

EU agrees to allow traces of GM crops in EU animal feed

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Activists fly a kite to protest against the cultivation of genetically modified maize. Crops containing tiny traces of genetically modified produce will be allowed to enter the European food chain for the first time under plans approved by EU governments Tuesday and attacked by environmental campaigners.

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A European Commission proposal to end import restrictions on animal foodstuffs containing traces of GM crops, up to a 0.1-percent threshold, was slammed as "overturning the EU's 'zero tolerance' policy," by Friends of the Earth expert Mute Schimpf.

France obtained a change which will mean only [GM crops](#) that have already been given the go-ahead by European Union food security experts would be allowed to enter the food chain in this way.

The commission more broadly wants restrictions by national authorities on GM crop cultivation removed because they flout World Trade Organization rules but it faces a legal maze of opposition within the EU largely due to greater consumer concerns than in the United States.

Schimpf said that "weakening safety rules to appease the animal feed industry compromises human and environmental safety."

The [European Parliament](#) has still to have its say on Tuesday's decision, within a three-month deadline.

Greenpeace slammed the decision on the same grounds, arguing that "contamination" will be all the greater because the EU imports [animal feed](#) massively from the United States, Brazil and Argentina, countries responsible for 80 percent of global GM cultivation.

A top US trade official said earlier this month she would bang down the door of the commission in a bid to break the longstanding impasse blocking the advance of genetically-modified foods.

"When Europeans come to the United States, they come and enjoy our cuisine with no concerns whatsoever," Deputy US Trade Representative Miriam Sapiro said.

"Why should we have different standards in Europe?"

"We have very strict safety standards -- as do you -- and I think that alone is good reason to make sure that our products are able to be sold in Europe," she insisted.

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