



OECD Schemes for the Varietal Certification of Seed Moving in International Trade

**DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE AD HOC MEETING
ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEED ISSUES**

Celle/Hanover, Germany, 3 July 2000

This document was prepared by the Secretariat. A draft version of the paper was circulated to the Annual Meeting held in Celle on 4-6 July 2000 and approved by the delegates subject to minor changes and editorial improvements.

The present document is circulated to delegations and National Designated Authorities for INFORMATION.

The list of the Ad Hoc Meeting participants appears in the draft Summary Record of the Annual Meeting held on 4-6 July 2000 [AGR/CA/S/M(2000)6, Annex I].

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1. Opening Statement by the Secretariat

Mr. Debois welcomed the participants. He reminded that this Ad Hoc Meeting had been preceded by several meetings held on the same subject since September 1999 with other organisations. The objective of the present Meeting was to prepare possible decision at the Annual Meeting level. Conclusions and recommendations would be submitted to the Annual Meeting starting the following day.

2. Election of Chairman

On the proposal of the Secretariat, participants agreed that the Ad Hoc Meeting would be chaired by M. Miauton, current Chairman of the Annual Meeting.

3. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda AGR/CA/S/A(2000)4 was adopted subject to the addition of an item previously raised by Greece which concerned the presence and identification of genetically modified varieties in the OECD List of Varieties. The item would be dealt with under item 4.4.

4. Developments since the 1999 Annual Meeting

4.1 *Request made by the G-8 to the OECD*

The Secretariat reported briefly on the OECD wide activities on biotechnology and other aspects of food safety in relation to the G-8 request and the contribution of the Schemes to it. The current Schemes activities in this area were also referred to the FIS request (see below).

4.2 *FIS request to the OECD Seed Schemes*

FIS emphasised the role of the Schemes in facilitating international seed trade. The purpose of the FIS request made to the OECD Schemes was to prevent international trade disruption. This was a response to government and civil society demand for GM information without implying risk recognition by FIS.

4.3 *Meetings held with FIS and ISTA (and AOSA)*

No comments were made concerning the summary records of the meetings held in Cambridge, Changins, Zurich and Amsterdam. These were:

- Cambridge, 9 September 1999, Advisory Group [AGR/CA/S/M(99)5]
- Changins, 21-22 October 1999, 4th joint FIS/ISTA/OECD [AGR/CA/S/M(99)7]
- Zurich, 22 December 1999, 5th joint FIS/ISTA-AOSA/OECD [AGR/CA/S/M(2000)1]
- Amsterdam, 12 May 2000, 6th joint FIS/ISTA/OECD [AGR/CA/S/M(2000)3]

4.4 *Roundtable on national GM seed issues*

The South African and Argentine Designated Authorities had sent a statement of intent to participate in the proposed experiment. Switzerland had agreed on a conditional threshold approach.

All countries updated the meeting on their current GM regulations and production. The overall picture was one of great diversity regarding testing methodologies, event approval, crops, commercialization and imports.

ISTA had set up a task force on test methods.

EC was working on these issues within the framework of the "White Paper on food safety". Current seed regulations would be supplemented with maximum thresholds on the presence of authorised GMOs in non-GM seed before 2001.

In respect of the above-mentioned issue raised by Greece of identifying genetically modified varieties in the OECD List, the Secretariat explained that the Schemes contained no provision for requiring, recommending or denying it. Be that as it may, prior agreement was necessary both on the principle and the way to mention such a characteristic. This was clearly not the case at present.

5. **The ISNI Experiment (International Seed Network Initiative for the Transboundary Movement of Seed and Biotechnology)**

The FIS Initiative described in AGR/CA/S(2000)3 was welcomed in its principle by all delegations.

It led to a number of remarks by the EU. The enhanced quality system, the proposed experimental values and the list of events seemed to be either unclear or too high or disconnected from the spirit of the OECD Seed Schemes. The EU delegate feeling was that no free circulation of seed lots tested within the experiment could be envisaged between countries other than those participating in the experiment. Moreover, papers AGR/CA/S(2000)15 and 16 could not be agreed because an amendment of the Schemes was implied. The EU needed more time to achieve a common position of all 15 Member States on all points. Some progress could be made through EU co-ordination before the Annual Meeting.

6. Proposal to establish a Working Group

The US Delegation proposed to start a series of quarterly meetings, the first one to be held in about a month within the framework of a new Working Group, established formally within the OECD Seed Schemes, with which FIS, ISTA and AOSA would be associated.

Whether a legal framework to the Experiment should be set up without delay was disputed but it was considered better to have one in order to make progress and address present and future commercial problems. No single initiative would suffice to achieve satisfactory harmonization.

The meeting agreed that initial work of the Working Group should start as soon as possible after a full review of all the clauses of the experiment.

7. Other Business

No time was left for any other business discussions.