

# Wellness Foods Europe

THE MAGAZINE FOR NUTRITIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL FOODS & BEVERAGES

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- Less sugar, full indulgence
- Yes: calcium can make you thin
- Agar-Agar
- Functional drinks with proven functionality
- Omega-3 LC PUFAs
- Obesity, epidemic, dieting and vitamins

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## IP Traceability: A central pillar in globalized food safety

*by Dr Jochen P. Zoller, CEO at Genetic ID  
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The public debate on foods containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) continues worldwide and is even increasing in intensity as a result of continuing international controversies. Surveys show that between 65 and 95 percent of European consumers are strongly opposed to purchasing or eating “gene foods.” Levels of rejection vary depending on time and location but strong rejection has been consistent for nearly a decade. EU politicians have responded with extensive regulations on labeling and traceability of GMOs, and some EU Member States have established similar regulations on the national level.

For the food and feed industries, developments related to GMOs are particularly challenging, because they are technically complex, and have significant implications both with regard to regulatory compliance and

consumer acceptance of products. However, in the broader picture, GMOs represent just one more addition to the tidal wave of regulatory and market demands that have engulfed industry over the past few years.

Food safety is the central focus in this wave of change, and from dioxin, to E. coli 0157, to Sudan red, it has challenged the classical analytical approach to food safety. Interestingly, new tools – traceability systems, in particular – which were first applied in dealing with GMOs, have been found to have wide utility and benefit in addressing these broader needs.

These developments in the needs of the industry are reflected in the evolution of services offered by Genetic ID worldwide. At first, focusing exclusively on the use of genetics-based PCR testing to detect and quantify

GMOs, the company was urged primarily by European clients to add to its core business a certification body that could deliver assurances of traceability. Thus, the sister company, Cert ID, was born. Then, because of the truly global nature of the food and feed industries, Genetic ID developed the **Global Laboratory Alliance®**, consisting of 20 laboratories in 14 countries, which provide standardized GMO and other genetics-based testing in every major market around the world.

Through the GLA, food operators know that they will receive highly consistent and reliable analytical services. Whether samples are taken in São Paulo, Chicago, or London, the nearby GLA laboratory will deliver analytical services with the same scientific rigor, precision and accuracy, because all GLA laboratories operate GMO testing to a consistent standard, which is monitored and maintained on an on-going basis by Genetic ID. Today's global integration of the flow of raw ingredients cannot do without the ubiquitous availability of standardized testing, which Genetic ID's Global Laboratory Alliance provides. The benefits of such standardized testing to the food industry are not complete if the analytical reports can not be assigned to consignments, documented and communicated to costumers and authorities. This is often the role of Cert ID.

More recently, as the complexity of the GMO issue expanded, due to the entrance



of many different kinds of GMOs into the global food chain, Genetic ID began to provide consultative services aimed at assisting industry in addressing business-critical issues by providing clear understanding, not only of GMO technology, but also of market conditions and regulatory issues.

All of these together – GMO testing, traceability-based certification, Global Laboratory Alliance, and consultative services, delivered in coordination by Genetic ID and Cert ID, provide complete solutions to all dimensions of the GMO issue.

These, together, also provide a model for a comprehensive approach to the broader food-system challenges that have emerged in the last few years.

Central to this approach is the recognition of the absolute necessity of documentation and communication in the food supply chain. It is exactly this realization that motivated the EU Commission to create the EU



regulation on general traceability of food and feed [(EC) No. 178/2002], which came into effect in January 2005.

Genetic ID's certification sister, Cert ID, has developed and implemented a comprehensive system of IP system validation and supply chain traceability, which is integrated with rigorous PCR analysis provided by approved labs.

Cert ID provides documented traceability; products are segregated from potential GMO contamination and then carefully traced through every stage of production, extending from seed to retail shelf. This comprehensive traceability is backed at key points with rigorous DNA-level testing to ensure that the non-GMO status of product is preserved. Cert ID encompasses the full range of IP practices and seamlessly integrates with any existing IP system.

Cert ID allows industry to deliver products that have been independently certified as non-GMO – and to affix the Cert ID 'Non-GMO' <sup>SM</sup> seal, on those products. This third-party seal, which is now recognized around the world, adds credibility to the non-GMO claim, builds buyers' confidence in products,



and helps them meet consumers' needs.

Cert ID's certification services are quite flexible, in that the company also provides certification according to client-designed standards, and to standards developed by industry groups. In addition, the system that Cert ID has initially developed for GMO-related certification can also be applied to certify virtually any other traceable quality characteristic, including the food safety criteria that are so important in the marketplace today.

It may be relatively easy to *demonstrate* quality assurance and food safety data to the *authorities*, but *communicating* the good news to *consumers* is an entirely different task. The recent history of food safety scandals has caused consumers to be quite wary of the industry's self-assurances. This is where the services of certification bodies, such as Cert ID, are indispensable. Recognized by growers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, consumer unions, and NGOs alike, Cert ID provides the information, not only on GMOs, but also on food safety and a growing list of other quality parameters, which consumers are looking for.

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