

Agri dept notes French ban on GMO maize variety

The French government recently placed a ban on the cultivation of Monsanto's MON 810, a genetically modified maize cultivar resistant to the European maize stalk borer.

This decision was based on the outcome of a report issued by a panel of experts in France, constituting the committee of High Authority on GMO's, who were called upon to re-evaluate MON 810 GM Maize.

In South Africa all activities involving genetically modified organisms are regulated under the Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) Act, 1997.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, MON 810 GM maize, owned by Monsanto, was approved for general release in South Africa in 1997.

Prior to its approval, this GM maize was thoroughly evaluated through a multidisciplinary process and consideration was given to its potential impact on the environment, human and animal health.

"The [South African] Department of Agriculture is committed to manage a biosafety regulatory process to contribute towards the safe application and use of GMOs in the country," the department said.

"Consideration will therefore be given to the findings of the French Government report.

"If this report presents new and relevant scientific evidence, a review of the decision with regard to the general release of the MON 810 will be considered."

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