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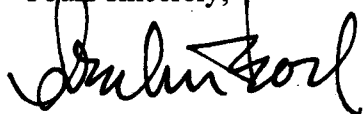
Dear Dr. Lucas,

Thank you for your letter dated 2nd of March 2006 in which you draw my attention to the debate about the Commission's proposal for a Council Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products, and in particular to concerns about the presence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in organic food. I can assure you that I am very much aware about these concerns of the European citizens.

The Commission is of the view that specific thresholds for organic products would be detrimental for the sector. This approach was already reflected in the European Action Plan on Organic Food and Farming (EAP) adopted in 2004, which stated the need to clarify that the general labelling threshold for the adventitious presence of GMOs set out in Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 (0,9 %) applies equally to products used in organic farming other than seeds. For seeds, future labelling thresholds to be defined under Directive 2001/18/EC and under the seeds Directives will apply. In addition, it proposed to introduce the explicit provision that products containing levels of GMOs above the labelling threshold cannot be marketed and labelled as organic. The proposal for a new Council Regulation does not introduce a specific threshold value for organic products, instead the current situation remains with respect to the level of the labelling thresholds. But the Commission proposal is stricter in comparison with the current rules in the sense that where adventitious presence above the 0,9 % threshold does at the moment not lead to a prohibition to sell products as organic, such a prohibition is proposed to apply in the future.

In your letter you make reference to the WTO interim report of the GMO panel. Given the fact that the WTO panel has not yet presented the final ruling, a decision whether or not to appeal has not yet been taken. Only after the release of the final report can the Commission make a full analysis and take a decision.

Yours sincerely,



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