

'Golden Rice' scandal tarnishes ethics committee

The results of an investigation into the infamous experiment of "Golden Rice," a genetically modified (GM) food, by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDCP), Zhejiang Academy of Medical Sciences (ZAMS) and the Hunan Provincial CDCP were published on December 6.

According to the investigation, 25 children ate 60 grams each of the GM rice in the experiment, which ran at Central Primary School of Jiangkou Town, Hengyang, Hunan Province in June, 2008. They will each reportedly receive 80,000 yuan (\$12,850) to compensate for possible health risks.

There are many reasons that account for the stir caused by the experiment. Choosing those children as test subjects showed the scientists' lack of conscience.

The result also shocked because those tests were performed stealthily, without getting proper approval.

According to Chinese laws, human experiments using GM rice should be strictly examined and approved by the agriculture and health authorities.

And before the test, those children's parents did not receive any information about the use of GM rice and were cajoled into signing an agreement. The scientists fooled the ethics committee by using a false official stamp.

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