

Brussels, 26 October 2004

## Genetically modified NK603 maize authorised for both food and feed

*The European Commission today authorised the placing on the market of foods and food ingredients derived from genetically modified maize line NK603 in accordance with the GM Food and Feed Regulation. NK603 maize has already been approved under Directive 2001/18/EC for import and for use as animal feed and for industrial processing. With both approvals in place, it is now possible to place on the market NK603 maize and derived products such as starch, oil, maize gluten feed and maize meal for food and feed use. However, the crop will be grown and harvested outside the EU. In line with the new EU legislation on labelling, the maize and any product containing it will have to show clearly that it has been genetically modified. The Commission took the decision to authorise NK603 following the failure of the Council either to approve or reject the Commission proposal for authorisation.*

David Byrne, the Commissioner responsible for Health and Consumer Protection, said: "During my time as Commissioner, we put in place a clear and strict system for the authorisation and labelling of GMOs, based on clear scientific advice. We are now seeing the system work in practice. The clear labelling system guarantees consumers what they have asked for: the information they need so that they can choose whether or not to buy any genetically modified products."

NK603 maize has been modified to make the maize tolerant to the herbicide glyphosphate. This improves weed control and thereby the cultivation of maize. The authorisation of NK603 maize for food use is valid immediately and will stay valid for 10 years. It results from an application submitted by the company Monsanto. NK603 maize has undergone a thorough safety assessment on the basis of international guidelines for any adverse impact on public health. It has been assigned a unique identifier and a validated detection method in order to allow labelling and traceability according to the new EU rules.

The EU has one of the most stringent safety systems for GMOs. Each authorisation is granted on its own merits and requests for authorisations which do not fulfil all criteria have been and will continue to be rejected.

### Further information:

See the website of DG Health and Consumer Protection: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/biotechnology/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/biotechnology/index_en.htm) and the Questions and Answers on the regulation of GMOs in the EU: [MEMO/04/102](#).