

Editorial

The present issue of *Acta Botanica Neerlandica* is largely dedicated to risk assessment related to the production of genetically modified plants (GMP). The relative papers are based on studies carried out for the Dutch Department of Economic Affairs (Ministerie van Economische Zaken), whose interest proceeded from the recommendations summarized in the *Blue Book: 'Recombinant DNA safety considerations'* from the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and from present directives from the EC (currently EU: European Union). The studies are meant to highlight relevant points of impact for the safe production of GMP. These points mainly concern the confinement of traits to the GMP, introduced by means of molecular biological techniques. The studies resulted in a quintette of reviews discussing the genomic stability of GMP by G.D.F. Maessen, the use of selection and reporter genes by P.L.J. Metz & J.-P. Nap, the biosafety of transgenic oilseed rape by P.L.J. Metz, E. Jacobsen & W. Stiekema, gene dispersal and the possibility of developing simulation models by L.W.D. van Raamsdonk & H.J. Schouten and the influence of gene products on soil micro-flora by D.C.M. Glandorf, P.A.H.M. Bakker & L.C. van Loon. The studies were carried out under the guidance of the Coordinating Committee for Risk-assessment Studies (CCRO: Coördinatie Commissie Risico-evaluatie Onderzoek), headed by Prof. dr P.G. de Haan.

Besides the inherent importance of these topics, these studies may be also important with respect to present breeding programmes and cultivation of economically important crops, which in turn generate extensive fundamental research.

The editors of *Acta Botanica Neerlandica* hope to have contributed with this issue to the general understanding of the present problems and possibilities of the production of GMP and their rational use in science.

THE EDITORS