

GM crop licensing blocked in Lahore, Pakistan; National Bio Safety Committee's power challenged

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah of the Lahore High Court has issued a stay against issuance of licences for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) until the licence issuing authority is granted legal cover.

Justice Shah issued the order on a petition by the Kisan Board of Pakistan (KBP) challenging the continued supervision of the National Bio Safety Committee (NBSC) by the federal government even after the devolution of authority to provinces under the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

The petitioner had submitted that the NBSC was under the purview of the provincial government after the amendment and its supervision by the federal government was unconstitutional. The petitioner asserted that after devolution of the environment portfolio to provincial governments, the NBSC was no longer legally competent to sit, let alone approve licences for GMOs.

Petitioner's counsel Advocate Ahmed Rafay Aalam said many of the varieties seeking commercial licences had not been subject to proper laboratory and field tests, and were being hastily pushed through the approval process in violation of environmental safeguards prescribed by the Cartagena Protocol – an international agreement that Pakistan was a party to that regulated the use of GMOs.

Read the full, original article: [Negating devolution: LHC issues stay on GMO licencing](#)