the mirror is in the "did move" state, the "did not move" state, or a superposition of the two, and they can measure how long the superposition lasts.

If the experiment actually puts a mirror into superposition, it will suggest that there is nothing fundamental about large things that makes them behave like classical objects rather than quantum ones. "If quantum mechanics hasn't gone wrong at the size of a cell," Tegmark says, "it probably won't go wrong with something the size of a mouse or a human." Bouwmeester's team is already testing components that will go into the lab setup, which requires very high vacuums, very cold temperatures, and very precise measuring equipment. Should the team overcome those formidable hurdles, Schrödinger's hypothetical tabby might become more than a pet notion. **–CHARLES SEIFE**

SWITZERLAND

## Compromise Allows Transgenic Trials

**BERN**—Swiss biologists believe they have won a decisive victory in a 9-year battle with campaigners opposed to genetically modified (GM) organisms. After 11 hours of rancorous debate, the National Council, the lower house of the Swiss parliament, voted last week to accept watered-down legislation governing gene technology. To the relief of researchers, the council deleted measures that would restrict research and impose a 5-year moratorium on commercial release of GM organisms. The new version is "a good sign for young scientists to stay in the field," says Heidi Diggelmann, president of the Swiss National Science Foundation's Research Council.

**Don't eat this.** Swiss officials have approved field tests of wheat engineered to resist the stinking smut fungus, which smells and apparently also tastes "just like rotten fish."

Anti-GM groups first aired the Gene-Protection Initiative in 1993 to ban all research on GM animals and patenting of any GM organism. Researchers went on the offensive, attempting to convey to the public the importance of their research. In 1996 a bill was put forward as a compromise, plugging gaps in existing law without aggressively curbing GM research. The initiative was decisively defeated in a national referendum (*Science*, 12 June 1998, p. 1685).

However, under pressure from anti-GM groups, the bill was modified to include provisions such as limiting releases of GM organisms to biosafety experiments that could be guaranteed to be 100% risk free and could not be performed with conventional means. These were poison pills to many scientists, who argued that the terms would amount to a de facto ban on basic transgenic research. The proposed legislation would also have banned antibiotic resistance genes in deliberately released GM organisms and would have held producers of GM products liable for damages for up to 30 years, even for nondefective, grossly misused products.

Some members of parliament rallied against these measures, and last-minute negotiations succeeded in defanging the bill. Under the approved measures, there will be no commercial moratorium, and restrictions on the release of GM organisms for research will be eased. In addition, antibiotic resistance genes in released GM organisms will be allowed until 2008, and in general, producers of GM products will be liable only for defective products. The legislation still has to go to the upper chamber of parliament for final revisions, but a moratorium looks unlikely.

Although many scientists are satisfied with the outcome, they are not dancing in the streets. Gottfried Schatz, president of the Swiss Science and Technology Council, a government advisory group, says that the approved measures were "the best that could be hoped for given the current climate of mistrust." Daniel Ammann, director of the Swiss Gene-Technology Working Group, an anti-GM umbrella organization, confirms that the group plans to continue its fight by seeking a ban on any commercial release of GM organisms.

The modifications dispel a cloud of uncertainty that had been hanging over Switzerland's first-ever field trial of GM plants. On 13 September, Moritz Leuenberger, head of Switzerland's Department of Environment, Transport, Energy, and Communications, approved the trial of wheat engineered to make a protein toxic to a crop pest called stinking smut fungus. Regulatory authorities had rejected the proposed experiment last year on the grounds that the transgenic plants contain an antibiotic resistance gene (*Science*, 7 December 2001, p. 2067). Leuenberger approved the trial "solely for legal reasons," as current laws do not require such an experiment to exclude all possible safety risks. Final approval is expected in a few months. **–MIN KU**

Min Ku is a writer in Bern, Switzerland.

## ScienceScope

**A Pox on Polygraphs** In the first major U.S. government report on polygraphs since 1983, a panel of the National Academy of Sciences this week said the government should not use the so-called lie detectors to see if an employee poses a security risk. The study, commissioned by the Department of Energy (DOE) in the wake of the Wen Ho Lee affair (*Science*, 15 September 2000, p. 1851), says that although the devices can be a help to criminal investigators, they are too crude to screen out possible spies.

The panel, led by statistician Stephen Fienberg of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, notes that lie detection research "has not progressed ... in the manner of a typical scientific field." It calls for expanded tests of the polygraph and other "indicators of deception."

The panel has briefed DOE and other agencies that now test thousands of employees. Fienberg didn't say if any was planning a change in policy, but polygraph critics say the course is clear. Physicist Alan Zelicoff of DOE's Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, says the panel has come to a "very strong conclusion. ... As a screening test, [the polygraph] has now been tossed onto the ash heap of history."

**Hatchet Buried** After years of wrangling, Russia and the World Health Organization (WHO) have agreed to cooperate in attacking the country's tuberculosis (TB) crisis. The deal, reached late last month, will funnel up to $150 million in World Bank loans into a revitalized TB monitoring and treatment system.

TB has soared to epidemic levels in Russia, and the disease now claims 30,000 lives annually. But many Russian specialists rejected WHO's insistence on tying aid to the use of Western anti-TB strategies, such as microscopy for detection, saying that homegrown methods, such as mass x-ray screening, worked fine (*Science*, 12 July, p. 170). New results from 18 projects that integrate Russian and WHO methods, however, helped end the standoff. The projects, begun in 1994, have boosted detection and lowered incidence rates, officials say.

"Five years ago ... we couldn't find common ground," Anatoly Vialkov, a deputy health minister, said in announcing the deal. "Today we understand each other." The World Bank must still approve the loan.

**Contributors: Susan Biggin, Wayne Kondro, Constance Holden, Paul Webster**

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) FBI FILE PHOTO; CHRISTOF SAUTTER