

Report: U.S. ships banned GM rice

August 28 2006

Britons have reportedly been unwittingly eating banned genetically modified rice imported from the United States for months, if not years.

The European Commission stopped imports of the rice last week, The Independent reported, noting U.S. inspectors in January discovered the banned rice was contaminating export stocks of long-grain rice.

European governments are reportedly furious the Bush administration delayed warning them.

The unauthorized rice was developed by Bayer CropScience to tolerate herbicides. It was tested on U.S. farms between 1998 and 2001, but the company decided not to market it and never submitted it for official approval.

Although Bayer notified the U.S. government on July 31, it wasn't until 18 days later the Bush administration told importers and only told British officials an hour before a news conference that made the contamination public, The Independent said.

Last Thursday, the EC banned U.S. rice imports unless the shipments can be proved to be free of the genetically modified rice.

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