

**Decisions taken in the 72<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee held on 13.12.2006.**

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The 72<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) was held on 13.12.2006 in the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the Chairmanship of Shri B. S. Parsheera, Additional Secretary, MoEF .

**1.0 Consideration of Proposals.**

**1.1 Permission for import and marketing of Phytase Enzyme (Poultry feed supplement) from Suson Industry Group Co. Ltd. Beijing, China by Elder Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Mumbai.**

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**1.2 Permission for import of Finase PC enzyme for formulation from Germany and marketing in India by M/s. Textan Chemicals Pvt. Ltd.**

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**1.3 Permission for import and marketing of enzyme Phytase (poultry feed supplement) from M/s Suson Industry Group Co. Ltd, Beijing, China by M/s. Chembond Chemicals Ltd. Mumbai.**

1.0 The Committee noted that the three proposals were considered by the GEAC in its meeting held on 11.10.2006 wherein it was decided to await the comments from CFTRI and Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Ministry of Agriculture and also obtain clarification from the Company on the status of market authorization for phytase as poultry feed supplement in China.

2.0 The Member Secretary informed the Committee that Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy have informed that comments from their department may be treated as nil. The applicants have also submitted a certificate confirming that phytase as poultry feed supplement is being marketed in China for the last three years without any negative feedback. The production and application of phytase is encouraged by Chinese Feedstuff Authority because it can improve the utility of nutrition and reduce the environmental pollution caused by using of phosphorus.

3.0 After detailed deliberation, the Committee approved the import of phytase enzyme from China and Finase enzyme from Germany.

**2.0 Other Items:**

**2.1 Investigation Report on alleged irregularities in GM Okra field trials at Gulbarga and Guntur Districts – Centre for Sustainable Agriculture.**

The Committee endorsed the action taken by the Ministry to obtain a factual report on the various issues raised by the NGO in the above representation. The Committee noted with concern that compliance by the Seed companies in respect of submission of information relating to the field trials is not satisfactory. The Committee was of the view that in future, the applicants may be directed to obtain the approval of the concerned Panchayats for conducting the field trials and also submit details of the locations where they intend to undertake the activity before approval is accorded by the GEAC/RCGM for conducting the field trials of GM crops. The Committee requested the Member Secretary, GEAC to issue notice to those companies who have not submitted the requisite information. The Member Secretary informed the Committee that a communication along with a format for submission of information was forwarded to the Seed companies on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2006. However, satisfactory information has been furnished only by three or four companies.

**2.2 Report of the Independent Expert Committee on Bt brinjal which was set up by Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (Hyderabad) and Thanal (Trivendrum).**

The Committee was of the view that merits of the suggestions made by the Independent Expert Committee constituted by the NGOs may be examined by the Expert Committee on Bt brinjal set up by MoEF under the Chairmanship of Prof. Deepak Pental, VC, DU. During the deliberation views were expressed for further scientific deliberations, suggestions for conducting any additional studies should be accompanied by detailed information on the material and methods to be followed. The Committee was also of the view that comments from RCGM on the above report may be obtained.

**2.3 Burning / uprooting of contained GM field trials in some States.**

The Committee expressed their deep regret and was of the view that necessary clarifications needs to be issued to ensure that such incidents do not occur in future. The Committee requested the Chairman, GEAC to issue a press statement clarifying that there is no ban or directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in respect of ongoing field trials. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has imposed restriction on the GEAC from granting fresh approvals for field trials in future vide order dated 22.9.2006. Subsequent to the Court order the GEAC has not approved any field trials of GM crops. The Committee also requested the Ministry of Environment & Forests/Department of Biotechnology to issue necessary communication to the State Governments to ensure that ongoing field trials approved by RCGM/GEAC are not disturbed.

**2.4 Status of Hon'ble Supreme Court direction in WP 260/2005 & IA No 4/2006 by Aruna Rodriguez vs. UOI.**

The Committee noted the status of the above mentioned Court case. The Committee also requested Prof. Govindraj Hegde, National Law School, Bangalore and Expert Member, GEAC to examine the implication of the Court order dated 22.09.2006 on the commercial release of GM crops which have completed field trials as per the regulatory procedure.

**2.5 Permission to import Soybean oil obtained from Round up Ready Soybean by M/s Solvent Extractors' Association of India, Mumbai.**

1.0 The Committee noted that in accordance with the decision taken in the GEAC meeting held on 11.10.2006, the Chairman GEAC has requested Director, CFTRI / NIN to conduct the analysis of refined soybean oil, crude degummed soybean oil and the residue for the presence / absence of DNA on a priority basis. The Committee sought clarification from representative of CFTRI on the action taken in this regard. It was clarified that the communication from Chairman, GEAC has been recently received. It was also stated that there is no difficulty in testing the oil samples for the presence or absence of DNA. However, analysis of glyphosate and parameters under PFA will require about one months time. It was agreed to accept the samples submitted by the importers in the first instance and subsequently based on the results of the tests conducted, the samples may be drawn by CFTRI as per the prescribed procedure under PFA.

2.0 The Member Secretary clarifying the urgency in the matter informed the Committee that the DGFT notification regarding mandatory declaration and documentation regarding GEAC approval at the port entry before import of GM products will come into force w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2007. The Committee requested the representative of CFTRI to accord high priority to the above issue to avoid dislocation of supply of edible oil in the Indian market.

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