Sampling instructions for foods analysed for potential genetically modified ingredients

GENERAL

Before any sampling is commenced, it must be ensured that the packages are unopened and unbroken. Individual products may not be split up or broken.

The sample must be so taken that it is as representative as possible of the entire lot being inspected. Subsamples shall be taken from different sides of the lot. A lot means a quantity of a foodstuff prepared or delivered at one time that is expected to be of uniform characteristics (origin, farmer, variant, packer, etc.). If a shipment consists of lots that can be identified as originating from different farmers, etc., each lot must be handled separately.

The samples shall be so clearly marked as to avoid any risk of confusion. All subsamples that belong to one sample are to be collected into a plastic sampling bag, for example, that must be so marked as to make it easy to trace (gmo sample, date, name of the product, name of the operator and name of the sampler).

The authority shall inform the product owner or holder or their representative of their right to receive a counter-sample. The counter-sample shall always be taken at the laboratory from the homogenised official sample and handed over to the food business operator upon his specific request (e.g. in the event of disputes). The analysis costs of the counter-sample shall be borne by the operator.

BULK GOODS

Sample amount

The amounts of subsamples to be taken from bulk goods are shown in Table 1. The size of an individual subsample is 500 g.

Table 1: The amounts of subsamples according to the weight of the goods lot (bulk goods)

Lot weight (kg)	Number of subsamples, pcs
< 50	3
50–500	5
> 500	10

For example, from a bagged bulk lot of less than 50 kg, 3 subsamples per production lot, approx. 500 g each, shall be taken. Take the subsamples from different bags that belong to the same production lot. In the case of only one jumbo bag, for example, take the subsamples evenly from different sides of the bag by, for example, augering the sample through the bag.

Sampling

- The sampling shall comply with the principles of aseptic sampling.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the sample is not be contaminated (by the ambient dust, a sample taken previously or some other way) or spoiled at any stage.
- Take the samples wearing disposable gloves that are changed after each subsample.
- Open the product package (bag, barrel, sack, etc.) neatly without causing unnecessary damage to the goods lot.
- Take the sample using a clean metallic scoop, spoon, etc. and change the sampling instrument after each subsample. Alternatively, clean the instrument appropriately between subsamples by, for example, covering it with aluminium foil that is changed between subsamples, or use a disposable carton cup for taking the samples. The use of plastic instruments should be avoided because they are prone to electrify the sample.
- Put the subsample into a clean, dry, odourless, unused and sufficiently strong paper bag (but not into a 'windowed' bread bag). Do not fill the sample bag completely full, but leave some space inside the bag. Close the bag immediately in such a way that it can be opened later without breaking the bag.
- Mark the name of the product, the name of the operator and the sequential number of the subsample on each paper bag that contains a subsample.
- Enclose each subsample bag in a transparent plastic bag to prevent contamination.
- Then enclose all subsamples that belong to one sample inside yet another larger plastic bag for sending.
- Mark the sampling bag to be sent to the laboratory so as to make it easy to trace (gmo sample, date, name of the product, name of the operator and name of the sampler).
- Enclose any disposable material generated during the sampling in a plastic or paper bag and put the bag into a waste bin.

PREPACKED SAMPLES (MARKET SURVEILLANCE SAMPLES)

Market surveillance samples shall be taken from prepacked products that are currently placed on the market. The samples must always be checked to ensure that they are of the same lot and that the packages are unbroken. A prepacked product shall be used as a subsample 'as is' (as a complete product package). 3 pcs of larger consumer and institutional kitchen packages from the same production lot and 6 pcs of bar-type preparations shall be taken as samples. The product packages are to be enclosed in a marked plastic bag provided with proper markings (gmo sample, date, name of the product, name of the operator and name of the sampler) and sent to the laboratory.

SAMPLING FORM

In addition to the other details of the sample, the production date/best before and/or lot number are particularly important pieces of information when the sampling form is filled out. If the sampling process departed from the instructions, this must always be reported in the sampling form. For subsamples, one common sampling form is sufficient. Any copies of the package labelling, product declaration, recipe or other documents are to be enclosed with the sampling form. A copy of the form will be given to the operator. A duly completed sampling form complete with annexes shall be delivered to the laboratory together with the sample.

DELIVERING THE SAMPLE TO THE LABORATORY

The subsamples along with the sampling form and copies of other documents shall be sent, carefully packed and marked, to the laboratory that prepares an aggregate sample of the subsamples and performs the analysis of the samples.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Changes to the previous version (5.6.2012):

- Approver and division updated to match the current organisation