



# ABIC 2004

12-15 September, Cologne, Germany

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## CALL FOR POSTERS

Best three posters will win one delegate ticket.

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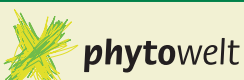
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ABIC is the acronym for  
**AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**



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Philippe Busquin | European Commissioner for Research

Brussels, Belgium, 10/04/04

## Busquin backs Biotech

The European Commission has identified biotechnology as a key growth industry for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - with AgBiotechnology in particular offering ways to improve the environment, increase the sustainability of agriculture and enhance the quality of our food.

Our goal in Europe is to regain leadership in the responsible application of these technologies by the year 2010. Two European research institutes - the University of Gent and the Max-Planck-Institute of Breeding Research in Cologne - have been instrumen-

Cologne, 14/04/04

## European Biotech Manifesto: Science fights back!

Botanist, ecologist, and unabashed biotech booster Klaus Ammann is putting together a draft proposal for a "European Biotech Manifesto" to be published at the close of ABIC 2004. Designed to provide a framework for helping the general public understand the benefits and risks of biotechnology, Ammann's draft will be submitted to ABIC delegates at this year's ABIC conference in Cologne, from 12-15 September. Participants will be asked to hammer out a final version.

Inside, Ammann answers questions about the ethics of risk assessment, the need for proactive discourse, and the dangers of letting "eco-Stalinists" hijack intelligent debate.

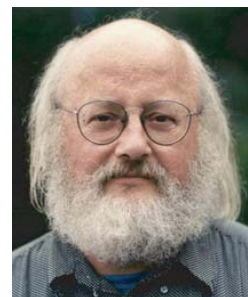
tal in the development of modern AgBiotechnology. It was two European scientists - Marc van Montagu and Jeff Schell - who laid the grounds for the worldwide success of this technology with their breakthrough method to transfer DNA into plants.

ABIC 2004 presents an opportunity for Europe to both commemorate this legacy and help chart a path into the future. ABIC 2004 will bring renowned scientists from around the world together with global representatives from industry and government to exchange their views and compare what has been achieved with this technology in various nations. I believe ABIC 2004 will serve as a unique forum for all stakeholders to combine our RTD results with commercial experience gained in other parts of the world.

As it can help to better use scarce natural resources and foster sustainable development, AgBiotechnology will proliferate in the world, and I would like to see Europe be fully part of this dynamic. ABIC 2004 should encourage Europe to acknowledge the opportunities available to it and play its role in the world that our trading partners and populations in need expect.

Europe welcomes you to Cologne where "AgBiotech Goes Europe" - and finally comes home.

**Philippe Busquin**  
 European Commissioner for Research



Professor Klaus Ammann

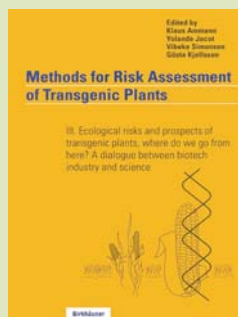
Professor Klaus Ammann, director of the University of Bern's botanical garden, has dedicated his career to protecting biodiversity, assessing the risks associated with genetically engineered crops, and promoting informed public debate about biotechnology issues. In addition to his duties in Bern, Ammann chairs the European Group of Plant Specialists for the World Conservation Union and sits on Switzerland's governmental biosafety committee. As a researcher, he concentrated on plant systematics and evolution.

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## Prof. Klaus Ammann: A Biotech Manifesto



Prof. Ammann recently edited and compiled accounts from an international workshop on the effects of transgenic plants on biodiversity. This volume focuses primarily on the impact of agricultural biotechnology on both native and farming ecosystems and on the consequences for conservation.

### Vol. IV Biodiversity and Biotechnology

2003. 196 pages. Hardcover  
72.75 Euro  
ISBN 3-7643-6657-5



Professor Ammann also publishes **The Impact of Agricultural Biotechnology on Biodiversity**, a continuously updated review of new developments in the field. It can be downloaded at:

[www.botanischergarten.ch/  
Biotech-Biodiv/  
Report-Biodiv-Biotech12.pdf](http://www.botanischergarten.ch/Biotech-Biodiv/Report-Biodiv-Biotech12.pdf)

### ? What exactly is a European Biotech Manifesto?

• The Manifesto will be a Europe-focused version of a manifesto we drafted at the Global Forum in Concepcion, Chile, for the United Nations.

The whole conference is built to unite positive forces behind biotech, and the manifesto will be a central part of this. The draft will be fed into the conference, and then we'll have an open session to discuss it.

It should be a declaration of major opinions exchanged, along with a strong statement that we believers in the benefits of biotech need to stand on our hind legs - as biotech scientists, as business-people, and as beneficiaries - and say to those who unfairly attack us, "Hey, you cannot go on like that."

One of the paragraphs will deal with how to handle opponents.

### ? And how do you handle opponents?

• To begin with, you avoid the hypocritical charade of engaging in discourse with eco-Stalinists, because they're only pretending to engage you. Stick to opponents with whom you share a true concern for the environment, and ignore those seduced by some woolly Rainbow Warrior aesthetic.

### ? That sounds like a broadside on Greenpeace.

• It is. I should mention that I worked with Greenpeace in the early 90s, and the organization I worked with never would have indulged in pseudo-science or intentional deceit, the way today's Greenpeace does. As far as I know, the Brent Spar was the only time they admitted to intentional deceit. That's why so many good people refuse to work with them now.

### ? Before we explore that, which groups would you engage in dialogue with?

• The WWF and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) oppose biotechnology, but they are open-minded. You can talk to them, and you can learn from them, just as you can talk to and perhaps disagree with - but also learn from - many organic farmers, and - to a much lesser degree - also Friends of Earth, among others.

### ? How has Greenpeace lied regarding biotechnology?

• Let's start with golden rice, which creates more vitamins than standard rice does. This is a major breakthrough, because 500,000 children die every year from vitamin deficiency, and their primary staple is rice. Well, Greenpeace derides it as "mock rice" - as if it's made from cardboard or something - and they insist on maintaining the lie that you have

to eat nine kilograms of it to gain any benefits, when you only need a fraction of that amount - 250-300g - to avoid deficiency syndromes.

Then there's Mexico, where land races of maize have been introgressed by Bt genes. Greenpeace says the land races are threatened by transgenetic maize, but that's a joke. The land races are threatened by massive subsidized American imports, which are destroying the local market. In Mexico City, I asked what was wrong with land races having transgenes in them which protect against insects. Nobody was able to give a negative answer. You talk to farmers down there - and farmers everywhere - and they always want to hear about ways of enhancing land races. We should help them achieve that - not just with technology, but with collaborative breeding programmes. Europe also has a responsibility there, because our subsidies are just as devastating as America's - but it's not a biotech issue; it's a trade issue.

### ? But you concede there are risks, correct?

• Absolutely. But the research into the risks is often distorted. For example, most risk assessments on the first generation had shown an accumulation of Bt protein in the soil. But the same scientist who first identified this risk, Gunter Stotzky from New York, also found that protein degrading on the long run. When he heard that his papers were taken over by opponents and grossly exaggerated, he became concerned.

### ? Industry also has had some lies to account for.

• Of course, but there is a clear improvement. Monsanto, for example, has become one of world's leading risk assessment bodies. They've become incredibly transparent, to the point where many of their risk-assessments are published and peer-reviewed. Can Greenpeace say that of their studies? They have only submitted a very few studies on molecular lab work to peer review. And worse: they publish so-called studies or reports, not at all peer reviewed, about various biosafety matters, and distort the papers they cite. A good example is their report on the Chinese Bt cotton studies, which the cited Chinese authors then protested.

### ? Is the issue of risk assessment addressed in the manifesto?

• It's a cornerstone - because we must have high risk assessment standards. But they shouldn't be absurd standards detached from reality, as Germany and also Switzerland is implementing.

### ? What is Germany doing wrong?

• First, there's insurance: in Switzerland, companies are liable for anything that goes wrong, but in Germany liability falls on the farmers. That's absurd because farmers won't be able to pay for the insurance.

Then there's this coexistence issue. Some genes will always transgress into other fields, but up to now the threshold levels were up to 5%.

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Now they want to concentrate on homeopathic amounts detectable through high precision DNA analysis, and genetic engineering is victimized this way. If they want to set standards, they should ask seed producers. They know best how to set up standards. Now it's getting absurd.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - employ hundreds of excellent scientists. As a result, in the US you have a history of trust, while in Europe you have a history of trust betrayed - most recently in the BSE and HIV scandals, where scientists and governmental bodies lied.

## &gt;&gt;&gt; IMPRINT

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## ? Can you expand on the risk assessment issue?

To begin with, risk has two sides: the risk of doing, and the risk of not doing. In the case of golden rice, for example, to include human suffering - meaning 500,000 dead children per year - in risk assessment is ethical, and to exclude it is unethical.

Plus, you need to apply risk assessment scientifically. Let's look at canola, which is also used to produce an oil for industrial purposes, not at all fit to get into the human food chain, but is not genetically engineered. Because it's not genetically engineered, it has no safety standards. The problem is that it presents a genuine risk, because industrial oil is high in erubic acids, which are not healthy for human consumption. But - as I said previously, seed producers know how to deal with this coexistence problem.

There are lots of examples of how distorted the risk perception picture is in Europe, especially when compared to the US. Allergens in foods, for examples, have to be declared in the US in a very exact way. Just look at soy beans, which have six allergens and for this reason have to be declared when they show up in food in the US. In Europe, their presence in foods only has to be declared if the soy beans are transgenic - which of course does not enhance public trust.

## ? Is that why there hasn't been this outcry in the US that you have here?

The US has a better regulatory environment: it's risk-oriented and science-based, meaning it's based on results. And its two primary agencies - the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the

## ? And, again, past lies have come back to haunt the industry...

It's important that we don't shy away from such things. Industry and science have made a lot of mistakes. Lot of people in the biotech sector today think they can explain the whole world with scientific facts. This causes mistrust and later aggression - a lot of people no more listen to scientists.

We need to regain peoples' confidence by opening discourse and respecting different kinds of knowledge and abandoning the utterly naïve stakeholder principle. We need to invite all to the debate, and encourage a free and open exchange of views, minimize hidden agendas, be honest of background interests. And most importantly, we must obey the rule of the Symmetry of Ignorance, which means that we have to develop an open mind towards different kinds of knowledge.

We have to realize that important elements of our language are culturally-oriented, and we have to learn not only to preach (especially to the converted) but also to listen.

## ? Getting back to the manifesto: Why Europe, and why now?

Europe has a high responsibility, because its refusal of GM imports is hindering the development of GM crop markets in the developing world. Currently, the developing world would like to apply transgen advantages, but they start to argue: "If we can't sell to Europe, we won't start in the first place."

**Interviewer: Steve Zwick**



## Bring on the Labels!

Biotech opponents hope the European Commission's required labelling of genetically-modified foods as of April 18<sup>th</sup> will scare off consumers, but researchers at Germany's Federal Research Center for Nutrition in Karlsruhe have found that consumers tend to focus on a different label: namely, the price tag.

Prior to the official labelling date, researcher Klaus Dieter Jany slapped "genetically-mod-

ified" labels on normal supermarket bread and slashed the price by more than 60%. The result: a fourfold increase in sales.

Then he persuaded a local fast-food stand to label half of its French fries as "Genetic Fries" (Genpommes) and slash the price. The result: customers bought 27 servings of Genetic Fries, and only one serving of the garden variety.

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**CALL FOR POSTERS**

Best three posters will win one delegate tickets.

You are invited to take part in the ABIC Poster Session competition. The contest is open to all non-commercial institutions. The subject of the work presented should be in relation to the topics of the program (see below).

**The best 3 posters selected by an independent committee will be awarded with a free ABIC 2004 delegate ticket. The deadline for poster submission is July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004.**

For more details please contact the ABIC Organisation Office or mail to:

[posters@abic2004.org](mailto:posters@abic2004.org)

**► PROGRAM UPDATE**

The full program can be downloaded as a PDF-file from this location:  
[www.abic2004.org/download/ABIC2004\\_program.pdf](http://www.abic2004.org/download/ABIC2004_program.pdf)

**Trade Fair Conditions and Rates**

Complementary with the conference, the business of AgBio-technology will have the unique chance to present products and services. The Trade Fair will take place in the localities of the Cologne Fair. Main Sponsors will present in the especially well located exhibition area at the Auenplatz, which is the central place of the Congress Center West. Due to its immediate vicinity to the Netherlands, Belgium and France and being less than one flight-hour from Great Britain, the Cologne Fair is the place of choice to get in contact with European Customers and partners.

**BOOTH RATES**

In HALL 3 50 pre-equipped booths of 9 m<sup>2</sup> will be available. The price per square meter is Euro 250,- (+ V.A.T.). In addition, raw space is available with minimum size of 15 m<sup>2</sup>; the price for the raw space will be Euro 190,- (+ V.A.T.) per square meter.

**9m<sup>2</sup> booth: Euro 2250,- (pre-equipped) + V.A.T.**  
**15m<sup>2</sup> booth: Euro 2850,- (raw space) + V.A.T.**

The full exhibitors manual will be sent to you on request.

**DELEGATE REGISTRATION RATES**

Prices include Breakfast, Lunch and Beverages

**Regular Rate:** Euro 750,- + V.A.T.  
(after July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004)  
**Academic Rate\*:** Euro 375,- + V.A.T.  
**Student Rate\*:** Euro 250,- + V.A.T.  
**One Day Delegate Rate:** Euro 250,- + V.A.T.  
**Exhibitor Delegate Rate:** Euro 250,- + V.A.T.  
**Group Discounts:** 3-5 Delegates: - 10 %  
6 or more Delegates: - 15 %

**Early Bird Rates:**  
(all before July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004)  
**Early Bird Regular Rate:** Euro 675,- + V.A.T.  
**Early Bird Academic Rate\*:** Euro 350,- + V.A.T.  
**Early Bird Student Rate\*:** Euro 200,- + V.A.T.

\* Academic and Student Delegates: You must provide verification of academic or student status to qualify for the Academic or Student rate.

**Special Partnering Event**

One session of the Conference program will be fully dedicated to the subject of Business Partnering (see program below). Approximately 20 companies will be given time and technology to appropriately present themselves as part of the **Premium Partnering Package**. Throughout ABIC a special area in the trade fair hall will provide optimized partnering procedures for registered partnering event participants. In addition a special section of the ABIC website [www.abic2004.org](http://www.abic2004.org) will be reserved for the partnering event. This service will be made available in due time.

**PARTNERING RATES**

**Regular Partnering:** Euro 350,- + V.A.T. (one to one meetings plus Web Partnering)  
**Premium Partnering:** Euro 750,- + V.A.T. (Business Presentation at Forum plus Regular Partnering)

Prices are added to Delegate Rates.  
Partnering possible throughout ABIC to allow participants to arrange meetings at convenience.

Session (Day)	The Business of Biotechnology	Advances in Plant Improvement	New Opportunities through Biotechnology
01	<b>The Role and Importance of Ethics for Agricultural Biotechnology in Europe</b> • Round Table Discussion	<b>Controlling Expression in Transgenes</b> • Regulating Expression of Transgenes in Plants • Expression of Genes in specific Tissues • Environmental Assessment of Risks and Benefits of Regulated Expression	<b>Plants as green factories</b> • Strategies for producing PMPs* in Plants (Molecular Farming) • Improvement of Fiber Crops by Genetic Engineering • Engineering New Biosynthetic Pathways * Plant-made pharmaceuticals
02	<b>Co-existence of Transgenic and Non-Transgenic Crops</b> • Gene Flow and Co-Existence • Scientific Basis of Co-Existence • Ecological Impact of GMOs	<b>Synergies between Breeding and Biotechnology</b> • Genomics/Allele Mining • Advanced Mapping Tools • Use of Model Genomes	<b>Biotechnology and Food Security for the Resource-Poor</b> • Analysis of the Need for new Solutions: Africa • Case Study of a real Biotech Solution: China • Managing IP to Benefit the Resource-Poor - Case Study Mexico
03	<b>Business Forum: Consumer Benefits and Industrial Perspectives of AgBiotechnology / Industry Presentations</b>		
04	<b>The Business of Biotechnology</b> • Investments in Biotech in Asia • Dos and Dents for Biotech Start-ups • Today's and Future Markets in Plant Biotech	<b>Improvements in Non-Food Crops</b> • Biotechnological Applications in Forestry • Oil Palm Breeding and competitive Approaches • Biotechnology and Ornamental Plants	<b>Nutraceuticals as Links between Food and Health: Using Biotechnology to Improve Our Food</b> • Polyunsaturated Fatty acids • "Golden Rice" - Classical Breeding - Food Processing/Fortification

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