

THE EU PUTS ITS AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY AT RISK IF IT DOES NOT QUICKLY ADOPT THE NEW PRECISION BIOTECHNOLOGIES

Protecting crops against pests is one of the major challenges that all types of agriculture face to limit losses in the field. In fact, with climate change and the globalization of trade, European agriculture will be confronted with the arrival of new diseases and new predators. For the French Association of Plant Biotechnology (AFBV), it is the competitiveness of our farms that is directly threatened if crop yields decline for lack of appropriate and authorized protection measures. To protect its crops against pests, and to enable its farmers to live better lives, the European Union (EU) must open up to all new technologies that enable reduction of crop chemicals. Biotechnology has a special role to play in facilitating and accelerating the creation of plants that are genetically resistant to diseases and insects. They are a factor in the success of the agro-ecological transition.

For AFBV, Europe also needs the contribution of new precision biotechnologies such as genome editing if it wishes to maintain food self-sufficiency and allow consumers to continue to benefit from quality products produced in the EU. Rather than comforting an agri-cultural isolationism, the EU should, on the contrary, prefer to continue to benefit from having a high quality seed R&D capability enabling its researchers to work for the common good with the best tools available.

For this reason, given the urgency of finding a solution, the AFBV has joined forces with other European associations, not to ask for a new Directive, but to propose to the EU some targeted modifications to the GMO Directive. **"If the EU does not quickly adopt appropriate regulation for these precision biotechnologies, our crops will be at risk, the EU's food security will be jeopardized and the competitiveness of European agriculture will suffer a serious handicap,"** said Georges Freyssinet, President of the AFBV, at the conclusion of the workshop organized in Paris on October 17 on the theme: "Plant Biotechnologies facing the new challenges of Crop Protection."

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