

EU clears 19 genetically modified products (Update)

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Labourers gather wheat grains from a thresher at a market

The EU has cleared 19 controversial genetically modified products including human food, animal feed and cut flowers, the European Commission said Friday.

The new lines are produced by companies including US giants Monsanto and DuPont, and German firms Bayer and BASF.

"All the GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) approved today have been proved to be safe before their placing on the EU market," the Commission said in a statement.

The ten-year authorisations will be added to the European Union's existing list of 58 GM food and feed products.

The newly authorised foods are varieties of maize, soybean, oilseed rape and cotton.

Two types of carnations for use as cut flowers have also been authorised.

The EU on Wednesday announced plans to allow its 28 member states to individually decide whether to allow the import of GM foods and animal feeds.

Greenpeace, the environmental group, said the new authorisations showed that European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker was "moving closer to the US and Monsanto" instead of its citizens.

"Earlier this week Juncker broke his promise to change rules that force GM crops onto the EU market even if a majority of countries opposes them," Greenpeace EU food policy director Franziska Achterberg said.

"Today he opened the flood gates to a new wave of GM crops only to please US biotech corporations and trade negotiators. This is TTIP in action."

A huge but controversial US-EU trade deal known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is currently under negotiation by both sides.

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