



cordially invites members, students, alumni, and other interested persons to a Seminar on

GENE TECHNOLOGY: CURSE OR BLESSING? **Are GM crops the solution to feed the ever growing world population?**

Date: **Thursday 16 December 2010**, at **16:00 h** (Tea/coffee will be served from 15:40 h)

Venue: **Hof van Wageningen (formerly WICC/IAC), Lawickse Allee 9, Wageningen**

Programme

- 16:00 **Opening** by Ir Cor de Jong, president of SKOV
- 16:05 **Brief introduction** of the theme by Dr Niels Louwaars*), WUR Group on Sustainable Development and Food Security, chairman of the Seminar
- 16.15 **“Roles of GM in addressing food security challenges”** by Dr Sjaak van Heusden*), Department of Plant Breeding, Wageningen UR
- 16:45 **“A matter of design: Disentangling hype from reality in the GM crops debate”** by Dr Dominic Glover*), Dept. of Technology and Agrarian Development, Wageningen UR
- 17:15 Tea break
- 17:45 **Plenary discussion** chaired by Dr Niels Louwaars. To focus the discussion some statements will be prepared by the speakers and by Ir Mans Lanting*), CEO at ETC Consultants India Pvt Ltd, Bangalore.
- 18:45 **Closure** by Ir Cor de Jong followed by ‘Drinks and Bites’
- 19:15 **Dinner** (optional) at the “Hof van Wageningen” for speakers and participants

To date about a billion of people go hungry. Will GM crops substantially contribute to the alleviation of the world’s food problem? Gene technology is a controversial issue. In Europe, as well as in several developing countries, there is an – often heated – ongoing discussion about the merits and demerits of the cultivation of GM crops, although not always with the same arguments. Some fundamental questions;

- Are GM crops needed to feed the growing world population?
- Is it responsible policy to promote the use of these crops in countries which have not sufficient capacity to guarantee environmental and food security?
- Should GM crops be promoted in regions where these crops originate from?
- Could growing these crops corrode biodiversity?
- Are these crops adjusted to the needs of small farmers?
- Is there not a serious danger of concentration of power in the hands of a few seed producing multinationals?

Participation in the Seminar is free of charge. Registration by return e-mail <huydtsbm@pt.lu> or by surface mail to the Secretariat of SKOV (see below) by 14 December is highly appreciated. Subsidized dinner fee, inclusive drinks, is € 20, – for SKOV and SLE members. It is € 30,-- for other participants (all payments on the spot), Please indicate vegetarian or non-vegetarian. **Dinner registration is required and binding.**

***) Some biodata on the speakers are given on the backside of this page.**

Some biodata of the Chairman of the Seminar, the speakers and the discussant

Dr Niels Louwaars was trained as a plant breeder. He worked in Asia and Africa on seed systems. His interest in policy aspects led him to write his PhD thesis “Seeds of Confusion” on policy and legal challenges in seed systems with special emphasis on developing countries. These include patents in the life sciences, breeders’ and farmers’ rights, and rights on biodiversity and traditional knowledge. He is also a member of the Intellectual Property Chamber of the Court at The Hague.

Dr Sjaak van Heusden is a senior scientist in the Department of Plant Breeding of the Plant Sciences Group of Wageningen UR. His long-standing career in molecular biology and particularly in the use of genetic markers in plant breeding has taken him to a range of developing countries for research, collaboration, training courses and otherwise. He will speak about:

“Roles of GM in addressing food security challenges”

On 16 October 2010 (World Food Day), FAO’s Director-General Jacques Diouf stated that food production will have to increase by 70 per cent in the world and double in the developing countries to adequately feed a global population expected to reach 9.1 billion in 2050. Technology will necessarily have to play a role in this global task.

According to Dr Van Heusden GM is a powerful technology, which is not a panacea for all food problems, but a relevant part of the toolbox.

Dr Dominic Glover is a post-doctoral researcher with the Technology and Agrarian Development (TAD) Group of Wageningen UR. Until 2009 his work focused primarily on policy, governance and regulatory issues surrounding biotechnology and GM crops in developing countries. His PhD was a study of the role played by the US Agribusiness Company Monsanto in commercialising GM cotton in India. His current work examines the spread and adaptation of a controversial rice cultivation system, the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). He will speak about:

“A matter of design: Disentangling hype from reality in the GM crops debate”

Transgenic (GM) crop technology certainly has a lot of potential – but what kind(s) of potential? This presentation will examine how GM crops have come to be discussed as a ‘pro-poor’ and ‘sustainable’ technology that apparently has something to do with feeding the world and promoting development in the global South. By reviewing what has happened since transgenic, insect-resistant cotton was commercialized in China, India and South Africa, the presentation will pose the question: How would a GM technology need to be designed in order for it to be genuinely ‘pro-poor’?

Ir Mans Lanting is a senior consultant on Sustainable Agricultural (Chain) Development with Lanting AgriConsult, Randwijk, and CEO at ETC Consultants India Pvt Ltd, Bangalore. He was trained in Tropical Husbandry and Agricultural Economics at the Wageningen University. His work as researcher, advisor and trainer in the field of sustainable agriculture, organic farming, fair trade development, etc. has taken him to several developing countries. He will present some statements under the title:

“Some preliminary observations on the introduction of GM crops in developing countries”

Recently he completed evaluation studies on the pro’s and con’s of GM crops (especially cotton) grown in India, Burkina Faso and South Africa. He will present some statements on the cultivation of GM crops and will take an active part in the discussion.