

PETITION

We request the New Caledonian institutions to :

- 1. Disclose information publically on the past importation of GM Papayas in New Caledonia.**
- 2. Make an official assessment on the actual contamination in the territory.**
- 3. Impose a moratorium on the importation of papaya seeds in New Caledonia.**

**Sign it online here :
www.stopogmpacifique.org**

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New Caledonia

The papaya (*Papaya Carica*) is a tropical plant originating from Mexico, and the fruit is eaten raw, as a salad, or lightly cooked.

Although it is produced commercially in several countries, the papaya is also a part of the subsistence farming culture in private food gardens. It is easy to grow, produces fruit in the first season after planting, and necessitates little help thereafter.

World papaya production is estimated to be in the tens of millions of tons, supported by about 400,000 hectares. The main producers are India, Brazil, and Nigeria. One serving of 100g of ripe papaya has 133% of the daily recommended value of Vitamin C for an adult and 33% of the daily recommended value of Vitamin A. The papaya is a plant that has numerous medicinal virtues, and is particularly known to aid the digestive system.

Allergene? After putting the GM papaya on the market, scientists have noticed that the transgenetic encoded protein was presenting an homology with an amino acid sequence similar to an allergen listed in their database.

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GMO

Papaya

**Where will
the contamination
lead us ?**

In Hawaii, like in other places, intensive monoculture farming of papayas has led to the vulnerability of the plant to the Ringspot Virus, a disease transmitted by insects. The infected plants won't die, but they cannot bear any more fruit. In 1994, the University of Hawaii developed a GM Papaya resistant to the Ringspot Virus. There are several cultivated varieties: RAINBOW and SUNUP are two that come from the variety of SUNRISE. These are grown mainly in Hawaii, and are sold in the US, Canada and Japan.

It's not just Hawaii that produces GM Papayas!

China grows another GM variety, called Huaong No. 1, authorized since 2006 in the Guangdong region and Hainan Island and developed by the South China Agricultural University.

In Thailand, field trials of GM papayas were made on several occasions and in several places until July 2003. But a moratorium was imposed on the trials because contamination was discovered in commercial fields. In 2004, it was found that 329 out of 8912 papayas tested had traces of GM (about 4%). The farmers were compensated for each tree which was destroyed. But in spite of the destruction, other GM papaya plants were later discovered.

In 2014, the European Commission requested an audit following several alerts concerning the presence of GM papayas in papaya based products coming from Thailand. GM Papaya is not allowed in Europe, and the audit recommended systematic testing in the country of origin on exported products in order to guarantee that they are not GMO.

More cases of **contamination** have been reported in Hawaii, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, and Fiji... trials are also ongoing in Philippines, Australia, Japan, Indonesia. These contaminations pose a serious environmental problem, but also consider this: in certain countries, like Fiji, the exportation of papayas weighs in the economic balance. In Hawaii, organic farmers are required to test their papaya (to be free of GMOs) before they are sold. Co-existence is impossible. Other countries like Brazil, Jamaica, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Uganda, and Tanzania are also under threat : GM papaya was designed for their market and widely promoted. GM papaya is spreading worldwide with uncontrolled GM seeds release...

How are they made ?

The technology used, called RNA interference, consists of introducing an inverted DNA sequence that allows inhibition of a pathogenic organism at the transcription level. The inversed gene of a protein of virale capsid of PSRV introduced to a papaya plant prevents the development of the virus by blocking the synthesis of an essential protein of the virus.

**In Hawaii,
75% of papayas are GM,
and more than 50%
of non-GM papayas are
contaminated by GM pollen
through wind, insects, animals
or simply by the movement of
the fruits and therefore their
seeds when consumed.**

And elsewhere in the Pacific ?

For the most part, the secluded Pacific countries have imported papaya seeds for 10 years from Hawaii and Asia.

The presence of GM papayas in Fiji is certain; fruits exported to Fiji from Asia have tested positive. In New Caledonia, the SunUp papaya variety had been promoted for a number of years, but the importation of GM papaya seeds is now prohibited.

But what about contamination?



**CAUTION
BIOHAZARD**

GREEN