

## **INIA discarded the presence of transgenic maize in Barranca**

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### **The agricultural agency's scientific research capacity was demonstrated.**

The National Institute for Agrarian Innovation (INIA), discarded the illegal presence of GM maize in the valley of Barranca (north of Lima), after completing a verification study presented at the International Forum of Modern Biotechnology in the Agricultural Sector that disrupted the complaint made by biologist Antonietta Gutierrez, who claimed to have found two types of hard yellow corn resistant to herbicides and insect attack.

Following the claim of this finding, two years ago INIA undertook a review covering imports of maize (amount and source), seed cultivars records, national races of maize, and especially its location in order to assess and identify dispersal areas of high variability.

As reported by INIA, leaves collected from 134 maize fields were analyzed and confronted with specific primers (or molds) that detect the presence of genetic material of transgenic origin. At the same time, extracts from collected leaves were tested with reactive strips to identify the transgenic events that indicate resistance to the herbicide and insects (NK 603 and Bt 11 respectively) which were not detected in each of the samples. Finally, the INIA concluded that the Barranca valley is not a center (or place) of origin of maize, but it has the presence of corn hybrids and breeds (varieties) that were not of national origin.

At this respect, biologist Ernesto Bustamante -sued by Antonietta Gutierrez at the 6th Criminal Court of Lima which found him guilty of the crime of defamation- said he was satisfied that INIA demonstrate once again that it is a good regulator agency and is well qualified for research to sample all areas of the Barranca and Pativilca valleys, despite the refusal of Dr. Gutiérrez to deliver her back samples (counter samples) and to indicate the location coordinates of the fields in which she made her study.

"My observation, which I sustain until now, was that the study was poorly designed and made procedural and quality control errors. The criticism was only professional, which is a common practice in science. Within the scientific environment one can not react with a lawsuit, but through a debate that I proposed myself to Dr. Gutierrez, and she did not accept", he emphasized.

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The Penal Code Article 133 states that no insult or defamation is committed when it comes to literary, artistic or scientific criticism.