

France asks EU to suspend GM crop authorisation

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A Monsanto storehouse in Trebes, France, shows an identification tag and bar code for "MON 810." France's ecology ministry said it had asked European regulators to suspend authorisation for the use of genetically modified MON 810 maize crops from Monsanto based on new studies.

France's ecology ministry said Monday it had asked European regulators to suspend authorisation for the use of genetically modified MON 810 maize crops from US company Monsanto based on new studies.

The request is "based on the latest scientific studies" which show that the use of the GM crops "pose significant risks for the environment," the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry pointed to a recent study by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that raised concerns with another form of GM crop, BT11, that it said could also be applied to MON 810.

"If the European Union does not act, we can invoke the safeguard clause" which allows EU nations to independently restrict or prohibit the sales of products, it said.

President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#) in November pledged to

seek new legal measures after the European Court of Justice and France's top administrative court overturned a French ban on [GM crops](#) from US agriculture giant Monsanto.

France's agriculture ministry imposed a ban in February 2008 amid concerns over public safety, but the French State Council said the government had failed to prove that Monsanto crops "present a particularly elevated level of risk to either human health or the environment".

Monsanto markets MON 810 maize -- which has been modified at a [genetic level](#) to include DNA from a bacteria -- under the trade name YieldGuard as being resistant to [insect pests](#) that can threaten harvests.

But some governments believe it could pose a danger to [plants and animals](#).

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