

Costs and Benefits of GM Crops: Scoping Note

7.1.2 What do you expect the main costs and benefits to be within each of the overall categories:

IT IS DIFFICULT TO GENERALISE AS EACH GMO IS LIKELY TO HAVE A DIFFERENT ECONOMIC PROFILE AND NEEDS TO BE JUDGED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. THAT BEING SAID THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT COST ALREADY TO THE PUBLIC PURSE IN AN EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE PUBLIC THAT TRANSGENIC AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY IS ACCEPTABLE WHEN IT CLEARLY ISN'T POPULAR WITH THE MAJORITY. MOREOVER WHEN THE DEBATE STARTS MOVING TO GM ANIMALS THERE WILL BE EVEN MORE AT STAKE - EG ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL ISSUES. AS SUCH THE COSTS RELEVANT TO SOCIAL ENGINEERING AS WELL AS THE ENTIRE REGULATORY PROCESS SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND. WITHOUT GM CROPS THERE WOULD BE NONE OF THIS EXPENSE.

GM product chains;
INCREASED USE OF PESTICIDES AS RESISTANCE BUILDS UP AND PESTICIDES LOSE IMPACT ON WEED/PEST CONTROL.

LOSS OF YIELD AS COMPETITION FROM WEEDS GAIN STRONGHOLD

UNQUANTIFIED AND UNKNOWN IMPACT ON NON-TARGET WILDLIFE SPECIES - LITTLE RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED ON THIS SUBJECT AND ON SOIL MICROBIOLOGY. GMOS MAY DECIMATE WILDLIFE AT AN UNTOLD COST.

COST OF IMPLEMENTING AN EMERGENCY RECALL OF GMOS SHOULD HARM BE PROVEN IN THE LONG TERM

STERILISATION OF LAND TO PREVENT CROSS-CONTAMINATION OF SEXUALLY COMPATIBLE CROPS AND EXTRA EFFORT PUT INTO CONTROLLING SEXUALLY COMPATIBLE WEEDS

INCREASED USE OF ENERGY TO CONTROL ALL ABOVE

DAMAGE TO MARKET

THE ONLY BENEFIT IS TO THE BIOTECH AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRY.

Conventional product chains;

CONTAMINATION WITH GMOS AFFECTING MARKET PRICE OF CROP

LOSS OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHT TO EAT GM FREE FOOD

COST OF TESTING FOR GMOS PRESENCE

ECONOMIC BENEFIT FOR GM-FREE MARKETS TO MEET CONSUMER DEMAND

Organic product chains;

SAME AS FOR CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT CHAINS BUT COSTS HIGHER TO ORGANIC FARMING WHO LOSE ORGANIC ACCREDITATION OF CROP IF CONTAMINATED WITH ANY GMOS

The environment;

UNKNOWN COSTS AS SO LITTLE HAS BEEN RESEARCHED IN THIS FIELD WITH REGARD
THE
IMPACT OF GROWING GMOS ON NON-TARGET SPECIES

PERPETUATION OF MONOCULTURE FARMING AND MANAGEMENT WILL HAVE A
NEGATIVE
IMPACT ON BIODIVERSITY.

EXPLOITATION OF ONE PARTICULAR HERBICIDE USE ON TOLERANT GM VARIETIES
LIKELY
TO CAUSE BREACHES IN DRINKING WATER QUALITY

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE TO SEXUALLY COMPATIBLE PLANTS THAT MIGHT
INHERIT THE
GM TRAIT

The biotechnology sector and associated industries;

THERE WILL BE A BENEFIT TO PESTICIDE PRODUCERS AND THOSE WHO OWN
PATENTS FOR
GMOS

The rural economy;

NO BENEFIT AT ALL. GMOS COULD RUIN THE LIVELIHOOD OF CONVENTIONAL
FARMERS.

Developing, Emerging and Transition Economies (DETEs)?

7.1.3 What information do you have that would enable SU to quantify these
costs and benefits? Do you know of any other sources of information
that should be explored?

7.1.4 How would you weight each of the categories of costs and benefits
identified in the report?

THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO UK AGRICULTURE TO KEEP
FOOD/FEED
GMO FREE. AS SUCH THE COST OF PREVENTING AND MONITORING FOR GMO
CONTAMINATION
WILL PLACE A HUGE ECONOMIC BURDEN ON ALL SECTORS. PREVENTION IS BETTER
THAN
CURE AND, AS SUCH, THE SOLUTION IS NOT TO GROW GM CROPS IN THE FIRST PLACE
AND RETAIN BRITAIN AS A SOURCE OF GM-FREE CROPS.

7.1.5 What do you see as the major uncertainties that will need to be dealt
with in the study? How should these be addressed in an assessment of
costs and benefits?

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE CASE OF A
NATIONAL EMERGENCY SHOULD THE RELEASE OF GMOS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT
CAUSE AN
UNPREDICTED CATASTROPHE. NOT ONLY WOULD THE TASK OF RECALLING GMOS BE
VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE THE COSTS COULD BE BILLIONS OF POUNDS. AS SUCH, ANY
SO-CALLED BENEFITS NEED TO BE CLEARLY ASSESSED WITH THIS IN MIND AS THE
POTENTIAL TO DO GREAT HARM IS INHERENT IN THE UNPREDICTABLE NATURE OF
TRANSGENIC BIOTECHNOLOGY.

SHOULD UNDESIRABLE HEALTH IMPACTS ARISE AS A RESULT OF NEW PROTEINS IN THE FOOD CHAIN, THE COST TO THE NHS SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND

8. Contact details

SWINDON FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
PEAR TREE COTTAGE
LONGCOT
FARINGDON
OXON SN7 7SS

8.1 Please send responses to the questions and issues raised in this note by post or email to:

GM Crops Team
Prime Minister's Strategy Unit
Cabinet Office
4th Floor Admiralty Arch
The Mall
London
SW1A 2WH
GMCrops@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

8.2 In order for the SU team to be able to take submissions fully into account, responses should be sent to arrive in SU by 5.00pm on Friday 25th October 2002.

All submissions will be published on the SU website. There will be further opportunities to comment on the work of the SU team during the course of the study.

8.3 The postal address and email address listed above may also be used for general questions relating to the study.