

PRESS COVERAGE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS IN EUROPE

LA VANGUARDIA: 1996-2012.



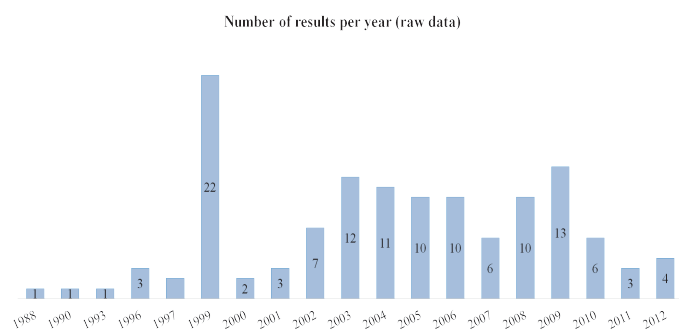
Biotech crops are grown in 28 countries worldwide. Its hectares have an annual growth rate of 6%, with 170 million hectares in 2012, the 17th year of its commercialization. Spain holds the 90% of all European Union biotech crops

HECTARAGE IN 2012

Quantitative analysis

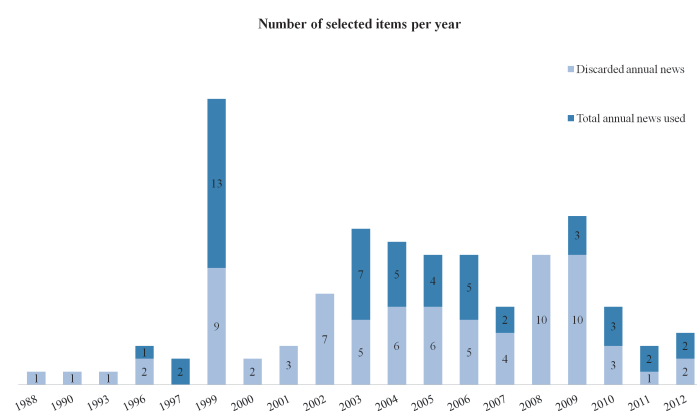
- The total results were 127 hits, from 1988 to 2012. Although Spain started to harvest GM crops in 1998, there were no results until 1999.

A general search through the online "La Vanguardia" hemerotec was performed using "maiz", "cultivo" and "transgénico" as key words. The results of the quantitative analysis of the raw data are collected in the following graphic. From 1988 to 2012, a total number of 127 hits was the result.



- The number of items qualitatively analyzed was 49.

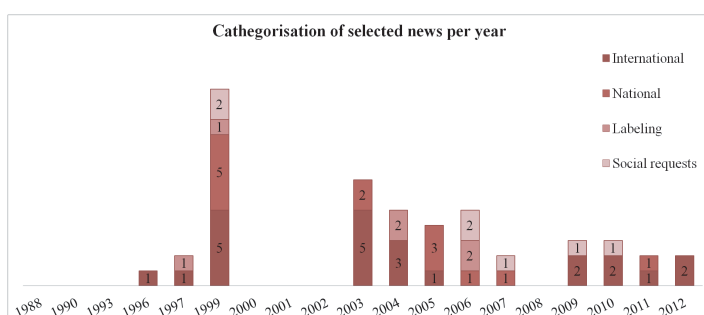
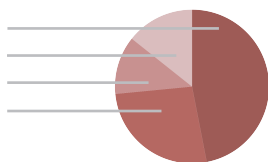
The news were located in the general newspaper edition as well as in the weekend magazine, the opinion section and the local newspaper editions. Only items present in national editions were taken into account for the qualitative study. Items present in the weekend magazine, regional editions, letters from the readers and interviews were discarded (78 items). The other 49 news were qualitatively analyzed.



Qualitative analysis

The qualitative study of the news chosen revealed four kind of issues treated continually, each one with different percentage of the news:

- INTERNATIONAL.
- SOCIAL DEMANDS
- LABELING.
- NATIONAL.



INTERNATIONAL

In 1996, the EU had to decide whether importing transgenic maize and soy; they were authorized with 13 out of 15 countries against the approval. The Parliament supported an initiative of suspending the GMO commercialization.

In 1999 the EU approved a moratorium to new approvals until a new Directive was published. The EU moratorium had the rejection of the US government, because the country would have to face a huge economical loss, as it was the principal producer of transgenic seeds and products. The US planned to present a formal complain to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Two years later, in 2003, the US, Canada and Argentina reported the EU situation to the WTO. They exposed the moratorium supposed a barrier to free commerce, and accused the EU of protectionist policies. The Member States promised to finish soon the moratorium.

In 2004 the EU authorized the importation of a new type of GM maize. The Member States were divided in front of the decision. Six years later, in 2010, Brussels authorized the first new transgenic organism in 12 years, a potato. Three new varieties of maize were also authorized, without the approval of the Member States, by an unilateral decision.

Four months later, the EC proposed each country to decide what to do with the authorization of GMOs. The European Parliament and the Council said that it was only a way of eluding their responsibility in the issue, but a year later, in 2011, they supported the proposal. In 2012 the proposal was rejected because of EC disagreements when voting the terms.



NATIONAL

In 1999 a political party presented a non-law proposal for a Spanish 3 year moratorium to the Central Government, but it didn't have enough support in Congress. The Basque Country did establish a 5 year moratorium.

The rest of Europe had only experimental crops, and in some countries moratoriums were established or the crops were banned

In 2003, Greenpeace and Amigos de la Tierra reproached the Spanish Government the nonexistence of official data about the extension of GM crops in Spain. In 2011 the Department of Agriculture announced its intention to make a real registry of GM crops.

- Coexistence decree**

The transposition of the Directive 2001/18/EC to national and regional level started in 2005, but was never achieved due to the collective and individual allegations against the decree. In 2008 the Government announced its revocation.

SOCIAL DEMANDS

Since 1999, Greenpeace and other farmer and ecologist organizations have been asking an open discussion about the risks of the GMOs;

demanding Monsanto (in 1999) and reporting contamination in traditional fields and losses of ecological stamps of farmers who didn't get any economical compensation in any case.



LABELING

In 1997, the OCU (a Spanish consumer organization) denounced that since 1996 Spain had been importing GM products mixed with traditional ones without any label from the US. In 2004 entered into force a new European labeling procedure: products had to be labeled if GM content was 0,9% or more. The following year, in 2005, the OCU and the Agriculture Department still detected irregularities in products analyzed. In 2006 less than a dozen companies labeled GM products.