

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square,  
London, SW1P 3JR



**Telephone** 08459 33 55 77

**Website** [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

**Paul Chapman**

**request-122741-b165c7cc@whatdotheyknow.com**

**Our ref: 4919**

**27 July 2012**

Dear Mr. Chapman,

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: MONSANTO PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN THE UK**

Thank you for your request for information about all food products containing Monsanto GM products or grown using Monsanto pesticides and herbicides imported into the UK or grown in the UK using any Monsanto seed or pesticides or herbicides produced in the UK or imported from the US. You also asked if the government had any policy towards this corporation and their products. We received your request on 22 July 2012 and have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

I am writing to advise you that Government does not collect or hold all of the data you have requested, we suggest that in order to gain this you may wish to contact the company directly. I can confirm that to the best of our knowledge the information is not held by another public authority. I can also confirm that the government does not have a specific policy in relation to this this particular company.

The information is therefore exempt under regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to information which is not held at the time when an applicant's request is received. Regulation 12(4)(a) is a qualified exception, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner, who is the independent regulator for requests made under the EIRs, takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the Information Commissioner's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

However, under our duty to advise and assist applicants in pursuance of regulation 9, you might be interested to know that all genetically modified (GM) food and feed products cultivated in or imported into the European Union (EU) must be in receipt of an appropriate authorisation required under EU Directive 2001/18 and Regulation 1829/2003. These regulations require a comprehensive risk assessment to be carried out, and once a



product has been authorised under these pieces of legislation it can then be placed on the EU market. The European Commission maintain a register of such authorised products and authorisation holders on their website at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/gm\\_register/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/gm_register/index_en.cfm). There are currently no GM crops cultivated on a commercial basis in the UK, but if you would like further information about the Government's policy towards genetically modified organisms then you may wish to visit our website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/gm/>.

You might also be interested to know that pesticides, including herbicides, also require appropriate EU and national authorisations before they can be placed on the market or used in the UK. The Health and Safety Executive maintain a database of authorised products on their website at: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/topics/databases/databases-home.htm>. This database includes details of which crops may be cultivated with the assistance of each pesticide product and as you will see some authorised products have been produced by Monsanto.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Mike Rowe**

**Direct Line: 0207 238 3182**

**Fax: 0207 238 3293**

**Email: [Mike.Rowe@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Mike.Rowe@defra.gsi.gov.uk)**

## **Annex A**

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Brendan Walsh, Head of Defra's Information Rights Team at Area1B, Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AL, (email: [informationrights@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:informationrights@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF