

Monsanto drops bid to grow new GM foods in EU

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Activists rip open bags of MON 810 GM maize at a Monsanto site in Trebes near Carcassonne, France last year. US agro-chemicals giant Monsanto said Thursday it will drop all requests to be allowed to grow new genetically modified foods in the European Union, which has for years held up approval.

US agro-chemicals giant Monsanto said Thursday it will drop all requests to be allowed to grow new genetically modified foods in the European Union, which has for years held up approval.

"We will no longer be pursuing approvals for cultivation of new biotech crops in Europe," Monsanto said, adding that it would now focus on its conventional seeds business and enabling imports of such products into the region.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, said it "took note of the decision" by Monsanto which produces a whole stable of GM crops and associated agro-chemicals in wide use in the United States and elsewhere.

In Europe, however, there is widespread suspicion about the use of GM [food products](#), with many fearing that their use could have an unintended long-term impact on health.

Monsanto and other producers insist such fears are unfounded and that GM products are essential if growing global demand for food is to be met.

The EU currently allows only two GM products to be grown in the 28-member bloc—Monsanto's MON 810 [maize](#) and German conglomerate BASF's Amflora potato.

Brussels cleared MON 810 in 1998 for 10 years and Monsanto submitted a request in 2007 for it to be extended but the process has been effectively frozen since then.

Environmental groups welcomed Monsanto's announcement.

"This is great news for science and research in Europe," said Mark Breddy, Greenpeace EU spokesman.

"Over the last couple of decades, GM crops have proven themselves to be an ineffective and unpopular technology, with unacceptable risks for

our environment and health," Breddy said.

"Monsanto's retreat could finally create the space for European farming to focus on modern practices and technologies that offer real advances for food production and rural communities."

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