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Scientists Call for 10-Year Moratorium on 'Dangerous' GMOs

By The Moscow Times

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An association of Russian scientists is calling for a 10-year moratorium on the production of genetically modified organisms to give the country's specialists time to study their effects on the human body.

"The methods for generating GMOs are imperfect, so at this stage all GMOs are dangerous," said Irina Yermakova, vice president of the National Association for Genetic Safety, or NAGS.

The possible negative health impact of GMO products is related to the use of certain bacteria in their production, which can produce tumors in plants by directly transferring genetic material, Yermakova told Interfax on Sunday.

"It has been proven that in those regions and countries where there are many products containing GMO there has been a surge in oncological diseases and diabetes," she said, adding that ten years would give scientists time to plan experiments and potentially develop new

research methods.

A state system for registering genetically modified organisms intended for use and products created with or containing such organisms was established by the Russian government in September this year and will go into force in July 2014.

The order, signed by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, delegated monitoring the effects of GMOs and products containing or created using GMOs to various state agencies, depending on the specific uses of the products.

The Agriculture Ministry, meanwhile, does not oppose GMO products, but has warned companies to "act very conservatively" rather than hurrying to employ them.

NAGS was founded in 2004 as an independent non-profit association of scientists and specialists devoted to "solving the problems of protecting man as a biological form from the negative influence of environmental factors leading to irreversible changes to his gene pool," according to the organization's website.

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