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## Rice Food Safety & other Facts

Newsletter Nr. 13

30<sup>th</sup> April 2009

### FOOD SAFETY

#### Rapid Alert System

- On 14<sup>th</sup> April a notification was sent by Italy concerning aflatoxins in rice from Sri Lanka.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> April a notification was sent by Luxembourg concerning aflatoxins in basmati rice from Austria.
- On 24<sup>th</sup> April a notification was sent on by United Kingdom concerning undeclared nuts in organic puffed rice of domestic origin.
- On 24<sup>th</sup> April a notification was sent on by the Commission Services concerning unauthorised genetically modified (Bt 63) rice sticks from China.

Source: [www.efsa.europa.eu](http://www.efsa.europa.eu)

### GMO & BIOTECH

The Norwegian GenØk - Centre for Biosafety, Third World Network (TWN) and the New Zealand INBI - Centre for Integrated Research in Biosafety announce the release of the **Biosafety Assessment Tool, or BAT**, developed as part of a large programme in capacity building for the assessment of the risks of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The BAT is a free-to-the-public and online resource to assist citizens and regulators who are reviewing the scientific data provided by developers of GMOs in support of their evaluation of safety. The BAT was developed over the past five years as part of a larger Norwegian biosafety capacity building commitment underway since the earliest days of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, an international agreement governing the movement of many kinds of GMOs. Researchers from New Zealand, Norway, Solomon Islands, Malaysia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, France and Germany contributed to the BAT, and the product was reviewed by top researchers and regulatory officials in additional countries including Iran, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Ghana. The Tool is built upon three entry points depending on a user's background. Those new to risk evaluation and the relevant scientific information can enter into a section titled "Topic Guides". These are in depth overviews of the pertinent issues. Those ready to begin an evaluation or are practiced in evaluation will then use the "Practical Assessment" section. All users may wish to finish with the "Checklist", which helps to assure the user that they have identified all issues relevant and important to their evaluation.

Source: <https://bat.genok.org/bat/home.html>

### ORGANIC FOOD

The **Italian Organic National Convention** was held on April 14 in Piazzola sul Brenta, near Padua. It was a moment of complete knowledge of the sector aimed at guiding policies, a course that will develop guidelines. Four more events are scheduled in the framework of the General Assembly: the closing Congress and three local events (North, Centre and South Italy). During the opening day thematic groups were activated - production techniques, environment and biodiversity, business value, and industry and markets - whose resulting work will be presented in December. The day ended with the first confrontation between the different players in a round table gathering representatives of the sector's associations as well as of the Ministry of Agriculture and the industry.

Source: <http://it.greenplanet.net>



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## **Rice Food**

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### **SCIENCE & RESEARCH**

Sub1 rice or "**Scuba rice**" that can survive more than two weeks under water can now be planted by farmers to improve rice yields on flood-prone land in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. The variety is called Swarna Sub1 (Improved Swarna), being nearly identical - apart from its flood tolerance - to the variety Swarna. These inaugural releases of a Sub1 mega-variety occurred very quickly, only 6 years after the first cross was made at IRRI. The *SUB1* gene - identified by IRRI and University of California (UC) researchers - allows rice to survive complete submergence for up to 17 days.

Source: <http://beta.irri.org/news>

### **OTHER NEWS**

- Bayer CropScience and Israel-based Evogene Ltd. are teaming up to develop rice varieties with increased productivity and yield. Under the terms of the three-year collaboration, candidate genes discovered by Evogene will be introduced into Bayer CropScience's rice research pipeline for the development of **high yielding hybrid rice**. Bayer will have exclusive commercialization license to these genes for use in rice. Financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Source: *Crop Biotech Update*

### **EVENTS & MEETINGS**

International Scientific Conference - **The EU support for 2007–2013: new challenges and innovations for agriculture and food industry**. Vilnius, 27–29 May 2009. The aim of the conference is to provide the forum and invite for discussions researchers, politicians and public representatives related with agriculture and food industry and rural activities. The conference will open a dialogue bringing together different participants for sharing new ideas and future perspectives, discussing new scientific research achievements and guidelines, etc.

Source: <http://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it>

**2009 BIO International Convention "Heal, fuel, feed the world"**, May 18-21, 2009, Atlanta, Georgia-USA. The BIO International Convention is the largest global event for the biotechnology industry and attracts the biggest names in biotech, offers key networking and partnering opportunities, and provides insights and inspiration on major trends affecting the industry. The 2009 BIO International Convention will help expand the biotech innovations that help heal, fuel, and feed the world.

Source: [www.merid.org](http://www.merid.org)