

Viewing cable 08MUNICH365, GERMANY/AGRICULTURE: GUILT BY ASSOCIATION - GENETICALLY

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MUNICH365	2008-11-10 10:42	2011-08-30 01:44	UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY	Consulate Munich

VZCZCXRO7391
PP RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHYG
DE RUEHMZ #0365/01 3151042
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 101042Z NOV 08
FM AMCONSUL MUNICH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4559
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEU/EU INTEREST COLLECTIVE
RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUNICH 000365

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

USDA FOR FAS/OSTA EJONES AND OCRA/EUR BBAYSINGER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [BTIO](#) [PGOV](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: GERMANY/AGRICULTURE: GUILT BY ASSOCIATION - GENETICALLY
ENGINEERED CORN TARNISHES MONSANTO'S IMAGE IN BAVARIA

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Monsanto fears that "populist" and "unbalanced" attacks by German and Bavarian politicians over Monsanto's genetically engineered corn have the potential to damage Monsanto's much larger core business for conventional seeds and pest control products in Germany. When asked by Monsanto to intervene with Bavarian government officials to urge a more even-handed approach, the Consul General said we would continue to support biotech efforts generally and, when appropriate, would ask Bavarian officials to treat Monsanto even-handedly. End Summary.

Monsanto's Image Should Not Suffer Because of Biotech

¶2. (SBU) Meeting with the Consul General on November 3, Monsanto's Ursula Luettmer Ouazane (Area Lead for North Europe, based in the Netherlands) noted that Monsanto had just six percent of the overall market in Germany for seed and pesticides. She complained, "We are hardly the monopolistic agribusiness giant that the politicians claim" when they criticize us for using our market position to force

the system to accept genetically engineered seeds. With 1.6 million hectares of "conventional" corn planted in Germany, and only some 3000 hectares of Monsanto genetically engineered corn planted country-wide, Monsanto's "GMO business in Germany is merely a hobby", Ouazane joked.

¶3. (SBU) However, she was not joking about the potential damage to Monsanto's image that "the populist Minister President Seehofer" and new Bavarian Environmental Minister Soeder could cause by "always demonizing Monsanto solely over the GMO segment of the business," where they dominate in what is a tiny German market, according to

¶4. (SBU) Monsanto's genetically engineered corn product in Germany specifically resists the corn borer, which Monsanto believes infests at least one-quarter of Bavarian corn fields, according to Dr. Andreas Thierfelder (Director Public and Government Affairs Austria, Germany Switzerland), who joined Ouazane on the visit. Thierfelder claimed that Bavaria had stopped research on the corn borer because, he said, the government alleges the problem is not severe. Thierfelder dismissed this position as "ridiculous," citing continuing demand for pesticides against the borer as evidence, and he said Monsanto is running tests to verify the current spread of the pest.

Seeing Is Believing - Monsanto Works to Educate Its Customers

¶5. (SBU) Monsanto has long enjoyed profitable and cordial business relations with Bavarian farmers, according to Thierfelder. Most of Monsanto's business with farmers is in conventional products like seeds and Roundup, the popular pesticide. Through presentations at agricultural fairs and "winter schools" for farmers, Monsanto distributes information and teaches its customers about genetically engineered organisms, Thierfelder said. Monsanto actively supports a network for those farmers who use the modern seeds so they can share ideas and give each other moral support in the face of protests and rejection by their peers. Thierfelder was interested in working with the USG to help send farmers on exchange programs to the United States to see for themselves how U.S. counterparts use the modern seeds and how well they grow.

Bavarian Officials Impolite to Monsanto Representatives

¶6. (SBU) Despite the good working relationship that Monsanto has with its clients for non-GMO items, the representatives complained that they increasingly had problems getting appointments at relevant ministries in Bavaria. They said that they are confronted with downright hostility on the part of the Farmers Association (Bauernverband), where the leadership uses harsh language like "dominance" and "hate." Thierfelder reported that Bavarian farmers willing to use GMOs routinely face harassment. A Monsanto research unit with 5 employees in the area of Passau is facing similar problems.

¶7. (SBU) The Consul General said we would continue to advocate a fair hearing for genetically engineered organisms in general. Where the opportunity presented itself with Bavarian interlocutors, he said we would point out that blanket criticism of Monsanto over one small segment of its business is unfair and counterproductive. He asked the Monsanto representatives to alert us to specific cases

where they felt that statements or actions by politicians or farmers' representatives crossed the line. The Consulate General continues to support outreach on biotech in coordination with USDA's

MUNICH 00000365 002 OF 002

Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).

NELSON