

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **MEP – FINNIE TO BLAME FOR GMO TRIALS**

Ian Hudghton MEP (Scottish National Party) has hit back at Fife Liberal Democrat MSP, Iain Smith over claims that the Scottish Environment Minister “had little option under the present European and UK rules but to grant approval” for field trials of genetically modified oil seed rape to go ahead in Fife. The MEP says that the decision on whether or not to grant consent to go ahead with the trials lies not in Brussels – but in Edinburgh with the Scottish Minister, Ross Finnie. Mr Hudghton was responding to a “Courier” article (Friday 15 March) in which Iain Smith MSP is quoted as saying that the Scottish Executive should be “lobbying the European Union for a moratorium on the planting of GM crops until we have had an opportunity to assess the potential impact.”

"While I absolutely agree on the need to impose a moratorium on planting GM crops, the decision to go ahead with the Newport trials rests squarely with the Minister in Edinburgh, Ross Finnie. EU legislation on GMO's centres on regulations designed to avoid adverse effects to human health and the environment that might arise from the release of GMO's.

Mr Smith is kidding himself and the public by implying that there is a man in Brussels, wielding a big stick, forcing us to carry out GM trials in Scotland. What the European legislation in fact does is to set a very tight regulatory framework in which the member states must operate if applications for consent to carry out field trials are made. The Directive is about health and the environment, NOT about compelling member states to participate in the trials.

Consumers have made it perfectly clear that they don't want GM foods and that there is a massive market out there for non-GM products. Scotland can take commercial advantage of this growing consumer demand. We have built up an excellent record world wide for the wholesomeness and quality of our agriculture and the foods we produce. There is a big market out there for our naturally produced foods. Why on earth are we putting that reputation in jeopardy by expanding GM crops trials and risking the reputation we have won for ourselves for fine produce? The answer to that rests with Ross Finnie and the Scottish Executive - and no pretending that it's Brussels' fault will change that fact."

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