



**For immediate release**

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## Press Release

### Experts maintain 'co-existence' of GM and GM-free crops biologically impossible

Leading experts maintained that it is biologically impossible for GM and GM-free crops to co-exist, at a conference organised by Consumers International (CI) and Regione Emilia-Romagna. **Ignacio Chapela**, Associate Professor at University of California-Berkeley, told CI: "Co-existence" might be a convenient thing to have politically or commercially but biologically it is an impossibility. For most GMOs the problem of contamination arises immediately: within one generation you have escaping genes.'

Ignacio Chapela was one of fourteen experts speaking at a conference "Co-existence", contamination, and GM-free zones: Jeopardising consumer choice?" in Bologna, Italy on 9 September 2005. Speeches mostly tackled problems with GM contamination and how to legally and technically maintain GM-free agriculture.

**Angelika Hilbeck**, ETH - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, told the conference: '[trying to prevent GMO contamination] starts with the seeds; you want to make sure you get uncontaminated seeds. This is the origin of everything - from there on the contamination multiplies. For example, in Canada it is hardly possible to get GM-free canola seeds any more. Even the seed stock has been contaminated at this point.'

**Benedikt Haerlin**, Director of Save our Seeds and Foundation on Future Farming, told CI: '[the term] "co-existence" as used by industry means that those rejecting GMOs have to accept a so-called minimum level of GM contamination.'

**David Cuming**, GM Campaigns Manager, Consumers International says: 'Listening to the experts it is apparent that contamination will occur if GM crops are planted alongside GM-free crops. Governments must take urgent measures to stop GMO contamination to ensure that GM-free food remains widely available to all consumers.'

Read speeches, exclusive interviews, and other resources about GMO contamination, 'co-existence' and GM-free zones:

<http://www.consumersinternational.org/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=93963&int1stParentNodeID=89650&int2ndParentNodeID=89677>

Consumers International is a federation of consumer organisations dedicated to the protection and promotion of consumer's rights worldwide through empowering national consumer groups and campaigning at the national level. It currently represents 234 organisations in 113 countries. For more information, see: [www.consumersinternational.org](http://www.consumersinternational.org)