



Office of the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Dublin 2.

Oifig an Aire Talmhaíochta agus Bia, Baile Átha Cliath 2.

24 June 2005

Our Ref: 2005/22524P

Mr Trevor Sargent, T.D.,
The Green Party,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

*(Scan) → copy
to
Sweeney
Sorell
etc
C.M. Il*

Dear Trevor

I refer to your enquiry concerning the consignment of maize gluten contaminated with the unapproved BT10 maize product and currently under detention in a store in Greenore port.

You are aware that, following the notification to the EU by the US authorities of the potential presence of Bt10 in maize by-products, an emergency piece of legislation was introduced requiring that all imports from the USA of distillers grains or maize gluten intended for animal feed had to be accompanied by a laboratory certificate indicating the absence of the unauthorised BT10 product.

I wish to confirm to you that my Department has been very active in ensuring that the controls relating to the importation of BT 10 products are effectively implemented.

It is common practice for samples of consignments for export to be taken during loading of the ship and for the analysis to be carried out as the product is transported over the seas. Such testing can include analysis for nutritional value, contaminants as well as the new check for BT 10.

When my Department was informed that the impending shipment contained a consignment of maize gluten of BT 10 origin some consideration was given to refusing its entry to the country. However cognisance had to be taken of the fact that the shipment contained four other feed products not affected by BT 10 which were awaited by the feed industry.

Taking the above into account my Department took the decision to allow the shipment on the basis that an authorised officer maintained a constant presence to ensure cross contamination did not occur at time of discharge. Following discharge, samples were taken of the other products on the ship and all proved negative when tested for the

presence of Bt10. All equipment involved in discharging the contaminated maize gluten was subsequently thoroughly cleaned. The consignment of maize gluten contaminated with Bt10 is currently stored at the port.

Responsibility for disposal of this material rests with the importer. The importer has been requested to submit proposals for disposal of the material and has responded saying that they are currently exploring three options, viz incineration abroad; return to country of origin or possible composting within Ireland, the latter which would require the consent of the EPA.

Since the material is impounded by my Department it will not be released until all legal requirements, including food safety and environmental issues are fully addressed.

I will keep you informed of events.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mary', is written over a horizontal line.

Mary Coughlan T.D.
Minister for Agriculture and Food.