



Sixth Framework Programme



The European integrated project CO-EXTRA on the CO-EXistence and TRAcability of GM and non-GM supply chains

The objective of this project (started on the 01/04/05) is to provide to the different stakeholders the needed methods and tools to comply with the new EC regulations designed to manage the expected increase of marketed Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). With 52 partners from 18 countries (in Europe and also Russia, Brazil and Argentina), Co-Extra is a 4-years Integrated research Project, which is funded with €13,5 million from the European Union's Sixth Research Framework Programme, under the Food Quality and Safety Priority.

Co-Extra aims at :

- enabling co-existence between GM and non GM (conventional and organic) crops by developing comprehensive tools and methodologies and integrate them along with existing ones into embedded decision-support systems;
- tracing GMO materials and derived products, along the food and feed chains;
- allowing consumers to make enlightened choices by proposing the most appropriate information structure, content and flow management for ensuring reliable and cost-effective documentary traceability.

To achieve its multi-dimensional objectives, the Co-Extra consortium has gathered a truly multidisciplinary partnership covering all of the needed competences to address co-existence and traceability issues from seed to consumer: biology, organisation modelling, decision mathematics, statistics, reliability, computation and detection methods.

The Co-Extra consortium also comprises several industrial companies including biotechnology-specialised companies. They will provide the project with the industry's point of view on the one hand, and their expertise on dialogue with stakeholders on the other hand.

Stakeholders have been involved in the project from the start through the dialogue platform, editorial offices, focus groups, national relays, etc... Co-Extra outcomes will contribute to reinforcing consumers' confidence in labelling claims and therefore EU products at large.

Yves Bertheau, INRA's Co-Extra scientific coordinator declared: "This project will provide tools and methods to help the food and feedstuffs producers, including SMEs, to better match their practises with the consumers' needs of reliable and cost-effective information. It is the first time, in the area of supply chains of GMO and non-GMO derived products, that such a project is consumer-driven, i.e. from fork to farm."

For Christian Patermann, Director Biotechnology, Agriculture and Food, of the European Commission "Co-existence and traceability of GMOs and non-GMOs are required by the current and forthcoming EC regulations and demanded by European consumers. As an integrated project and by gathering recognised experts from 18 countries, Co-Extra is particularly well designed to generate deliverables required to achieve scientific and technological objectives, to increase the impetus to Europe's competitiveness and to address major societal needs. "He also stressed the interest of non-European countries in this work, like Russia, Argentina and Brazil.



ARVALIS' studies in Co-Extra concern maize crop

ARVALIS' participation

Within Co-Extra, ARVALIS is mainly involved in the frame of WP1: Biological approaches for gene flow mitigation. This workpackage, led by the Federal Biological Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry (Germany) is aimed at assessing and developing whenever necessary biological tools and methods to allow producers to grow kind of crops they choose with minimised risks of admixture between GM, conventional and organic products.

ARVALIS participates in the validation of biological mitigation techniques in collaboration with ETH Zurich to test maize male sterility in fields and its reversibility in greenhouses.

Furthermore, in collaboration with INRA, ARVALIS is involved in the second task of this WP concerning the factors affecting large scale pollen flow: research on pollen emission, according to the agronomical context and climate conditions.

The institute participates also in the study on prediction of pollen emission and impact over large distance, using isolated sites in the South of France.

The Xenia effect is also tested in the frame of this WP and ARVALIS is involved in. ■

Don't hesitate to consult the Co-Extra website: <http://www.coextra.org>

ARVALIS contact :

Xavier FOUILLASSAR

x.foueillassar@arvalisinstitutduvegetal.fr

If you need further information about this newsletter or about our activities, do not hesitate to contact our international relations department:

Christophe ROTURIER : c.roturier@arvalisinstitutduvegetal.fr

Sylvie GUILLOT : s.quillot@arvalisinstitutduvegetal.fr

You can also consult our website: www.arvalisinstitutduvegetal.fr/en

ARVALIS – Institut du végétal

3, Rue Joseph et Marie Hackin

F-75116 PARIS

Tel : +33 1 44 31 10 00

Fax : +33 1 44 31 10 10

Layout of this issue : Edwige FONTAINE (ARVALIS – Institut du végétal)