

UPM AND THE USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Genetically modified organisms (GMO) are organisms whose genome has been modified in a laboratory by inserting one or several genes to the genome. Genetic modification is used, for example, in the pharmaceutical and food industries as well as in the chemical, textile and mining industries. One example is the genetic modification of plants to produce faster growing strains. Modern technology and research techniques make it possible to modify also trees genetically and to produce genetically modified wood raw material.

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

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

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