

Ag department accused of 'industry-friendly approach' in regulating outdoor GMO tests

At a secret location among the vineyards of California's Central Coast, a plot of genetically engineered corn is producing proteins for industrial and pharmaceutical uses, including an experimental vaccine for hepatitis B.

The altered corn is growing with federal approval 100 feet from a steelhead stream in San Luis Obispo County, in designated critical habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog. Agriculture Department inspectors have reported two "incidents" at the site, including conventional corn sprouting in a 50-foot fallow zone, but the findings did not rise to the level of a fine or even to a formal notice of noncompliance for the company that planted it, Applied Biotechnology Institute Inc.

Details of Applied Biotechnology's inspections and hundreds of other field trials with genetically modified plants were obtained by Hearst Newspapers under Freedom of Information laws. The inspection reports and other Agriculture Department records present a picture of vast, swiftly expanding outdoor experimentation and industry-friendly oversight of those experiments.

The documents show how the obscure Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), part of the Agriculture Department, takes an industry-friendly approach in seeking to prevent contamination or economic harm from field trials.

Read the full, original article: [GMO experiments receive questionable oversight](#)