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# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Switzerland

**Post:** Geneva

### **Bolstering Scientific Evidence--Genetically Modified Plants**

**Report Categories:**

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

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**Report Highlights:**

Swiss National Science Foundation demonstrated overwhelming scientific support this week for deliberate release of plants from modern biotechnology. The report, "*Benefits and Risks of the Deliberate Release of Genetically Modified Plants*" (NRP 59), was commissioned by the Swiss Federal Council. This report contributes information for next-step decisions whether to continue the current Swiss moratorium on plant biotechnology or not.

**General Information:**

On August 28, the Swiss National Science Foundation published National Research Program Report 59, “Benefits and Risks of the Deliberate Release of Genetically Modified Plants” (NRP 59), commissioned by the Swiss Federal Council. The NRP 59 reports the results of nearly seven years of research, outreach and review of international scientific studies to assess the public health, environmental and economic impact, and social consequences of the application of gene technology to modify plants. A link to this report, its background, research results, and implementation considerations can be viewed in the web link: [www.nrp59.ch/e\\_index.cfm](http://www.nrp59.ch/e_index.cfm).

The NRP 59 was launched by the Swiss Federal Council shortly after the implementation of a five-year moratorium which began in November 2005 to prohibit the commercial cultivation of GMO plants or use of GMO animals for the production of food and agricultural products. The moratorium was due to expire on November 27, 2010, but was subsequently extended by referendum for an additional three-year period in order to await the results of NRP 59.

The aim of NRP 59 is to provide the scientific basis to narrow the knowledge gaps for a subsequent political discussion and to support decision making towards a final rule on how to proceed with the use of GMO plants in Swiss agriculture. This study represents a significant step forward in addressing a general lack of awareness regarding genetically modified agriculture but intense public resistance remains, as evidenced by a recent motion submitted to the Federal Council calling for a temporary continuation of the moratorium beyond November 2013.

Analogous to the review of NRP 59, the Federal Council has opened consultation proceedings for any subsequent amendment of the Gene Technology Act.