

POSITION STATEMENT ON TRANSGENIC PLANTS BY PLANT PROTECTION COMMITTEE OF THE POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Summary

The objective of the Plant Protection Committee, representing wide range of professionals in plant pathology, entomology and weed science, with a strong group of biological control experts, is providing a vision for safe, cost-effective, sustainable plant protection strategy in Poland. Developments of the last ten years showed that new biotechnology methods have expanded implementation of environmentally safe methods by developing plants resistance to pest infestation or plant tolerance to herbicides. The Committee wishes to contribute to the nearly ten year discussion on GMO hold by politicians, NGOs, farmer organisations and scientists in Poland. The Committee discussions on GMO, as a new plant protection challenge in agriculture, were included in the programme of three consecutive meetings hold in 2006 and 2007. Based on the experience of a number of Committee members on the environmental risk assessment (ERA) and moni-

toring of pesticides on non-target organisms, a draft position statement was prepared, based on available scientific data from countries implementing the ERA principles in approving cultivation of GM crops in Europe, for further discussion and amendments. Later some additional suggestions from weed scientists were included in the final version of the declaration approved on the 21st September 2007. Confirmed successes of growing GM crops by increasing pest management options, reduction of pesticide treatments, human health considerations and reduction of negative environmental impacts influenced the positive judgement of GM crops by the Committee. At the same time, the declaration cautioning that a case-by-case scientific analysis of risk (e.g. effect of Bt crops on non-target organisms) and benefits (reduction of pesticides) should be conducted before commercial use of GM crops.