

Pays : Burkina Faso**Année :** 2014**Épreuve :** Anglais, 1^{er} Tour**Examen :** BAC, séries C-D**Durée :** 2 h**Coefficient :** 2

Genetically Modified Morals

Present European Union (EU) policies restrict imports of genetically modified food and the release of genetically engineered living organisms into the environment. Revisions under discussion would allow modified imports, but require that they be labeled as such. In Europe, where agricultural landscapes and local products are highly valued, experience with mad cow disease has heightened distrust of large – scale, industrialized farming. U.S. officials contend that such attitudes are irrational and that EU regulations are not based on scientific evidence. [...]

When they declined U.S. genetically modified food aid, southern African governments had other concerns. One was the possible health risk of consuming unprocessed modified corn, which is not a major part of U.S. diets. The other was the unknown consequences of releasing modified corn into ecosystems in southern Africa, where corn is the main staple grain. Until these concerns could be addressed, African governments asked the United States to follow World Food Program guidelines by providing funds to purchase locally preferred and appropriate foods, as other donor countries did.

The U.S. argument that such policies are “immoral” takes as a given that modified crops have been proven to be free of health or environmental hazards. It also presumes that modified crops would reduce African hunger because they yield more than conventional varieties. In fact, average yields from currently available modified food – crop seeds are slightly lower than yields of comparable nonmodified varieties. This is not surprising, because modified crops have been designed mainly to deal with pest problems, not to produce more food. Crop genetic engineering is a long way from developing varieties that could produce more food under African conditions. [...]

In addition, the question of environmental risk is proving more vexing than enthusiasts of genetic modification first thought. Some scientists worry that synthetic genes and their products may damage soil microbes and other organisms that keep agro-ecosystems productive. Until such ecological problems have been solved, countries may reasonably prefer not to accept genetically modified seeds. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the trade representative’s office have nonetheless made the promotion of genetically modified crops a policy priority. The United States has fought hard against the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a global treaty that will give countries the option to decline genetically modified seed imports if they are shown to pose ecological or socioeconomic risks...

By Kathleen McAfee from *International Herald Tribune*, June 13, 2003.

Vocabulary

To contend: (here) soutenir, affirmer...que

Staple grain: aliment de base

Hazards: (here) risques, dangers

To yield: produire, rapporter

Seeds: semences.

Guided commentary (20 points)

1. According to the text, what are the measures taken by the European Union about genetically modified food?
2. Refer to the text and give the reasons why some African countries did not accept genetically modified food aid.
3. What shows in the text that U.S. is determined to promote the production and export of genetically modified products?
4. What are the scientists' main worries about genetically modified seeds?
5. In your opinion, should farmers in your country replace their local seeds by genetically modified ones? Justify your answer.