

GMOseek

Project name: GMOseek: Development of screening methods for GMOs

Project acronym: GMOseek

Project duration: 2 years (June 2009-June 2011)

Project funding: Food Standard Agency (FSA), United Kingdom; Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL), Germany

The GMOseek project challenges the increasing number of EU- approved and unauthorized GM events (UGMs) needed to be detected, and the need for better time- and cost-efficiency of analytical approaches. GMOseek will deliver new screening methods and strategies in order to improve GMO detection and render it more cost-effective. The project will also challenge the detection of UGM that are not authorised or safety assessed in the EU and therefore pose a potential risk for consumers.

A minimum set of well chosen screening tests can be sufficient to detect a maximum number of GMOs in a sample. However, few efforts have been done until now to improve this screening phase of GMO detection while identification/quantification of authorized GMOs is very effective in EU. The number of EU-approved GMOs is expected to increase in the coming years and laboratories will have to distinguish between material derived from authorised and non-authorised GMOs in order i) to respect the consumer's right to choose between GMO-containing and GMO-free products, ii) to prevent products without authorisation or safety assessment from entering the EU market.

The project's outcome will be the following. New bioinformatics tools will help the enforcement/companies laboratories designing more efficient screening strategy for detection of authorised and also unauthorised GMOs at the same time. Several new screening methods targeting one or several genetic elements characterising GMOs will be developed and tested in a second laboratory for its usability. These screening methods will be ready for validation in order to be shortly used in routine GMO diagnostics.

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