



NZ's Export Markets Sensitive to Trace GM Contamination

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If even a pizza maker in Japan is "routinely testing" for GM content, this is the clearest demonstration of how sensitive New Zealand's premium export markets are to GM contamination said Sustainability Council Executive Director Simon Terry.

He was commenting on the MAF announcement that it was launching an investigation following test results, including those from Japan, showed trace GM content in sweet corn sourced from New Zealand.

Throughout Europe and the wealthier Asian nations, there is strong consumer resistance to even trace GM contamination. Major food buyers routinely test for its presence in order to provide the GM Free food these customers are seeking.

On Wednesday, the European Parliament passed legislation that will require all products sold in Europe to be labeled if there is more than 0.9% GM content. But as the Japanese tests show, the market is actually looking for zero GM content and suppliers will often reject a product showing any level of contamination.

It is not just fussy French or food-scandalized UK consumers, even a fast food provider in Japan wants to know there is no GM content. There is no place to hide.

New Zealand currently does not allow commercial production of GM food. If outdoor GM food production were to go ahead, contamination of ordinary food crops is inevitable. Attempts to segregate GM crops will generally only slow down the contamination.

Consumers are looking for GM free food and New Zealand should not permit commercial production of GM crops until there is market acceptance of these products.

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