

UPM AND THE USE OF GENETIC ENGINEERING

Genetically modified organisms (GMO) usually refer to organisms created by transgenic modification. More widely, a term Genetic Engineering (GE) covers several techniques where genetic material has been manipulated through means that bypass the reproductive process.

Genetic Engineering is used, for example, in the pharmaceutical and food and feed industries as well as in the chemical, textile and mining industries. One example is genetic engineering of plants to produce faster growing strains. Modern technology and research techniques make it possible to modify also trees genetically and to produce genetically engineered wood raw material.

UPM recognizes the concerns of its various interest groups and will not use genetically engineered raw material in its products until safety of both the production and use of such material has been established by the local authorities. No genetically engineered wood raw material is used. Some raw materials, such as binding starch and deinking soaps, may, however, contain genetically engineered elements as it is not mandatory to disclose the information on the use of GE. UPM's policy is to ask suppliers for information about the possible use of GE materials.

Today, benefits and risks relating to large-scale genetic engineering are only partly known. UPM considers it essential to gain more knowledge and understanding of genetic engineering and thus encourages comprehensive scientific research on GE. UPM participates in the public debate on the GE related issues through its membership in industry associations and in co-operation with research institutes. Clear international rules on genetic engineering would be needed.

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UPM Responsibility