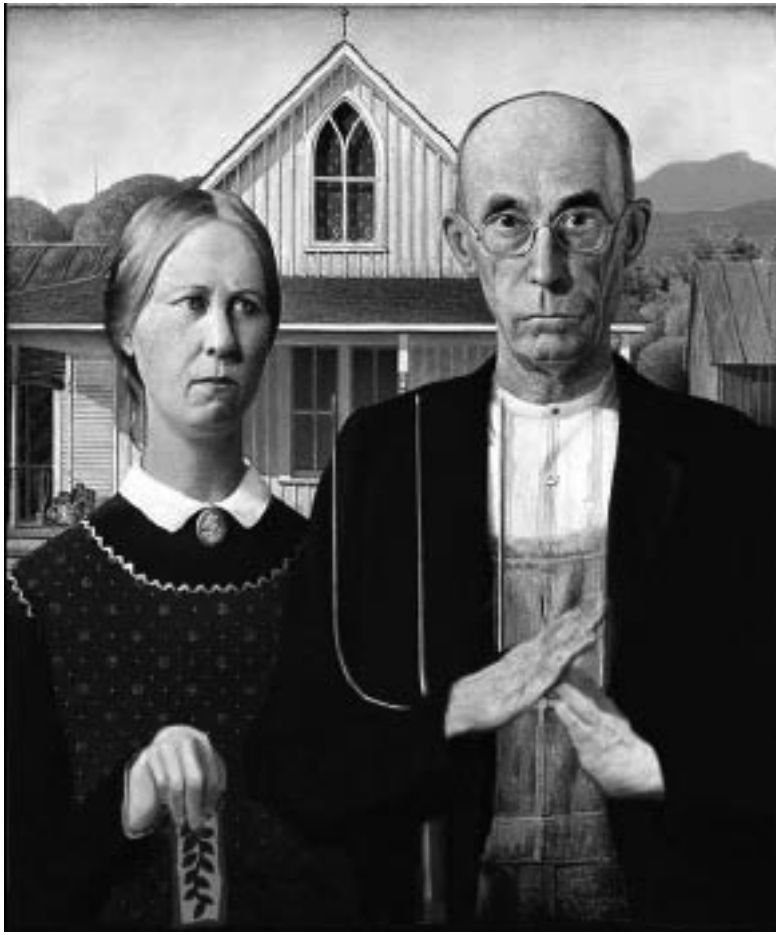


Special Insert for Measure Q in SLO County



SUPERVISORS VOTE TO PUT INITIATIVE ON NOVEMBER BALLOT Democratic process alive and well in San Luis Obispo County

(San Luis Obispo, Ca.) – Tuesday, July 13 the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to place the GE free initiative on the November ballot. There was a question of waiting three weeks for reports to come in from the Agricultural Commissioner but it was decided that the democratic process should move forward as quickly as possible.

Laura Lopez, a volunteer signature gatherer speaking during public comment, stated, “Your decision today is not about whether being GE Free is good for the county. It is, plain and simple, a matter of democratic process.”

Signature gathering for the initiative to keep SLO free of genetically engineered crops began on May 12th. In a little over six weeks, the all-volunteer signature gathering crew had accumulated an unprecedented 12,104 signatures from registered voters.

After submitting the petitions on June 28th, the County Clerk-Recorder performed a random sample test. The sample resulted in 122% of what was needed to qualify for the November ballot. The certified petition went to the Board on July 13th for further action. The Board could have ordered reports that would have potentially delayed the ballot initiative until March of 2006, but

in respect of the democratic process, 3 of the supervisors chose to let the voice of the people prevail.

Last March, Mendocino County became the first in the country to pass an initiative to keep their county free from genetically engineered crops. Vermont has recently passed a farmer protection act that will protect farmers from liabilities of genetic contamination. In April of 2004, Vermont passed a seed labeling law. Under the law, seeds that are genetically altered or engineered must be labeled as such after Oct. 1. Seed manufacturers must report their total sales in the state to the Secretary of Agriculture every Jan. 15.

Marin, Humboldt, Butte, and Sonoma Counties are all working to have initiatives on the November 2004 ballot. This united effort is moving towards keeping California free of genetically engineered crops. SLO GE Free wants to promote a vibrant future for SLO agriculture. Reporting from the BIO 2004 conference in San Francisco this spring, the New Zealand Herald said, “Investment in genetically modified food is drying up in the world’s biggest GM market, the United States, because consumers in the rest of the world are not willing to buy its products.” ○

Genetically Engineered Foods may Pose National Health Risk by Jeffrey M. Smith

In a study in the early 1990’s rats were fed genetically modified (GM) tomatoes. Well actually, the rats refused to eat them. They were force-fed. Several of the rats developed stomach lesions and seven out of forty died within two weeks. Scientists at the FDA who reviewed the study agreed that it did not provide a “demonstration of reasonable certainty of no harm.” In fact, agency scientists warned that GM foods in general might create unpredicted allergies, toxins, antibiotic resistant diseases, and nutritional problems. Internal FDA memos made public from a lawsuit reveal that the scientists urged their superiors to require long-term safety testing to catch these hard-to-detect side effects. But FDA political appointees,

including a former attorney for Monsanto in charge of policy, ignored the scientists’ warnings. The FDA does not require safety studies. Instead, if the makers of the GM foods claim that they are safe, the agency has no further questions. The GM tomato was approved in 1994.

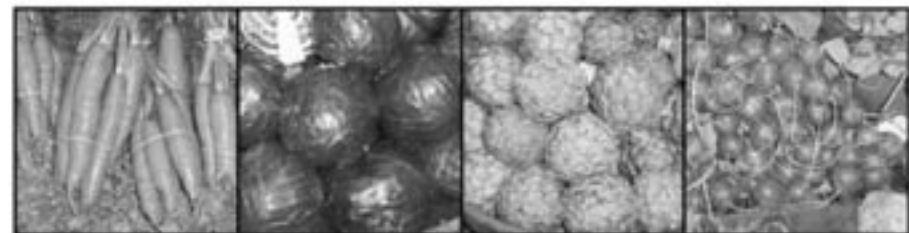
According to a July 27, 2004 report from the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the current system of blanket approval of GM foods by the FDA might not detect “unintended changes in the composition of the food.” The process of gene insertion, according to the NAS, could damage the host’s DNA with unpredicted consequences. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which released its findings a few days earlier, identified a long list of potentially dangerous side effects from GM foods that are not being evaluated. The ICMR called for a complete overhaul of existing regulations.

The safety studies conducted by the biotech industry are often dismissed by critics as superficial and designed to avoid finding problems. Tragically, scientists who voice their criticism, and those who have discovered incriminating evidence, have been threatened, stripped of responsibili-

Continued on page 24

THE FUTURE OF FOOD

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ties, denied funding or tenure, or fired. For example, a UK government-funded study demonstrated that rats fed a GM potato developed potentially pre-cancerous cell growth, damaged immune systems, partial atrophy of the liver, and inhibited development of their brains, livers and testicles. When the lead scientist went public with his concerns, he was promptly fired from his job after 35 years and silenced with threats of a lawsuit.

Americans eat genetically modified foods everyday. Although the GM tomato has been taken off the market, millions of acres of soy, corn, canola, and cotton have had foreign genes inserted into their DNA. The new genes allow the crops to survive applications of herbicide, create their own pesticide, or both. While there are only a handful of published animal safety studies, mounting evidence, which needs to be followed up, suggests that these foods are not safe.

Rats fed GM corn had problems with blood cell formation. Those fed GM soy had problems with liver cell formation, and the

livers of rats fed GM canola were heavier. Pigs fed GM corn on several Midwest farms developed false pregnancies or sterility. Cows fed GM corn in Germany died mysteriously. And twice the number of chickens died when fed GM corn compared to those fed natural corn.

Soon after GM soy was introduced to the UK, soy allergies skyrocketed by 50 percent. Without follow-up tests, we can't be sure if genetic engineering was the cause, but there are plenty of ways in which genetic manipulation can boost allergies.

A gene from a Brazil nut inserted into soybeans made the soy allergenic to those who normally react to Brazil nuts. GM soy currently consumed in the US contains a gene from bacteria. The inserted gene creates a protein that was never before part of the human food supply, and might be allergenic.

Sections of that protein are identical to those found in shrimp and dust mite allergens. According to criteria recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), this fact should have disqualified GM soy from approval.

The sequence of the gene that was inserted into soy has inexplicably rearranged over

time. The protein it creates is likely to be different than the one intended, and was never subject to any safety studies. It may be allergenic or toxic.

The process of inserting the foreign gene damaged a section of the soy's own DNA, scrambling its genetic code. This mutation might interfere with DNA expression or create a new, potentially dangerous protein.

The most common allergen in soy is called trypsin inhibitor. GM soy contains significantly more of this compared with natural soy.

The only human feeding study ever conducted showed that the gene inserted into soybeans spontaneously transferred out of food and into the DNA of gut bacteria. This has several serious implications. First, it means that the bacteria inside our intestines, newly equipped with this foreign gene, may create the novel protein inside of us. If it is allergenic or toxic, it may affect us for the long term, even if we give up eating GM soy.

The same study verified that the promoter, which scientists attach to the inserted gene to permanently switch it on, also transferred to gut bacteria. Research on this promoter suggests that it might unintentionally switch on other genes in the DNA permanently. This could create an overproduction of allergens, toxins, carcinogens, or antinutrients. Scientists also theorize that the promoter might switch on dormant viruses embedded in the DNA or generate mutations.

Unfortunately, gene transfer from GM food might not be limited to our gut bacteria. Preliminary results show that the promoter also transferred into rat organs, after they were fed only a single GM meal.

This is only a partial list of what may go wrong with a single GM food crop. The list for others may be longer. Take for example, the corn inserted with a gene that creates its own pesticide. We eat that pesticide, and plenty of evidence suggests that it is not as benign as the biotech proponents would have us believe. Preliminary evidence, for example, shows that thirty-nine Philipinos living next to a pesticide-producing cornfield developed skin, intestinal, and respiratory reactions while the corn was pollinating. Tests of their blood also showed an immune response to the pesticide. Consider what might happen if the gene that produces the pesticide were to transfer from the corn we eat into our gut bacteria. It could theoretically transform our intestinal

flora into living pesticide factories.

GM corn and most GM crops are also inserted with antibiotic resistant genes. The ICMR, along with the American Medical Association, the WHO, and organizations worldwide, have expressed concern about the possibility that these might transfer to pathogenic bacteria inside our gut. They are afraid that it might create new, antibiotic resistant super-diseases. The defense that the biotech industry used to counter these fears was that the DNA was fully destroyed during digestion and therefore no such transfer of genes was possible. The human feeding study described above, published in February 2004, overturned this baseless assumption.

No one monitors human health impacts of GM foods. If the foods were creating health problems in the US population, it might take years or decades before we identified the cause. One epidemic in the 1980's provides a chilling example. A new disease was caused by a brand of the food supplement L-tryptophan, which had been created through genetic modification and contained tiny traces of contaminants. The disease killed about 100 Americans and caused sickness or disability in about 5-10,000 others. The only reason that doctors were able to identify that an epidemic was occurring, was because the disease had three simultaneous characteristics: it was rare, acute, and fast acting. Even then it was nearly missed entirely.

Studies show that the more people learn about GM foods, the less they trust them. In Europe, Japan, and other regions, the press has been far more open about the potential dangers of genetic manipulation. Consequently, consumers there demand that their food supply be GM-free and manufacturers comply. But in the US, most people believe they have never eaten a GM food in their lives (even though they consume them daily). Lacking awareness, complacent consumers have been the key asset for the biotech industry in the US. As a result, millions of Americans are exposed to the potential dangers, and children are most at risk. Perhaps the revelations in the reports released on opposite sides of the planet will awaken consumers as well as regulators, and GM foods on the market will be withdrawn.

To become more informed of the dangers of GM foods, to download a letter to food manufacturers, and to learn how to avoid buying and eating GM foods, see www.seedsofdeception.com.

Jeffrey M. Smith is the author of Seeds of Deception: Exposing Industry and Government Lies about the Safety of the Genetically Engineered Foods You're Eating, and the Director of the Institute for Responsible Technology.

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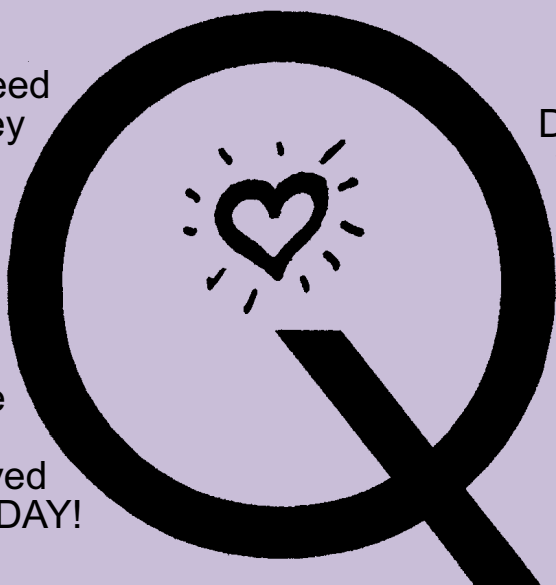
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"What you are seeing is not just a consolidation of seed companies, it's really a consolidation of the entire food chain."

- R. Fraley, Monsanto

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Keep SLO free of genetically engineered crops.
Vote YES on Measure Q!

FAQs

What is Genetic Engineering?

Genetic engineering usually involves taking genes from one species and inserting them into another in an attempt to transfer a desired trait or character. With these molecular techniques, scientists are able to take DNA from any species — bacteria, viruses, insects, animals or even humans, and engineer them into another organism.

A good example is the “pharmaceutical” rice with human genes that Ventria Biosciences wanted to plant in SLO and 8 other California counties.

Haven't we been genetically engineering plants and animals for thousands of years?

The industry likes to say this in order to confuse people. The fact is that traditional breeding and hybridization are completely different to genetic engineering (GE). With traditional breeding it is possible to cross a rose with another rose to get a new variety, but it is not possible to cross a rose with a potato or a mouse.

GE, on the other hand, refers to a new set of molecular techniques that have only really been developed over the last 20 or 30 years. The first product was introduced commercially in 1994.

What would a ban on genetic engineering mean if it became law?

Measure Q states “It shall be unlawful for any person or entity to propagate, cultivate, raise, or grow genetically engineered organisms in San Luis Obispo County.”† The intent is to prohibit the growing of GE crops and animals within SLO agriculture.

The ordinance does not apply to city or state lands within the county.† As a result, Cal Poly would be exempt.

The ordinance also explicitly exempts for scientific research conducted in a University environment on County lands.

Measure Q would also not affect any laboratories doing research.

Does YES! Q stand in the way of progress?

Genetic engineering isn't the path to progress. Other techniques that use genetics and biotechnology, like marker-assisted breeding, can solve real problems like Pierce's Disease, drought tolerance and increased nutrition without the risks of GE.

Unknown threats to our economy, liability problems, health concerns, and the patenting of living organisms as ‘ecorporate inventions’ do not constitute progress.

What are the GE foods on the market in the US?

The following genetically engineered plants are approved for sale in the US: herbicide-resistant canola, radicchio, corn, cotton, and soybeans; insect-resistant corn, cotton and potatoes; virus-resistant papaya, potato and squash; canola designed to produce high concentrations of lauric acid; and tomatoes engineered to delay their ripening, or have thicker skins.

The most common genetically engineered crops are corn, soybeans, cotton and canola.

How will YES! Q help the SLO economy?

Our U.S. and international trading partners are demanding GE free crops.† Having pure crops will ensure a market advantage for our county's \$529 million agricultural economy.

The American Farm Bureau estimates that U.S. exporters have lost about \$300 million per year because of GE corn.

Will YES! Q increase taxes?

NO. Only San Luis Obispo County voters can authorize an increase in taxes.

Is genetically engineered food safety tested?

There is no long-term safety testing of genetically engineered food. No evidence from human trials for either

toxicity or allergy testing is required. No independent checks of the company's claims are required.

These regulatory guidelines for the testing of GE food are based on the theory of ‘substantial equivalence’. According to this principle, selected chemical characteristics are compared between a GE product and any variety within the same species. If the two are grossly similar, the GE product does not need to be rigorously tested on the assumption that it is no more dangerous than the non-GE equivalent.

It has become clear, however, as a result of thousands of pages of internal documents that were released during a lawsuit filed by a number of public interest groups against the FDA, that this policy is in fact inconsistent with the views of many of the FDA's own scientists.

FDA microbiologist Dr. Louis Pribyl: “There is a profound difference between the types of unexpected effects from traditional breeding and genetic engineering...” Similarly, Dr. E.J. Matthews of the FDA's Toxicology Group warned that “..."

genetically modified plants could ... contain unexpected high concentrations of plant toxicants...” and cautioned that some of these toxicants could be unexpected and could “...be uniquely different chemicals that are usually expressed in unrelated plants.”

But no one's fallen over dead from eating genetically engineered food, right?

Proponents of genetic engineering often make comments such as: “We've been eating genetically engineered food for years in the United States and there have been no problems, not even a sniffle”. Well — how on earth would we know? Without any scientific studies, without any epidemiological testing being done (e.g. following people who've eaten genetically engineered food over years, comparing them with a control group of people who have not eaten GE food, taking blood samples etc) how would we know if people are being affected?† Many scientists feel that we would need to study the cumulative effects of eating genetically engineered food over years to know if we are being affected.

Don't we have a responsibility to grow GE food to feed the world?

We are already producing one and a half times the amount of food needed to provide everyone in the world with an adequate and nutritious diet; yet one in seven people is suffering from hunger. Every day 25,000 people die from hunger.

Statement signed by 24 delegates to the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation from 18 African countries: “We . . . strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us. We do not believe that such companies or gene technologies will help our farmers to produce the food that is needed in the 21st century. On the contrary, we think it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia and that it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves.”

Don't genetically engineered crops have higher yields?

NO.† A number of other studies contradict industry claims that crops have higher yields. Ed Oplinger, for example, Professor of Agronomy at the University of Wisconsin, has been conducting performance trials for soybean varieties for the past 25 years. His comparison of yields in the 12 states

that grow 80 per cent of the soybeans in the United States show that, on average, the yields of genetically engineered soybeans were 4 per cent lower than conventional varieties.

How would farmers in SLO County be affected if GE crops were allowed?

If GE crops were grown in San Luis Obispo County:

Farmers could have their crops contaminated with DNA from genetically engineered sources

Farmers would suffer losses in sales and in the well-earned trust of the purity of crops grown in this county

SLO residents would lose the right to buy locally grown produce that was free of contamination from genetically engineered crops.

How could genetic contamination happen?

Contamination can occur at many points in the agricultural production system. It can occur in the production and delivery of seed, via cross-pollination while the crop is growing, and during harvest, milling, storing and processing. After just a few years of widespread planting of GE corn, soy and canola, dozens of incidents of contamination prove that pollen and seed from GE crops cannot be contained.

How will YES! Q affect our privacy?

It won't. This ordinance does not mean there will be snooping around on people's land. Plants and animals could be inspected as they enter the county.

One thing that we can be sure of if this ordinance does not pass is that there will be intrusion by the industry into our private lives. Pinkerton private detective agency has been hired by Monsanto to check that farmers across North America are not saving seeds.

A free phone hotline was set up to encourage farmers to tell on their neighbors for seed saving.

By late 1998, more than 475 farmers in the United States and Canada had already been sued by Monsanto or are awaiting lawsuits for allegedly breaking their contracts — including farmers who state that they have never grown genetically engineered crops and that their crops were contaminated by neighboring farms. It was also company policy to broadcast radio advertisements in which they name farmers who have been caught saving seed.



Many in the US and around the world are concerned about and are actively opposing GE crops. Mounting evidence is also showing that:

- GE foods are increasing the likelihood of new food allergens or novel toxins being introduced into our food supply.
- GE crops are leading to increased pesticide use and are harming beneficial insects, earthworms and birds.
- GE crops are threatening both conventional and organic farmers as a result of genetic contamination, costing them billions of dollars in lost export markets.

engineered (GE) foods, and governments are responding by instituting restrictive growing guidelines, labeling laws, importation regulations, and, in some cases moratoria or bans. Consumer concerns include:

Human Health Effects — Many independent scientists have raised concerns about the potential hazards of genetic engineering and the need for a rigorous science-based approach in evaluating the food safety of biotech foods.

Lack of Regulation — The US Food and Drug Administration has required no independent safety testing before

What is "Pharming"?

Pharming is the use of genetically engineered (GE) crops to produce pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and other non-food products. Genes from other species (sometimes humans) are inserted into plants, causing them to produce new proteins which are extracted and purified after harvest, and used as experimental human and animal drugs or industrial chemicals. Though no plant-made pharmaceuticals have successfully come to market, approximately 400 pharm crops are in the research stage, producing drugs such as contraceptives, blood thinners, growth hormones, and vaccines for animals and humans.

Corn is by far the most common pharm crop, accounting for over two-thirds of all pharmaceutical plantings in the US; soy, rice, wheat, and tobacco have also been used. While traditional methods of producing pharmaceuticals involve the genetic manipulation of organisms under strictly controlled and confined laboratory conditions, pharming is typically conducted out-of-doors, where it is impossible to contain the experimental crop or control the many factors that influence crop production.

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from <http://www.thefutureoffood.com/biblio.html>

Important quotes:

"We are confronted with the most powerful technology the world has ever known, and it is being rapidly deployed with almost no thought whatsoever to its consequences."

Dr Suzanne Wuerthele, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) toxicologist

"All policymakers must be vigilant to the possibility of research data being manipulated by corporate bodies and of scientific colleagues being seduced by the material charms of industry. Trust is no defence against an aggressively deceptive corporate sector."

The Lancet
from <http://www.gmwatch.org>

Some Headlines and their urls: Scientists Expose Monsanto's Fraudulent Safety-Testing Data for GE Soybeans

<http://tinyurl.com/454hq>

Monsanto's Public Relations Boomerang by Andy Zimmerman How Monsanto attempted to silence critics

<http://www.greens.org/s-r/18/18-11.html>

Venezuela: Chavez Dumps Monsanto

<http://tinyurl.com/6g7vs>

Monsanto: THE model (bad) corporation

<http://tinyurl.com/5lt8p>

For more stunning articles go to the Monsanto Monitor

<http://www.groundup.org/mm/mm1a.htm>

Upcoming Events/ Trainings:

- 9/7 Jeffrey Smith talk @ Grover Beach community center, 7:30-8:30pm
- 9/8 Jeffrey Smith talk @ Ludwick center 7-8pm w/Book signing to follow
- 9/17 The film "Future of Food" will be in Paso Robles, 7pm (see ad in this special insert)

Need help posting flyers around the County. Please call 924-1393 or go to www.slogefree.org for updates of events and trainings.

COUNTY ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE GROWING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED ORGANISMS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Section 1. Finding. The people of San Luis Obispo County wish to protect the county's agriculture, environment, economy, and private property from genetic pollution by genetically engineered organisms until all the risks associated with these organisms are fully understood.

Section 2. Prohibition. It shall be unlawful for any person or entity to propagate, cultivate, raise, or grow genetically engineered organisms in San Luis Obispo County.

Section 3. Exemptions. Nothing in this Ordinance shall make it unlawful for (1) a fully accredited college or university to engage in scientific research or education using genetically engineered organisms under secure, enclosed laboratory conditions, taking precautions to prevent contamination of the outside environment, or (2) any licensed health care practitioner to provide any diagnosis, care or treatment to any patient. For the complete Ordinance, please go to <http://tinyurl.com/43nbf>.

- The use of food crops to produce pharmaceuticals presents a threat to the human food supply due to the impossibility of preventing contamination.

GE foods enter the food supply, and no notification of the commercialization of new GE foods. According to the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, "the US government's oversight of biotech crops once they have been approved is inadequate and has potential vulnerabilities." 1

Ecological Impacts — Evidence of environmental hazards is mounting, including loss of biodiversity due to contamination, harm to insects and other wildlife, and increased pesticide use.

Consolidation of the Food System — The patenting of living organisms such as plants that provide food, a basic human need, gives too much control to only a few large corporations dominating the biotech industry. The motivation of these companies — to maximize profit — is increasingly at odds with the rights of farmers, consumers, and the sustainability of agriculture and the environment.

Liability & Legal Issues

The use of patented genetically engineered (GE) crops presents specific legal risks that farmers must evaluate. Since courts are just beginning to address the complex legal and regulatory issues associated with these crops, the legal liabilities are still unknown. Class action, farmer liability and antitrust lawsuits currently underway may clear up some of these issues. This fact sheet outlines the legal considerations for farmers considering planting GE seed, as well as the risks for all farmers that can arise from GE crop contamination, whether or not they buy GE seed.

Consumer Concerns

Consumers around the world are rejecting genetically

