



The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor
Minister of Health

January 11, 2018

RE: Request for the rationale behind Health Canada's assessment of genetically engineered "Golden Rice"

Dear Minister Petipas Taylor,

According to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Health Canada is reviewing the safety of the genetically engineered Vitamin-A enhanced rice called "Golden Rice".¹ We are writing to ask for confirmation that Health Canada regulators are engaged in a safety assessment of "Golden Rice," and to ask you to provide the rationale for Health Canada to conduct this assessment. **Why are Canadian regulators assessing the safety of a food product that is not intended for sale in Canada?**

According to IRRI, applications have been submitted for approval in the Philippines, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the US. Only one of these five countries suffers from a problem of Vitamin-A deficiency and is therefore a potential market (In fact the Philippines has largely addressed this problem with supplementation and food fortification programs²).

Is "Golden Rice" intended for the Canadian consumer market? Is Health Canada assessing "Golden Rice" in order to prepare for anticipated contamination of Canadian rice imports with "Golden Rice"?

We would like to take this opportunity to bring your attention to our attached report on Golden Rice.

Thank you for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator

¹ <http://irri.org/golden-rice/faqs/what-is-the-status-of-the-golden-rice-project>

² Please see "*Golden Rice*" *GM Vitamin-A Rice*, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, July 2016 <https://cban.ca/wp-content/uploads/golden-rice-factsheet-cban-web.pdf>