

## **Destruction of academic and governmental research experiments by anti-GMO activists in Germany (2002-2009)**

On the night of the **21<sup>st</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002**, unknown persons destroyed test fields sown with genetically modified rapeseed in Dahnsdorf (Brandenburg). Several trials of the **Kleinmachnow Federal agency for Biology** have been affected, some of which were part of the safety research programme.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/archive/145.dahnsdorf-trial-laid-waste.html>

On the night of **23<sup>rd</sup> June 2003**, a trial field with genetically modified potatoes on the Roggenstein estate near Munich was destroyed. The field was to be used to propagate potatoes with a higher carotenoid content as part of a project funded by the **Federal Ministry of Research (BMBF)**. The organisation making the application was the **Department of Plant Breeding at the Technische Universität München (TUM)** in Freising-Weißenstephan.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/archive/188.potato-field-destroyed.html>

In the early hours of **22<sup>nd</sup> June 2004**, unknown perpetrators destroyed completely a trial field of genetically modified potatoes. The **Max Planck Institute for Molecular Plant Physiology** in Golm near Potsdam had been conducting basic trials of starch formation in potatoes there.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/archive/223.potatoes-destroyed.html>

**In June 2006**, on the Friday before Whitsun (Pentecost), activists partially destroyed a field trial (10 m<sup>2</sup>) with genetically modified barley being conducted by the **University of Giessen** as part of safety research.

On Whit Monday, a trial field of GM maize was destroyed in Nürtingen (Baden-Württemberg). **Nürtingen-Geislingen University** was conducting a field trial in collaboration with the Bundessortenamt (**Federal Office of Plant Varieties**) on the one-hectare plot.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/archive/433.planned-concerted-attack.html>

**In July 2006**, radical opponents of genetic engineering destroyed parts of a trial field of GM maize near Forchheim (Karlsruhe district). The site, which includes a plot of GM maize measuring about three hectares, is part of the coexistence research programme of the **Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV)**.

Several Bt maize fields had already been destroyed earlier in the year, including cultivar trials being conducted by the **Federal Office of Plant Varieties** in Dachwig (Thüringen) and Ladenburg (Baden-Württemberg) and trial fields that were part of biosafety research.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/archive/442.alternative-transparency-neutrality-experimental-planting.html>

On the night of **12<sup>th</sup> June 2007**, unknown perpetrators forced their way onto the trial field and systematically destroyed some of the barley plants belonging to the **University of Giessen**. They had been planted on the research station site belonging to the **Institute for Phytopathology and Applied Zoology** at the end of April. They had been produced from two barley lines developed in the USA, one of which contains an active chitinase gene from a soil fungus. Chitinases break down chitin, which is also a component of fungal cell walls. The second line contains a gene from a soil bacterium producing glucanase. The gene was transferred to barley to improve its brewing properties and to make it more easily digestible as animal feed. However, glucanase also has fungus-resistant properties.

Trial fields belonging to the **University of Giessen** had already been destroyed at the end of **May 2007**. In these fields the Institute for Plant Breeding was conducting value tests on behalf of the **Federal Office of Plant Varieties** with numerous maize varieties, including varieties of GM maize MON810.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/news/505.destruction-barley-trial-field.html>

**In a repeat of the previous year's events**, parts of a trial field with GM maize in Forchheim (Baden-Württemberg) were once again destroyed. The field was part of the coexistence research programme funded by the **Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV)**, which is investigating practical questions of coexistence between genetically modified and conventional maize farming. During the night of Friday **22<sup>nd</sup> June 2007**, anti-biotechnology activists forced their way into the field and trampled some of the maize plants.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/news/507.attacks-coexistence-trial-field.html>

On **21<sup>st</sup> April 2008**, in Gatersleben, radical opponents of genetic engineering destroyed a GM wheat field trial from the **Leibniz Institute for Crop Research (IPK)**. This experimentation was planned to test various approaches to increase the protein content of wheat grains and to improve the feed quality.

On **23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008**, in Mariensee (Niedersachsen): Destruction of a field trial of the **Julius Kühn Institute (JKI)** devoted to coexistence studies. Unknown offenders with hand scythes destroyed the entire trial (2 hectares), so that is no longer possible to perform the test. The damage is estimated at 20,000 - 30,000 Euro.

On **4<sup>th</sup> July 2008**, in Rheinstetten (Baden Württemberg), unknown perpetrators destroyed a fenced trial of the **Landwirtschaftlichen Technologiezentrum Augustenberg** (Agricultural Technology Centre). The official coexistence experiment should have provided new data on outcrossing behaviour. Conventional maize plants on an area of 1,600 m<sup>2</sup> were trampled or cut down. According to preliminary estimates, the damage amounts to around 30,500 Euro.

#### **Also to be noted in 2008:**

Seven fields were occupied that year (4 planned for academic research).

**31<sup>st</sup> March – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008**, in Gießen (Hessen): A GM barley field trial at the **University of Giessen**, occupied in 2006 and 2007, was set free. There was property damage to fences and implements, verbal attacks against members of the Institute and destruction of bee-hives.

**Early April 2008**, GM opponents occupied a trial field at **Nürtingen-Geislingen University (HfWU)**. The university management bowed to pressure from the protest

groups and announced that all trials of genetically modified plants would be stopped for the next five years.

The HfWU has been studying genetically modified plants since 1996, and agronomists have had to contend with the partial destruction of their research projects almost every year since

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/news/567.cultivation-trial-hands-science.html>

As in 2007, in **2008** GM opponents bound objects (metal bars and bottles filled with concrete and metal parts) to maize plants to prevent their harvest. In two incidents of this kind, extensive damage was caused to a combine harvester.

On **1<sup>st</sup> June 2009**, 270 apple trees on a trial site owned by the **Institute for Breeding Research on Horticultural and Fruit Crops of the Julius Kühn Institute (JKI)** in Dresden-Pillnitz were destroyed by unknown intruders. Most of the trees were genetically modified plants being grown in tubs in a special safety tent under field-like conditions. It is the first time that protesters have destroyed plants that were not being grown in a field.

<http://www.gmo-safety.eu/news/620.apple-trees-destroyed.html>

On **17<sup>th</sup> May 2009**, in Groß Lüsewitz (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), GM opponents destroyed large field trials with genetically modified plants on the experimental site of the **AgroBioTechnikum**. These are apparently the same activists who occupied the experimental plots in April. This field trial concerned biosecurity research on GM potatoes, barley and wheat.

On **2<sup>nd</sup> July 2009**, in Groß Lüsewitz (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), unknown perpetrators attacked officially approved field trials of the **Biovativ GmbH** in Groß Lüsewitz. By spraying an unknown liquid, they partially destroyed a GM barley experiment and fully destroyed GM potato and GM wheat experiments. A security guard was injured in the attack.

**Also to be noted in 2009:**

Four fields were occupied (one planned for academic research).

GM opponents sent threat mails to leading scientists with defamatory content.

GM opponents hindered the sowing of improved Amflora potatoes in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern by catapulting organic potatoes onto the field.

GM opponents beat and injured a security guard in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in his attempt to discourage them to proceed to further destruction.

**To be noted in 2010:**

Pea field trials relocated to US

<http://www.nature.com/nbt/journal/v28/n1/full/nbt0110-8b.html>

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