

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK OF GM FOOD?**

Date of Release: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2003

For Immediate Release

Today, the Irish Council for Bioethics has placed advertisements in the national newspapers (north and south) seeking the views and opinions of the Irish public on genetically modified crops and food.

Their survey is looking at the amount of information people know about genetically modified crops and the sources of that information. It also examines how people feel about consuming genetically modified food and whether it poses a threat to the environment. People's trust of scientific bodies and non-governmental organisation to provide factual and non-partial information about GMOs is also being surveyed.

In July 2003 the European Parliament introduced guidelines for the development of national strategies and best practices to ensure the coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming. These initiatives require the traceability of genetically modified organism (GMO) throughout the food chain from farm to table and provide consumers with information by labelling all food and feed consisting of, containing, or produced from a GMO. This effectively ends the five year de facto moratorium on the import into European member states of genetically modified food and crops.

The Irish Council for Bioethics has a working group investigating the ethical issues surrounding Genetically Modified crops and food with particular reference to the Irish setting. The group is also considering the impact Genetically Modified crops might have on developing countries.

Dr. Siobhán O'Sullivan, Scientific Director of the Irish Council for Bioethics said "given recent developments in Brussels, the establishment of an expert group by the Irish Council for Bioethics is timely and will hopefully add to a reasonable debate on this issue".

The questionnaire is available from the Irish Council for Bioethics, Academy House, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2 (Ph: 6380920) and must be returned by 14 November 2003. Submissions can also be made via the Bioethics website, [www.bioethics.ie](http://www.bioethics.ie)

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