

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: April 25, 2023

Report Number: BE2023-0001

Report Name: European Food Safety Authority Launches Stakeholder Survey on Microorganisms Produced by Biotechnology

Country: Belgium

Post: Brussels USEU

Report Category: Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies

Prepared By: Luigi Castaldi

Approved By: Elisa Fertig

Report Highlights:

The European Commission requested a scientific opinion from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on microorganisms produced by new developments in biotechnology. On March 7, 2023, EFSA launched a stakeholders survey requesting interested parties to share information on microorganisms produced by new developments in biotechnology that are intended for food and feed. EFSA will consider data collected through the survey to form an opinion on potential novel hazards and risks, as well as the adequacy of the current risk assessment guidance. The deadline to respond to the survey is April 30, 2023.

General Information:

On March 7, 2023, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) launched a stakeholder's [survey](#) requesting interested parties to share information on microorganisms produced by new biotechnology developments that are intended for food and feed (Task 1). EFSA will consider data collected through the survey in order to form a [scientific opinion requested by the European Commission](#) on potential novel hazards and risks, as well as the adequacy of the current risk assessment guidance (Task 2).

For the purpose of the survey and in accordance with the [EFSA Guidance on the risk assessment of genetically modified microorganisms \(GMM\) and their products intended for food and feed use](#), the following two categories are of interest:

- **Category 3:** Products derived from GMMs in which GMMs capable of multiplication or of transferring genes are not present, but in which recombinant DNA is still present (e.g. heat-inactivated starter cultures);
- **Category 4:** Products consisting of or containing GMMs capable of multiplication or of transferring genes (e.g. live starter cultures for fermented foods and feed).

The interested parties are invited to participate in the survey and share information about new biotechnology developments for microorganisms.

New genomic techniques (NGTs) are defined as techniques of genetic manipulation that have emerged or developed after 2001 (when the Directive 2001/18/EC was published). Examples of NGTs include:

- 1) Genome editing techniques such as CRISPR-Cas.
- 2) In vivo mutagenesis techniques such as EvolvR, SCRaMbLE.
- 3) Epigenetic techniques such as DNA-methylation, miRNA, etc.

The survey asks technical questions about the microorganisms modified through the new biotechnologies and the development stage of the process. The deadline for completing the survey is April 30, 2023.

Meanwhile, the European Commission will present its proposal to regulate plants obtained via NGTs at the beginning of June 2023. With regard to the use of NGTs in the application of animals, the EC is still at an early stage as EFSA was recently requested to provide a scientific opinion.

For more information about Biotechnology in Europe, please see the [Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies 2022 Annual Report](#).

Attachments:

No Attachments.