

EURO COOP STATEMENT

LABELLING: MAKING THE NON-GM ALTERNATIVE POSSIBLE

Brussels, 7th December 2007- The European Commission will not accede to the request of one million EU citizens who had signed Greenpeace's petition calling for the labelling of products such as eggs, meat and milk produced from animals fed with GM feed¹.

It has indeed decided to maintain the current EU labelling regime for GM food and feed, on the grounds of EFSA's scientific opinion on the incorporation of transgenes into animal tissues or products when fed with GMOs².

While Euro Coop acknowledges that EU policies should be science-based, it regrets that the Commission seems to have looked exclusively at the science without taking into account other legitimate factors that should underlie risk-management decisions.

Euro Coop reminds that besides health concerns, there are many ethical reasons for not wanting to consume GMOs or GM-derived food. European consumers deserve the **right to know** and should always have the **right to choose** in any case.

Against this background, consumer cooperatives across Europe are committed to offering consumers that freedom of choice. They are striving to adapt their food supply so that it reflects the concerns, values and convictions of their consumer-members. Despite the cost and complexity involved, some cooperatives have totally eliminated GMOs from their own brand products, instructing suppliers to use certified GM-free feed and providing clear labels as a result.

Euro Coop therefore encourages **voluntary GM-free labelling** as a valuable tool to:

- Inform, protect consumers and enable them to make safe and ethical choices ;
- Help economic operators differentiate their non-GM products on the market, and allow them to reap the rewards of efforts engaged in securing GM-free supply ;
- Ultimately to ensure the sustainability of a European farming model based on quality and biodiversity, which is currently under threat.

These objectives will only be achieved if the political and economic context in Europe allows it. Consequently Euro Coop calls on consumers, farmers and responsible businesses to join efforts and use their clout to make the non-GM alternative possible. It also asks EU

¹ See <http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/press-centre/press-releases2/one-million-petition>

² See http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/Statement/gmo_EFSA_statement_DNA_proteins_gastroint.0.pdf

institutions to put stronger political will and concrete efforts into **securing a non-GM feed supply in Europe**.

***EURO COOP** is the European Community of Consumer Cooperatives, whose members are the national organisations of consumer cooperatives in 17 European countries. Created in 1957, EURO COOP today represents over 3,200 local and regional cooperatives, the members of which amount to more than 22 million consumers across Europe.*

For further information, please contact:

Laura Street, Food Policy Officer, Euro Coop

Tel: +32 (0)2 285 00 74

E-mail: lstreet@eurocoop.coop

Rosita Zilli, Policy Officer, Euro Coop

Tel: +32 (0)2 285 00 72

E-mail: rzilli@eurocoop.coop