

OGM: The Crazy Epic of the Golden Rice

Patrick Moore, one of the founders of Greenpeace, who left the organization, is fighting for the cultivation of this GMO in Asia and Africa

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The facts: Now that the law to ban GMOs comes back to the national parliament, the debate on the Golden Rice is not closed. This crop that could save millions of children of this world is attacked violently, notably by Greenpeace.

After having rejected by the senate on February 17, the text aiming at the ban of cultivating transgenic maize came back to the national parliament. The legal proposal of the socialist Bruno Le Roux will be discussed and for sure to be adopted on April 15 and 16 [and has indeed been adopted April 16]. At the agriculture roundtable Stéphane Le Foll has indeed opened the door to the GMOs of the second generation, notably for the Golden Rice invented by two biologists from the Federal School of Technology in Zurich [and by the University of Freiburg i.Br.]. The Golden Rice with its enhanced level of Vitamin A is absolutely necessary to fight the blindness – the minister of agriculture declared. And he added: For such cases we should organize a serious debate.

This is a thoughtful man, congratulates Patrick Moore, on his visit in Paris. "GMOs should be approached step by step, or you can say that the Golden Rice is the first humanitarian GMO."

To-day, the Golden Rice is further developed by IRRI, the National Institute of Rice Research of the Philippines, this variety is capable of synthesizing beta-carotene, a precursor of the Vitamin A. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food Agency of the United Nations (FAO), every year 250'000 to 500'000 children are going blind and half of them die half a year later after having lost vision because of Vitamin A deficiency.

Since 10 years, militant GMO-opponents, headed by Greenpeace, do everything to block its development, not hesitating to destroy on August 8 one of five Golden Rice research fields on the Philippines. This enraged Patrick Moore, the founder of Greenpeace for which he worked 15 years). According to him Golden Rice is an ideal GMO, it does not cause any environmental risk, nor a loss of biodiversity but it will save millions of children's life. The tests still can be made, but until when? "It is like a fire broke out, the fire truck is ready, but its front windows are dirty", rants Patrick Moore – you just have to clean them and go ahead.

The government of the Philippines hopes to launch the Golden Rice in 2016. In France, the debate promised by Stéphane Le Foll is not yet scheduled. On April 29 the High council of biotechnology organizes nevertheless a meeting on the "Intellectual Property of Genes". The ministerial entourage signals that although the Golden Rice is not in the center of the meeting, it would merit being there – and if only between the lines. For once, the debate is not over.