www.abic2004.org will be reserved for the partnering event. This service will be made available in due time.

PARTNERING RATES

Regular Partnering: Euro 350,- + V.A.T. (one to one meetings plus Web Partnering)

Premium Partnering: Euro 750,- + V.A.T. (Business Presentation at Forum plus Regular Partnering)

Prices are added to Delegate Rates.

Partnering possible throughout ABIC to allow participants to arrange meetings at convenience.

PROGRAM UPDATE

| Session | The Business of Biotechnology | Advances in Plant Improvement | New Opportunities through Biotechnology |
|---------|--|--|---|
| 01 | The Role and Importance of Ethics for Agricultural Biotechnology in Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round Table Discussion | Controlling Expression in Transgenes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulating Expression of Transgenes in Plants and Gene Expression Expression of Genes in specific Tissues Environmental Assessment of Risks and Benefits of Regulated Expression | Plants as green factories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies for producing PMPs* in Plants (Molecular Farming) Improvement of Fiber Crops by Genetic Engineering Engineering New Biosynthetic Pathways * Plant-made pharmaceuticals |
| 02 | Co-existence of Transgenic and Non-Transgenic Crops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gene Flow and Co-Existence Scientific Basis of Co-Existence Ecological Impact of GMOs | Synergies between Breeding and Biotechnology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genomics/Allele Mining Advanced Mapping Tools Use of Model Genomes | Biotechnology and Food Security for the Resource-Poor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of the Need for new Solutions in Africa Case Study of a real Biotech Solution: China Managing IP to Benefit the Resource-Poor - Case Study Mexico |
| 03 | Business Forum: Consumer Benefits and Industrial Perspectives of AgBiotechnology / Industry Presentations | | |
| 04 | The Business of Biotechnology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in Biotech in Asia Dos and Dents for Biotech Start-ups Todays and Future Markets in Plant Biotech | Improvements in Non-Food Crops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biotechnological Applications in Forestry Oil Palm Breeding and competitive Approaches Biotechnology and Ornamental Plants | Nutraceuticals as Links between Food and Health: Using Biotechnology to Improve Our Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polyunsaturated Fatty acids "Golden Rice" Classical Breeding / Food Processing/Fortification |

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