

BIOTECHNOLOGY: INDUSTRY'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Five large industry federations involved in the industrialisation of biotechnological developments have just presented the European Commission with a set of proposals and recommendations on rules to guarantee the security of modern biotechnological applications that is the culmination of a year of working together on this problem. The federations, speaking at a press conference in Brussels on April 7, announced the launching of a bi-monthly English-language newsletter, the EUROPEAN BIOTECHNOLOGY NEWSLETTER, that will focus exclusively on European biotechnology. This newsletter is being put out by the French magazine BIOFUTUR with the support of the European Commission.

The Association of Microbial Food Enzyme Producers (AMFEP), European Council of Chemical Manufacturers' Federations (CEFIC), Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EEC (CIAA), European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries' Associations (EFPIA), and International Group of National Association of Agrochemical Manufacturers (GIFAP) all took part in drawing up the recommendations slated for discussion by the European Commission's experts in the coming weeks. This work was necessary, according to these industrial groups, especially since a number of factors currently discourage the industrial application of biotechnology in the EEC, namely, the uncompetitive prices of raw materials, uncertainties concerning (and sometimes the lack of) regulations, and laws on intellectual property that are not adapted to the protection of biotechnological inventions. The one exception is the field of pharmaceuticals, which has made the most progress in using new technology.

The representatives of the "big 5" outlined the fundamental ideas that guided their work:

- All guidelines or regulations must allow for the potential advantages in future technological developments while limiting any inherent risks.
- It is neither necessary nor desirable to formulate a single set of guidelines and rules to cover every aspect of biotechnology. (No further considerations have been felt necessary for areas of biotechnology which are either outside the scope of industrial applications or are adequately covered by existing guidelines and rules.)
- Attention has consequently focused on one area, that of the planned release into the environment of live organisms that carry a foreign gene or gene component deliberately integrated into their genomes by genetic engineering technology.
- Finally, it is considered important that risk assessment of the release of genetically modified organisms be done on a commonly accepted basis and be applied to all organisations, both industrial and non-industrial, private and public, throughout the EEC (harmonised rules), and that risk assessment procedures and their findings be mutually recognised.

The French company 'Biofutur S.A.' is launching the newsletter on European biotechnology with the support of the European Commission. The newsletter is aimed at decisionmakers in all areas of industry or regulatory work that are influenced by biotechnology. Additional information may be obtained from Daniel Bonvalot or Karl Simpson, EBN/BIOFUTUR, 29, rue Buffon, F-75005 Paris (France), Tel.: (331) 47071122, telex 202400/BIOFUTU F. (April 8, 1986 - European Report) (MZ)

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