

# EURO-TOQUES IRELAND

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF CHEFS

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Wednesday 28/04/04**

## **TOP CHEFS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO LISTEN TO CONSUMERS AND DECLARE IRELAND A GM-FREE ZONE**

Euro-Toques Ireland, the Irish branch of the European Chefs' organisation, came out strongly at Monday's 'GM-Free Ireland' workshop against the possible introduction of GM food and crops in Ireland. Euro-Toques, whose members include top chefs from throughout Ireland and Europe, aims to protect the quality, diversity and flavour of our food and to promote indigenous and traditional production methods. Genetic manipulation of food is seen as totally at odds with these aims.

Commissioner-General of Euro-Toques Ireland Mr. Ross Lewis says that "Euro-Toques has seen an overwhelming concern growing amongst its members and their customers over the past few years about the future of our food and it is felt that GM poses a very serious threat in this regard. Not only are there the obvious risks related to the uncertainty surrounding the effects of GMOs on human and animal health and on the eco-system, GM products also pose a serious threat to the diversity of our food".

"GM technology is very new and its consequences are unknown. Our main concern in relation to the question of introducing GM crops is one of choice; cross-contamination with organic and conventional crops will inevitably occur which means consumers will have no choice about eating GM foods. In our experience people are increasingly looking for traditionally and naturally produced foods, they simply don't want GM products. Euro-Toques is calling on the Irish Government to listen to consumers and to declare Ireland a GM Free zone".

At Monday's conference Euro-Toques member Evan Doyle of Brook Lodge Hotel in Co. Wicklow remarked that "chefs and consumers are increasingly seeking out safe but differentiated high quality products – this differentiation is usually made on the basis of local, regional or geographic characteristics".

Local sourcing from small, artisan producers is central to the ethos of Euro-Toques Chefs. During cooking demonstrations at the National Food Fair in the RDS on Sunday Euro-Toques member chefs Neven Maguire, Kevin Thornton and Derry Clarke continually emphasised the importance of sourcing the highest quality local ingredients.

Euro-Toques was established in 1987 to address the concerns of Europe's top chefs about the quality and future of our food. Euro-Toques has over 200 members in Ireland and a 4,000 throughout Europe. The organisation represents not only the interests of its members but also of the network of small producers who supply them and the consumers they cater for.

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