

French court lifts ban on growing Monsanto GM corn

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A cornfield in Godewaersvelde, northern France, on September 28, 2012. France's top administrative court has thrown out a government ban on US agro-chemicals giant Monsanto from growing a type of genetically modified corn.

France's top administrative court on Thursday threw out a government ban on US agro-chemicals giant Monsanto from growing a type of genetically modified corn.

A moratorium on MON810 corn—one of just two types of genetically altered [food crops](#) whose cultivation is approved by the European Union—has been in place in France since March 2012.

The Council of State court noted in a statement that the [moratorium](#) had little legal basis.

It pointed out that EU regulations say such a ban "can only be taken by a member state in case of an emergency or if a situation poses a major risk" to the health of people or animals, or to the environment.

But France's Agriculture Minister Stephane Le Foll countered that the government "is not in favour of GM, especially MON810 which is a corn that is resistant to [herbicides](#)."

He hinted earlier that the government would take other legal actions if the [ban](#) were lifted, and later announced that authorities would take a fresh decision on whether or not to get rid of MON810 before farmers next sow seeds from April 2014.

Brussels cleared MON810 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.

In the absence of a formal decision on the renewal request, MON810 is still grown on a small scale, notably in Spain and Portugal whose governments have been more welcoming than other member states.

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