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18. abstract

In the past, typically normative pictures on the future development of green genetic engineering or assumptions on future genetically modified (GM) products and on their use were developed and subsequently used to deduce research aims and questions. A precise formulation of scenarios integrating regulation aspects, issues of agricultural cultivation and coexistence and above all different societal perceptions was not carried out. Concomitantly, the scenario workshop approach was not often used in participative TA processes and only in discourses with stakeholders.

On this background, the project "Scenario workshops: Futures of green genetic engineering" has explored new territory: The scenarios were developed solely by laypeople, without direct assistance by scientific experts, stakeholders or political decision makers involved in the area of green genetic engineering. The participants of the five workshops in autumn 2008 were students from different faculties and universities in Germany, and in one case scholars from upper school. Elaborated information material – 23 fact sheets on four thematic complexes – was drafted. Therewith, a broad spectrum of information on green genetic engineering was provided to the participants.

The analysis of the scenario workshop results show: In the assessment of laypeople, the future of GM plants is not only determined by polarisation – utilisation or non-utilisation. The future pictures worked out in the workshops show a number of differentiations. Further, the scenarios describe not only continual developments, but also developments with change of direction. The scenarios from all workshops could be grouped in scenarios

- > with extension of GM plant utilisation,
- > with partial utilisation of GM plants,
- > with reversal in the utilisation of GM plants, and
- > with marginal utilisation or blockade of green genetic engineering.

The scenarios provide differentiated statements especially on regulation, acceptance, freedom of choice, coexistence and alternatives, economic impacts and risks.

The new concept of scenario workshops with laypeople was successfully put to the test, and the methodology was developed thus far to enable others to use this instrument independently. A manual for scenario workshops with laypeople was compiled.

Based on the scenarios, the project group have worked out a number of points that are – in view of the participants – of high relevance in research and political decision making on green genetic engineering. In addition, proposals for the implementation and further development of the scenario workshop methodology are made.

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GM crops, Biotechnology, Scenarios, Scenario Workshop, Discourse, Laypeople

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