

PRESS RELEASE & PHOTO CALL

Immediate Release - Wednesday 13 February, 2002

GM LABELLING “LOTTERY” - MEP

Ian Hudghton MEP (Scottish National Party), is paying a visit to the Munloch Vigil on the Black Isle tomorrow, Thursday 14 February 2002 at 1 pm, to lend his support to the campaign to have GM crop field trials halted.

Commenting on his trip to the Highlands, Mr Hudghton said:

"Primary legislation governing GMO's is initiated in the European Union. I have been very keen to visit Munloch to see what weight I can add to the protesters' calls to have the field trials here stopped. The European Commission puts great store by talking up public health and the need for consumers to be assured that the food they eat is safe from field to plate. I am far from convinced that consumers can be re-assured when so many questions still need to be answered.

In a recent Eurobarometer poll (December 2001) well over 80% of European citizens polled said that they would not want GMO's at all unless scientifically proven to be safe, while 70% don't want GMO's at all. How the Commission can square their commitment to keeping citizens informed on public health issues, while permitting field trials of these crops is beyond me.

As things stand, there are just too many, too crucial ends to be tied up before I could be confident that the crops growing at Munloch pose no risk to public health. I am particularly keen to hear the protesters' views on European proposals on labelling. It's all very well to set thresholds above which products have to be labelled as genetically modified. But what about those products which fall the threshold, but are GM-tainted? There won't be a requirement to notify the public and therefore you or I could end up consuming GM contaminated food anyway! The Commission is effectively creating a GM Lottery by permitting ANY threshold no matter how low, to go through while the safety of GMO's is still very questionable."

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