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News | 18.03.2015

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Issue n°10 March 2015

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WHAT'S ON THE PLATE?

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GREEN INSIGHT INTO EU FOOD POLICY

Cloning for farming purposes: Greens ask the Commission to come with better proposal

On 23 February, the European Parliament held a further discussion on cloning for animal purposes. The ENVI and AGRI Committees hosted a joint public hearing on the issue. MEPs debated with experts on issues related to the animal cloning technique and on the impact of the current European Commission proposals. Again, MEPs clearly expressed their wish for a ban on cloning of animals and their offspring.

Cloning has strong negative impacts on animal welfare and biodiversity. It does not offer any advantage to

citizens, nor does it have any beneficial effect on food security, food safety or breeding improvement.

With such criticism and the EP speaking with one voice for years against cloning, why does the European Commission come up with proposals excluding ban of food from descendants of cloned animal? Who would benefit from such weak proposals?

Read more

EU seed marketing regulation fully withdrawn: The Greens say thank you to the seed savers community.

It's official: On March 7th, the European Commission published its decision to withdraw the controversial seed marketing regulation.

This good news is warmly welcomed by the Greens, who have campaigned against the Commission's proposal for regulation on production and marketing of seeds since its publication in May 2013.

The proposed legislation was not favourable to genetic diversity, farmers' rights or the interests of small and organic breeders. Instead it was shaped around serving the needs of the multinational seed industry that currently dominates the market. The multinational seed industry is intricately linked with the use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers, which will further push farmers into industrial-scale, input-dependent agricultural systems. However, the EC proposal chose to ignore the negative consequences on agriculture and our food systems, and the Commission continues to apply very restrictive and expensive rules and procedures for the testing, registration and marketing of seeds through the common catalogue of the EU. Such practices exclude traditional or newly bred heterogenic seeds which would be the basis for better conservation, development and sustainable use of seeds in more resilient farming practices such as organic farming and mixed cropping.

In March 2014, thanks to strong campaigning by NGOs and the tabling of around 1400 amendments reflecting the concerns of small farmers and breeders, the whole European Parliament voted on a resolution to reject this unfair proposal, asking the Commission to go back to the drawing board.

The full withdrawal of this proposal would not have been realized were it not for the strong and powerful voice of civil society protests. The Greens are therefore grateful to the organisations, home gardeners, farmers and diversity lovers who made this withdrawal happen. Seed savers are now relieved while the demand for heritage varieties is growing - to satisfy citizens' needs and biodiversity needs.

But what next? The new Juncker Commission should come up with a new proposal on seed marketing legislation. Let's hope the Commission will capitalize on the opportunity to create a new proposal with key green principles on food security, farmers' rights and the respect of biodiversity at its core. Diversity needs to grow, and people want to make it happen.

Watch our video to see the kind of legislation we want

Read our study: Concentration of market power in the EU seed market

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Food Community supported programmes in the spotlight

'Autrement (avec des légumes)' is a recently released documentary that gives the floor to both citizens, 'eaters' at the end of the food chain, and farmers producing our food. Both are interested or involved in short food chain community supported programmes. These promising experiences are slowly but surely growing all around Europe. They get consumers and producers closer, allow small-scale farmers to benefit from regular incomes, and are perfect concrete illustrations of a farm-to-fork system ready to fix our currently broken food system. The movie was recently screened on Belgian TV (RTBF) and is now available in French. Hopefully also in other languages too very soon!

A rotten deal: why TTIP threatens EU food safety standards for poultry

The threat of US-produced meat rinsed with disinfectants being sold in Europe is increasing, even before any EU-US trade deal is agreed, warns Friends of the Earth Europe in a report published beginning of March.

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WHAT'S ON THE PLATE?

20-30/03: Pesticide Action Week

22/03: World Water Day

23-24/03: AGRI Committee:

especially on the agenda: Exchange of views with Commissione Hogan, exchange of views on the organic regulation report, Consideration of Draft report on the Milk package, adoption of a motion for a resolution on Milan Expo 2015. Full agenda here

25-26/03: ENVI Committee Meeting

Especially on the agenda: Exchange of views with Commission Vytenis Andriukaitis.

Full agenda here

31/03: End of the Milk Quota system: the European Milk Board will organise a Vigil, press conference & symbolic action in front of the European Parliament in Brussels to point out this paradigm change for the dairy sector. More information here

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Opinion

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Contact person



Nelly Baltide

Advisor on Development

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