



Donau Soja zur Förderung
der europäischen Sojaproduktion

Danube Soya is becoming more sustainable: starting 2016 Danube Soya has prohibited the use of glyphosate during maturation.

Press release:

Danube Soya stands for regionality, freedom from genetic engineering, and sustainability. With the 2016 prohibition of desiccants and thus glyphosate for its farmers, Danube Soya is one step closer in realizing its sustainability standard.

Danube Soya Association, Vienna, March 22, 2016

In 2015, 6.5 million tons of soya were harvested across Europe including Ukraine. That amounts to 71 percent more than in 2012. Until 2025 the production could increase by 215 percent, up to 20.5 million tons.

“If we could manage to increase yields, increase the integration of soybean into crop rotation, and increase the demand of Danube Soya sustainably, I am convinced that in 2025, with consistent demand, Europe will be 50 percent self-sufficient instead of today’s 5.7 percent,” says Matthias Krön, Danube Soya Chairman.

This makes soya one of Europe’s most important arable crops.

At the same time, 40 million tons out of the worldwide yield of 319 million tons of soybeans and soy meal (equivalent to soybeans) are imported into Europe. 85 percent of these are genetically modified (GM). The most frequently used GM variety is Roundup Ready (RR), which is used in combination with the herbicide glyphosate.

With the implementation of RR, glyphosate became the world’s most frequently used pesticide followed by atrazine. It is primarily used in the cultivation of GM plants, but is also applied as a desiccant—a substance that is sprayed shortly before harvest—for non-GM soya in Europe. For this reason glyphosate can be found in imported as well as European soya.

In the last years, studies and cases have shown that glyphosate residues in food cannot be ruled out. In Europe residues were found in breast milk, urine, and food, including beer. It has been associated with diseases, miscarriages, malformations, and deaths of animals and human beings. Even the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)—a WHO authority—classified glyphosate in the “probable carcinogens” category 2A. Currently, the approval of the pesticide is being discussed on the EU level: should glyphosate be permitted for a further 15 years?

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No desiccants like glyphosate in Danube Soya cultivation.

“Consumers are very concerned—and rightly so. The use of desiccants, and thus the use of the herbicide glyphosate, are not part of sustainable agriculture. We take consumers’ concerns seriously and implement these into our standards,” says Matthias Krön. Therefore the usage of desiccants has been prohibited for all Danube Soya farmers and the entire Danube Region with the start of the year. “This way we can significantly reduce the use of glyphosate within the Danube Region.”

Danube Soya supports good agricultural practice. Steps taken by the association included the publication of best practice manuals for conventional and biological cultivation of soya. Trainings for farmers, demonstration fields, and field days are used to increase the awareness for soya cultivation and to gear it towards more sustainability.

As for demand, European soya has been gaining more and more importance. Increasingly large amounts of certified Danube Soya are being used, particularly in central European livestock farming. New projects are being established in Switzerland, Germany, and even Serbia. For 2016, the association estimates a Danube Soya amount of at least 120,000 tons—43% more than the previous year.

“While we promote an increased cultivation of soya in Europe, it is particularly important to us that the cultivation of soya remains sustainable. The Danube Soya Standard provides strict regulations for land use, plant protection, and genetical modification. We deserve the right to develop the Danube Soya Standard further as we did with our recent desiccant decision,” says Krön.

About Danube Soya:

Danube Soya is a non-profit, independent organization that represents Europe’s most significant initiative in the agricultural sector. Danube Soya links society, politics, and major businesses from all sectors of the supply chain, ranging from non-GM seed production to food of animal and vegetable origin. Danube Soya stands for non-GM, origin-controlled quality soya from the Danube Region, and incorporates about 230 members from all over Europe. The Danube Soya Association’s objective is to improve the conditions for a successful European protein cultivation, and to minimize soya imports. More information on Danube Soya can be found at www.donausoja.org.

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