

French, German Farmers Destroy GMO-contaminated Crops

About 11,000 hectares of crops will be destroyed to prevent the reappearance of GMO contaminated seeds.

By [Telesur](#)

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The transnational company Bayer said Wednesday that farmers in France and Germany were digging up thousands of hectares of rapeseed fields after traces of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which are banned for cultivation, were found in seeds sold by the company.

In Europe, few varieties of GMO are authorized for growing, mostly due to environmental concerns. However, during a routine check, French authorities found out GMO seeds in three rapeseed seeds batches sold by Dekalb, a brand previously owned by [Monsanto](#) before the company was taken over by [Bayer](#) in 2018.

GMO crops are not authorized in Europe, although GMO could be imported for food and animal feed, Catherine Lamboley, Bayer's chief operating officer for France, said and explained that the source of the contamination of rapeseed seeds, which were produced in Argentine GMO-free area, is not known yet.

Bayer issued a product recall but some of the seeds had already been sown, representing about 8,000 hectares in France and 2,500-3,000 hectares in Germany, which are in the process of being dug up.

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"We decided to immediately stop all rapeseed seed production in Argentina," Lamboley said.

The overall cost of this GMO contamination is not known. However, Bayer offers US\$2,278 per hectare as compensation to affected farmers, which suggest a US\$23 million payout for both countries.

According to the transnational company, the amount will be enough to compensate for the economic losses caused to farmers in this season and the next, since they will not be able to cultivate crops as a precaution to avoid the GMO strain's reappearance.

The order to destroy some crops is another blow for European rapeseed growers who had already cut sowings sharply due to dry weather.

Besides, the currently affected area is small compared to the total French winter rapeseed area, which the farm ministry, in December, forecast at 1.23 million hectares. The German crop area is believed to be close to 1 million hectares.

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