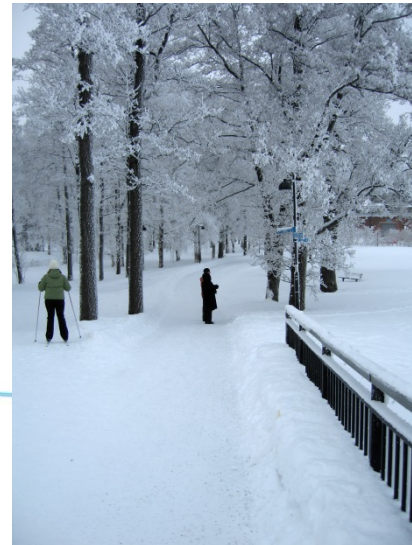


Good practices and challenges in promoting public participation in Finland

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Geneva 16.11.2016



Background information on GMO activities

- About 200 facilities for contained use
- About 20 field trials since 1995
- Only one field trial at the moment:
 - University of Helsinki, GM aspen, growth characteristics, response to air pollutant ozone
 - Several field trials of GM trees (birch, conifers) since 1995-
- No commercial cultivation of any GM crops – few applications would be suitable for Finnish agriculture

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GMO legislation and international agreements

- Member of the EU in 1995
- Gene Technology Act 1995
 - Major amendment in 2004
 - Implementing the EU directives on deliberate release and contained use
- Party to the CBD October 1994; Cartagena protocol October 2004, Nagoya protocol September 2016
- Ratified the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol in April 2014

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The Aarhus convention

- Party to the Convention September 2004
- Party to the Almaty amendment June 2008
- The provisions on hearing to the public are incorporated in the Gene Technology Act
- The amendment is also covered by our national law
- The National Focal Point is
the Ministry of the Environment

Public Participation in decision making 1

- Provisions laid down in our Gene Technology Act
- **Contained use** – for the Competent Authority to decide
- Never happened, no demand for this
- **Products** – organized by the European Commission
 - The Finnish Food Safety Authority acts as a facilitator for the public
- Very few comments sent by the Finnish public – present products not suitable for

the Finnish agriculture



Public participation in decision making 2

Examples from field trials:

- Announcement in the official Journal Bulletin and on the website of the Competent Authority
 - The nature of the possible decision
 - The public authority responsible for decision making
 - Where to get information: website, the library of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, also possible to get printed documents on request
(e.g. the SNIF summary)
 - Where to send the comments and how
 - 60 days commenting period

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Public participation in decision making 3

- A summary of the comments are prepared by the Competent Authority
- Considered during decision making
- Three public hearings organized
 - GM birch; GM potato; A detection kit for antibiotic residues in the milk (release into the environment)
 - Twice by the Competent Authority, once by the applicant



Public participation in decision making 4

- A successful “case study”
- A field trial on non-flowering birch (*Betula pendula*)
 - University of Eastern Finland
 - Competent Authority and the applicant organizing the hearing
 - Announced in local the local newspaper, broadly distributed invitation to all possible stakeholders, a full-evening event, information material distributed, people invited to visit the site etc.
 - A fence organized, proper marking of the area, possibility to visit even later – based on the request of the public

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Public participation in decision making 4

- Advisory Board on Biotechnology
 - Nominated by the Government and duties described in the national regulation
 - Ministries, Government Institutes, Academia, Commerce, Industry, Consumers, preferably NGOs
 - Duties: e.g. inform the public, arrange education
- NGO – Biosafety Association of the Citizens



THANK YOU!



25.11.2016



Luonddu
mánggahámatvuohhta
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