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Originally published March 9 2007

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USDA approves mass planting of GM rice made with human genes

by David Gutierrez, staff writer

(NaturalNews) For the first time, the USDA has given preliminary approval for large-scale planting of a genetically engineered food crop containing human genes. The rice grains, produced by California-based Ventria Bioscience, synthesize a human immune protein. The public comment period for this decision lasts until March 30, after which the decision will be finalized.

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What you need to know - Conventional View

- The USDA has tentatively approved a petition by Ventria to plant up to 3,200 acres of the modified rice in Geary County, Kan. If the approval stands, Ventria will begin by planting 450 acres this spring.
- Previously, Ventria had sought to grow the rice in Missouri, but the plan was abandoned when Anheuser-Busch Companies Inc. threatened to boycott all rice from the state. Anheuser-Busch, a beer maker, is the country's foremost buyer of rice.
- Anheuser-Busch had the same concern as many critics of genetically engineered plants, which is that genes from engineered varieties may spread to and "genetically pollute" non-engineered or even wild relatives of the plants.
- Critics of the USDA's decision have expressed concern that genetic pollution in this case could cause potentially dangerous pharmacological proteins to contaminate the [food](#) supply. The same day that [the USDA](#) gave the new rice the green light, it announced that rice seed in Arkansas had become contaminated by a different genetically engineered strain not approved for consumption. This was discovered while investigating the widespread contamination of rice in the U.S. with yet another genetically modified strain.
- According to Ventria, the genetically engineered rice could allow the cheap production of immune proteins that have been shown to help children recover faster from severe diarrhea. It is seeking FDA approval to add the protein to foods such as yogurt and granola.
- Quote: "This is not a product that everyone would want to consume. It is unwise to produce drugs in plants outdoors." - Jane Rissler, Union of Concerned Scientists

What you need to know - Alternative View

Statements and opinions by Mike Adams, author for Truth Publishing

- These experiments with genetically modified [crops](#) are, in my view, extremely dangerous and may ultimately lead to a genetic Chernobyl that could devastate the U.S. food supply. Such crops should never be allowed to be planted in the open.

- In giving this preliminary approval, the [USDA](#) seems to be once again leaning towards protecting corporate profits rather than public health. The motives of a regulatory agency that would allow such crops to be planted in open fields are highly questionable.

Resources you need to know

- Union of Concerned Scientists (<http://www.ucsusa.org>)
- Ventria Bioscience (<http://www.ventria.com>)
- USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service public comment notice (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/fedregist...>)
- More about genetically modified foods (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneticall...>)

Bottom line

- **The USDA has given preliminary approval for the planting of rice engineered to produce human immune proteins, and the agency will accept public comments on the decision until March 30.**

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