Support Kraft's Taco Recall Corn Growers

National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) respects and supports Kraft Food Co.'s announcement recently to voluntarily withdraw Taco Bell Home Original taco shells from grocery store shelves.

Kraft took the action in the wake of claims that the taco shells contained corn carrying StarLink, a type of Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) not yet approved for food markets.

Corn with StarLink Bt, produced by Aventis Crop Science, has EPA approval for use in feed and industrial uses. Food use is pending. All other Bt corn hybrids grown and sold in the U.S. have governmental approval for both food and feed use.

"We share the concern of Kraft, consumers, and the U.S. regulatory agencies in addressing the possible appearance of a not-yetapproved product in food channels. At stake is the reputation and integrity of U.S.

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The corn farmers and the food they produce," said Roger Pine, a farmer from Lawrence, Kan., and chairman of the 32,000-member NCGA.

> Pine also serves on the **USDA Advisory Committee** on Agricultural Biotechnology, a panel of 38 people that advises the ag secretary on biotechnology policy.

"We understand that lab tests are continuing in order to confirm or deny the presence of StarLink DNA. The presence of Cry9C, the Star-Link type of Bt, in the tacos, if proven, would indicate a significant breach in the license to use StarLink," said Pine. "Until that question can be answered conclusively, we support Kraft's voluntary withdrawal of the taco shells.

"If tests confirm Star-Link's presence, we will work diligently with food companies and regulatory agencies to help identify and correct any flaws in the supply chain," Pine continued. "And, if tests show the tacos

don't contain StarLink, we'll help Kraft restock the shelves."

Pine emphasized that this action is occurring because StarLink has allegedly been found in products for which it has not yet been approved. "There is no evidence of allergenicity with the StarLink products. Furthermore, Star-Link's use in food has not been rejected by the federal government's approval process but instead is awaiting approval," he noted.

Headquartered in St. Louis, Mo., the organization has been a strong supporter of the U.S. regulatory agencies and systems that approve these and other products. "We will continue to back the rules and regulations required to use this and other technologies. We are committed to meeting these requirements to guarantee the trust and confidence of consumers - whether they are in the U.S., Japan, Europe or anywhere — in the safety and



wholesomeness of our food supply."

Pine added that NCGA continues to support the availability and accessibility of biotechnology crops. "We support the commercial release of new hybrids created with the use of biotechnology or conventional breeding that have received full approval from all relevant U.S. regulatory agencies," he said. "Those agencies should expedite the process for reviewing and approving agricultural

biotechnology products for use in feed and food. This can be accomplished without sacrificing the rigorous standards consumers expect and deserve.

"We have a sound, safe, abundant food supply," he said, "and we will work hard to reassure consumers that biotechnology products are safe and will be handled in accordance with federal regulations and manufacturer recommendations."



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