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## Lithuania

### Biotechnology

## Lithuanian government disapproves second field trial application

**2007**

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**Report Highlights:**

The Lithuanian government recently rejected Monsanto's petition for field trials of a bio-engineered corn product just two days after it disapproved field trials of a BASF transgenic rapeseed variety. Lithuanian officials did not follow their own regulatory procedures in making these decisions, relying instead on public opinion.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Warsaw [PL1]  
[LH]

On April 6, 2007 the Lithuanian government disapproved field trials of a Monsanto biotech corn variety just two days after disapproving field trials of a BASF transgenic rapeseed variety.

Regarding the decision on rapeseed, the National Biotechnology Advisory and Steering committees recommended approval of the trials. Initially, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment also were in favor of approving the petition, but the Ministry of Agriculture weighed in against the request. In the end, however, the Ministry of Environment, which has the final say on these decisions in Lithuania, rejected the request apparently because of lobbying by environmental political parties and a recent survey of Lithuanians that stated that 60 percent disapprove of biotech planting in Lithuania.

In the case of the Monsanto decision, the Ministry of the Environment issued its negative decision without soliciting input from the National Biotechnology Advisory or Scientific committees. In addition, this same week, a parliamentary committee on the environment also voiced its opposition to biotech plantings in Lithuania.

A report on the Lithuanian regulatory structure for biotechnology and more details about the BASF rapeseed decision can be found in GAIN report LH7002, "Biotechnology in Lithuania" from April 2007. The report can be found on the internet at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200704/146280747.pdf>.

Comment: Post is concerned that the government's decision to ban field trials of these transgenic crops lacked a basis in sound science. In fact, for rapeseed, the negative decision ran counter to the opinion of scientific experts. Post will continue to monitor this situation and work with FAS/Brussels to ensure Lithuania remains in compliance with its EU and, ultimately, wider trade obligations concerning transgenic crops.