



World Prout Assembly

Economy of the People, For the People and By the People!
Put Economic Power in the Hands of the People!

Moralists of the world - unite!



Victory! Mendocino County First County in Nation to Ban the Growing of Genetically Altered Crops and Animals

This victory did not happen today or yesterday. It occurred early in 2004. But, World Prout Assembly deems it important to spread the news of this great victory. Mendocino County, California is an example for all the other thousands of counties in America, because the people of Mendocino County put up a fight and they won their battle against huge odds - the multinational agri-corporations and their supporters (Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow AgroSciences, Dupont, Bayer, California Plant Health Assoc., CropLife International, Hoover Institute, Hudson Institute, Center for Consumer Freedom, Council for Agricultural Science & Technology, Univ. of California Biotech Outreach Program, California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, the Federal and State government, and last but not least, the World Trade Organization and Free Trade Agreements). We all need to learn how they fought and how they won their struggle!

Website: <http://www.gmofreemendo.com/index.html>

World Prout Assembly Editorial note: Mendocino County is an example for all the other thousands of counties in America because the people of Mendocino County put up a fight and they won their battle against huge odds - the multinational agri-corporations. We all need to learn how they fought and how they won their struggle!

Despite spending \$55 on each NO vote, industry-fueled opposition is crushed.

March 3, 2004

Ukiah, (Mendocino County) California -- In a sweeping victory, Mendocino County yesterday (March 2) became the first county in the nation to ban the growing of genetically altered crops and animals.

Mendocino County voters defeated the world's largest producers of genetically engineered foods and seed, which pumped a record \$621,000 into a county of 47,000 voters.

Under the guise of CropLife America, Monsanto, DuPont, Dow Chemical and a consortium of other biotech multinational corporations shattered spending records in this small agricultural county.

But CropLife America was no match for thousands of Mendocino County farmers, business owners, vintners and families who joined the largest, most successful grass roots campaign the county has ever seen to fight the encroachment of genetically altered crops.

"These multi-billion dollar corporations underestimated the savvy and determination of Mendocino County voters," said Els Cooperrider of Ukiah, a retired medical scientist and Ukiah business owner who helped spearhead the citizen-led initiative. "This is just the beginning of the revolution," she said. "We're the first county in the U.S. to prohibit the growing of genetically altered crops and animals -- but we won't be the last."

Mendocino County's victory has already inspired nine other California counties to enact similar measures.

In addition, Mendocino County's victory is part of a coast-to-coast act of defiance against the corporate stranglehold of America's farmland, as farmers from California to Vermont, Maine and Hawaii and the Midwest band together to reject genetically altered crops.

"Our victory in Mendocino County is a simply the catalyst for counties all over the nation to protect their agriculture, food system and local economy," said Doug Mosel, spokesperson for the Yes on Measure H campaign. "No amount of money can replace the love and commitment of people who care passionately about the

place they live. This is a turning point in the corporate domination of the food system and a reclaiming of responsibility for agriculture at a local level."

What are GMOs?

A GMO, a Genetically Modified Organism, is a man-made organism created in a laboratory and patented by a corporation or the USDA. GMOs are created by a process called genetic engineering.

How are GMOs different from traditional cross-breeding?

We've all heard of creating hybrids by crossing a broccoli and a cauliflower, or two varieties of roses, or two breeds of dogs.

But a GMO is completely different. It is created when a gene from a totally unrelated species is shot into the genetic material of another species.

Here are some examples of GMOs that have been grown in the U.S.:

Rat and human genes in trout
Spider genes in goats
Human genes in corn or rice
Mouse and human genes in potatoes
Fish genes in tomatoes
Cow or human genes in salmon
These combinations never occur in nature.

Scientists worldwide now admit that the rush to sell genetically engineered products has put people's health, property, and the environment at risk.

This is why 30 countries have banned, or propose to ban GMO crops, including Japan and many European countries. In the U.S., Gerber baby foods, Trader Joe's, even McDonalds and Burger King, are now refusing GMO corn, potatoes, and other ingredients.

What are GMO's? – Frequently asked Questions

A self-defense guide against million dollar industry PR campaigns

What is DNA?

Every plant and animal is made of cells, each of which has a nucleus. Inside every nucleus there are strings of DNA, and these strings of DNA are organised into structures called chromosomes.

What is a gene?

Genes are sequences of DNA, inherited blueprints for the thousands of proteins that form the building blocks of all life, from bacteria to humans. Proteins make enzymes, which carry out all the bodily processes, like digestion of food, that keep us alive.

· Quote by Dr Michael Antoniou, a molecular biologist who specialises in the clinical applications of genetic engineering: "Genes are arranged along the DNA in groups or 'families'. The function of a given gene in a group is dependent on all the other genes that are present within the same family. Furthermore, the genetic activity in one family of genes can affect the function of genes in other groups of genes. It is also clear that genes and the proteins that they give rise to, have co-evolved together to form an extremely intricate, interconnected network of finely balanced functions, the complexities of which we are only just beginning to understand and appreciate."

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. An example would be selecting a gene which leads to the production of a chemical with antifreeze properties from an arctic fish, and splicing it into a potato or strawberry in an attempt to make it frost-resistant.

Haven't we been genetically modifying 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 hybridisation are completely different to genetic engineering (also called genetic modification). In 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. Even when species that may seem to be closely related do succeed in breeding, the offspring are usually infertile—a horse, for example, can mate with a donkey, but the offspring (a mule) is sterile.

Genetic Engineering or genetic modification, 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 ever field testing of a genetically engineered plant was in 1983). 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.

Example: Biotech company Nexia has been engineering goats with a gene from a spider that leads to the production of the spider silk protein (the stuff that spiders' webs are made of – of interest to the industry because it is so strong). The genetically engineered goats can then be milked for this spider protein.

Example: Biotech company epicyte has been conducting field trials of corn engineered with genes taken from humans, so that the corn contains a rare class of human antibodies that attack sperm. The idea is to develop the corn as a plant-gel contraceptive that kills sperm on contact.

Is genetic engineering precise?

The industry likes to suggest that genetic engineering is very precise. The fact is that the technology of genetic engineering is currently very crude. It is not possible to insert a new gene with any accuracy, and the gene transfer may disrupt the tightly controlled network of DNA in an organism.

Current understanding of the way in which genes are regulated is extremely limited, and any change to the DNA of an organism at any point can have side effects that are impossible to predict or control. The new gene could, for example, alter chemical reactions within the cell or disturb cell functions. This could lead to instability, the creation of new toxins or allergens, and changes in nutritional value.

Example: When genetically engineered coho salmon were compared to a control group of non-transgenic coho salmon, it was found that the genetic engineering had affected the activity of a number of non-target genes in the transgenic fish. These changes included an increased amount of the protein parvalbumin-b in the transgenic salmon, a protein that has been identified as a major food allergen in fish

Quote by Richard Lewontin, Professor of Genetics at Harvard University: "We have such a miserably poor understanding of how an organism develops from its DNA that I would be surprised if we don't get one rude shock after another."

Quote by Dr. George Wald, Professor Emeritus in Biology at Harvard University and Nobel laureate in medicine: "Up to now, living organisms have evolved very slowly, and new forms have had plenty of time to settle in. Now whole proteins will be transposed overnight into wholly new associations, with consequences no one can foretell, either for the host organism, or their neighbors. It is all too big and is happening too fast. So this, the central problem, remains almost unconsidered. It presents probably the largest ethical problem that science has ever had to face. Our morality up to now has been to go ahead without restriction to learn all that we can about nature. Restructuring nature was not part of the bargain. For going ahead in this direction may be not only unwise, but dangerous."

Isn't genetically engineered food thoroughly safety tested?

There is no long-term safety testing of genetically engineered food. Short-term animal feeding trials are conducted in some cases. The research is done by the biotech companies themselves. No evidence from human trials for either toxicity or allergy testing is required. No independent checks of the company's claims are required.

Quote by Phil Angell, the director of corporate communications at Monsanto: "Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible."

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.

Quote from the scientific body 'The Royal Society of Canada': "Substantial equivalence does not function as a scientific basis for the application of a safety standard, but rather as a decision procedure for facilitating the passage of new products, GM and non-GM, through the regulatory process."

But no-one's fallen over dead from eating genetically engineered food are they?

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 on earth 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.

Quote from British Medical Association "Antibiotic resistance, the threat of new allergic reactions and the unknown hazards of transgenic DNA mean that on health grounds alone the impact of GMO's must be fully assessed before they are released. The environmental implications and the long term effects on human health cannot be safely predicted at this stage and caution must therefore prevail."

Quote by Professor Joe Cummins, professor emeritus of genetics at the University of Western Ontario: "The failure to test may provide some protection in the courts against lawsuits by those maimed or crippled by the foods. Most ill effects from food and allergies are not easily quantified until after the disaster. At best, there may be a small but marked increase in autoimmune disease and allergy associated with the foods. At worst, major outbreaks of illness could be observed and will be difficult to trace to the unlabelled foods."

Hasn't the FDA said that genetically engineered food is safe?

In 1992, the US Food and Drug Administration published a policy statement on genetically engineered foods, which stated that it "is not aware of any information showing that foods derived by these new methods differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way."

It determined, therefore, that most of the foods produced by genetic engineering should be regarded and regulated as if they were foods produced by traditional methods. This means that, except in certain cases, such as when there are major changes in nutrient composition or incorporation of specific proteins known to cause allergic reactions, genetically engineered foods in the US do not require a pre-market approval process, public notification, or labeling. The industry decides when and whether to consult with the FDA, and it is they who conduct safety tests for their own products, notifying the FDA only if they suspect a problem. Thus it is the very companies who stand to profit who decide whether or not these products are hazardous.

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, for example, stated: "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."

The numerous internal critiques of the proposed policy were summed up by Dr. Linda Kahl, FDA compliance officer, who protested that the agency was "... trying to fit a square peg into a round hole ... [by] trying to force an ultimate conclusion that there is no difference between foods modified by genetic engineering and foods modified by traditional breeding practices."

"The processes of genetic engineering and traditional breeding are different," she declared, "and according to the technical experts in the agency, they lead to different risks."

Quote by Dr Suzanne Wuerthele, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) toxicologist: "This technology is being promoted, in the face of concerns by respectable scientists and in the face of data to the contrary, by the very agencies which are supposed to be protecting human health and the environment. The bottom line in my view is that 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."

What are the GMO 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. There is also a genetically engineered hormone, BGH, which is commonly injected into dairy cows in the United States.

Why isn't genetically engineered food labeled in the US?

Examples from around the world show that when genetically engineered food is labeled, people vote with their wallets and boycott food containing genetically engineered ingredients. The industry has lobbied hard to prevent labeling in the US, spending \$6 million to defeat a citizens labeling initiative in Oregon.

Countries around the world with labeling include Australia and New Zealand, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, all 15 countries of the EU, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Taiwan and Thailand.

Statement by 21 scientists including Professor Brian Goodwin, Professor Jacqueline McGlade, Professor Peter Saunders and Professor Richard Lacey: "With genetic engineering familiar foods could become metabolically dangerous or even toxic."

Quote by Dr Vyvyan Howard: expert in fetal and infant toxico-pathology: "Swapping genes between organisms can produce unknown toxic effects and allergies that are most likely to affect children."

Don't GMOs reduce the use of pesticides?

A 2003 study which analysed the USDA's own statistics since 1996 found that pesticide use has actually increased with the planting of genetically engineered crops. This is hardly surprising – the companies selling genetically engineered crops own 60% of the global pesticide market. These are not companies that want to see farmers using less chemicals, these are companies that want to profit by selling more of their chemicals.

More than 70% of the genetically engineered crops that are grown are crops engineered to be resistant to these companies' own-brand chemicals. This means that a farmer can spray the field with the chemicals without harming the genetically engineered crop.

Herbicide-resistant genes are being transferred from genetically engineered crops to weeds via cross-pollination, and higher and higher doses of chemicals are being needed to have the desired effect, leading to a rise in herbicide use.

Quote by Graham Wynne, Chief Executive of the UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: "The ability to clear fields of all weeds using powerful herbicides which can be sprayed onto GE herbicide-resistant crops will result in farmlands devoid of wildlife and spell disaster for millions of already declining birds and plants."

What is genetic pollution?

Once released, the new living organisms made by genetic engineering are able to interact with other forms of life, reproduce, transfer their characteristics and mutate in response to environmental influences. In many cases they can never be recalled or contained. The probability that one or more of these releases could cause serious ecological harm increases all the time as more and more products are approved.

Genes engineered into plants and animals can be transferred to other species. For example, genes from GM crops, fish or trees may move into the gene pools of related species in the wild. The introduction of genetically engineered organisms into complex ecosystems may bring about effects that we are unable to control.

Quote by Erwin Chargaff, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry, Columbia University, and discoverer of 'Chargaff's Rules', which laid the scientific foundation for the discovery of the DNA double helix: "I have the feeling that science has transgressed a barrier that should have remained inviolate . . . you cannot recall a new form of life . . . It will survive you and your children and your children's children. An irreversible attack on the biosphere is something so unheard of, so unthinkable to previous generations, that I could only wish that mine had not been guilty of it."

Example: Researchers at Purdue University in the US used computer models and experimental research to study the potential effects of the release of a small number of GE fish into the wild. They estimated that just 60 genetically engineered fish, which were larger and more likely to mate, and yet which had less viable offspring,

released into a wild population of 60 000 could lead to the extinction of the wild fish within 40 generations.

Quote by geneticist Dr Ricarda Steinbrecher "To use genetic engineering to manipulate plants, release them into the environment and introduce them into our food chain is scientifically premature, unsafe and irresponsible."

What would measure H mean if it became law?

Measure H would ban the growing of genetically engineered plants or animals in Mendocino county.

Wouldn't this harm the Mendocino economy?

On the contrary. If you compare what is happening around the world, you'll notice that countries such as the United States who are growing genetically engineered crops have lost literally billions of dollars worth of exports, because all over the world markets are closing to genetically engineered food. On the other hand, countries and regions that are growing produce that is guaranteed not to be genetically engineered are having record sales. Even here in the United States, non-genetically engineered crops sell at a higher price.

Would Measure H lead to an increase in taxes?

This initiative does not add a single cent to taxes in the county. Only Mendocino county voters can authorise an increase in taxes.

How would farmers in Mendocino county be affected if GMO's were allowed?

If GMOs were grown in Mendocino county, farmers would have their crops contaminated with DNA from genetically engineered sources. They would then suffer losses in sales and in the well-earned trust of the purity of crops grown in this county, and would no longer have the economic advantage in international and national markets of guaranteed GE-free produce. Mendocino residents would also lose the right to buy locally grown produce that was free of contamination by DNA from genetically engineered crops.

The industry often suggests that this kind of thing doesn't happen. One industry executive testifying in a lawsuit said that she thought "you would be more likely to get pregnant from a toilet seat than for a genetically engineered crop to contaminate a neighbouring farm." Obviously she chose to ignore basic biological facts, as well as the experience of contamination over the past 7 years across North America, where weeds have now taken on DNA from up to 3 different types of genetically engineered crops.

How could genetic contamination happen?

Genetic contamination happens in one of three ways:

1. Through cross-pollination – wind or insects can carry pollen over large distances. E.g. Genetically engineered corn could contaminate corn being grown on farms or in backyard gardens.
2. Mechanical contamination – through mixing of crops in the silo, plant material left on farm equipment etc
3. Through the passing of DNA from plant material into the soil where it can be picked up by soil bacteria

Example: In 1998, Frank Gebhard and Kornelia Smalla published laboratory studies which demonstrated that gene transfer could occur from GE sugar beet to commonly occurring soil bacteria called Acenitobacter. It is possible that insects, birds or other animals could pick up bacteria from the soil and transfer them wherever they go, potentially opening up another route for gene transfer from genetically engineered crops. In another experiment, Gebhard and Smalla found that genes which had been engineered into sugar beet were still present in the soil two years after the beet had been shredded and ploughed back into the earth.

Don't genetically engineered crops have higher yields?

According to Monsanto, in 1998 its Roundup-resistant soybeans averaged 43.1 bushels per acre, beating conventional growers by 4.5 bushels. A number of other studies, however, do not support these conclusions. 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.

Quote by Bill Christison, President of the US National Family Farm Coalition: "The promise was that you could use less chemicals and produce a greater yield. But let me tell you none of this is true . . . they wanted us to sign a production contract which limited what we could do with our production. It is our practice to produce our own seed for the following year's planting. Because the contract forbids this, it would have cost us three times as much for seed. And then there's a problem of paying for a patenting fee of several dollars per bag. . . Then, we found GMO seed actually produces a lower yield because of the varieties that had been altered. The acceptance of GMO's by the US farmer is predicated by the fact that farmers are hard pressed to survive financially, and have become acclimated to the idea that new technology is good technology."

How could genetic contamination affect land prices in Mendocino county?

This is unknown, the only information that we know of that is relevant to this question comes from the UK, where in a report to the British government, the Royal Institute of Chartered said that the growing of genetically engineered crops could reduce the value of agricultural land and potentially leave farmers open to legal action. The institute also said that the presence of transgenic crops could become as relevant to purchasing a piece of land as any past chemical contamination, or a history of crop disease.

Wouldn't we be protected by liability if anything went wrong with a GMO?

One of the reasons there is so little trust in the industry assertions that genetic engineering is absolutely safe, is that the biotech companies have lobbied hard against liability provisions when countries around the world have tried to introduce it. If the industry is so sure that these products are safe, then why are they not happy to take full liability if anything goes wrong?

There is case after case of this kind of double standard by the industry. For example, when it comes to the safety testing or labelling of genetically engineered food, the biotech companies say that genetically engineered food is the same as food produces by any other breeding method. Yet when it comes to patenting, biotech companies say that GMO's are unique, they're different, and that's why they have the right to patent them as their own inventions.

Quote by the world's second largest reinsurance company, Swiss Rye: "For the insurance industry, genetic engineering is potentially one of the most exposed technologies of the future . . . The risk profile of genetic engineering is extremely diversified and very difficult to anticipate. There is no clear conception of the risks accepted, so how can genetic engineering be insured? . . . Today we must accept that the one-sided acceptance of incalculable risks means that any participants in this insurance market run the risk of not only suffering heavy losses, but also of losing control over their exposure."

Won't Measure H lead to more intrusion into our private life?

Measure H does not mean there will be snooping around on people's land. Plants and animals will be inspected as they enter the county.

One thing that we can be sure of if Measure H does not pass, and if GE crops are grown in Mendocino county, is that there will be intrusion by the industry into our private lives. Pinkerton private detective agency, which used to supply employers with auxiliaries to break trade unions, was been hired by Monsanto to check that farmers across North America are not saving seeds. Saving seeds is forbidden under the 'Technology Use Agreement', which also allows the company to access farmers' land to take plant samples during a three-year period after the genetically engineered seed has been purchased. A free phone hotline was set up to encourage farmers to tell on their neighbours 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 neighbouring farms. It was also company policy to broadcast radio advertisements in which they name farmers who have been caught saving seed.

But don't we have a responsibility to grow GMO's 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. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out that if we are producing enough food, then there are social and political reasons why people are suffering from hunger. In order to feed the world the poor need access to inexpensive, sustainable agricultural technologies that can provide them with a diverse and varied diet. The last thing they need is increased corporate control of the food supply, expensive

fertilisers and chemicals, ecological hazards and patented seeds that they are not allowed to save for the following year.

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."

Isn't it standing in the way of progress to oppose GMO's?

Progress towards what? Many people feel that new threats to the environment and human health, potentially irreversible forms of pollution, and the patenting of living organisms as 'corporate inventions' do not constitute progress. Progress depends on your point of view, and maybe it would be progress to say Yes on Measure H to protect our land, our farming, our economy and our food supply in Mendocino county.

A Selected Guide to GMOs on the Web

Alliance for Bio-Integrity, www.bio-integrity.org
Reports on their lawsuit to obtain mandatory safety testing and labeling of genetically engineered foods and on the performance of GMO crops.

American Corn Growers Association, www.acga.org
Information on the consequences of GMO crops for farmers in the U.S.

An excellent primer on GMOs and their implications for agriculture.

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture, www.calgefree.org
Website of the state-wide coalition to promote economically, agronomically and ecologically sustainable farming in California.

The Center for Ethics and Toxics, www.cetos.org
The website of the Biotechnology Project directed by Marc Lappe and Britt Bailey.

The Center for Food Safety, www.centerforfoodsafety.org
Information on the safety of GMO foods and crops and about genetically engineered fish.

Corporation Watch, www.corpwatch.org
Where to find background information on the corporations behind GMOs.

Council for Responsible Genetics, www.gene-watch.org
About the social, ethical and environmental implications of genetic technologies.

Cropchoice, www.cropchoice.com
An alternative news source for American farmers.

Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, www.foodfirst.org Information on how GMO crops affect hunger, poverty and farmers world-wide.

Listen to a recording of the June 23, 2003 Sacramento debate on Agriculture, Hunger, and Biotechnology, www.foodfirst.org/progs/global/ge/sactoministerial/debate.php

Institute of Science in Society, www.i-sis.org.uk
Extensive information on all aspects of biotechnology.

Keep Maine Free, www.keepmainefree.org
Reports on Monsanto legal action against labeling rBGH.

Network of Concerned Farmers, www.non-gm-farmers.com,
An Australian network of conventional and organic farmers who are concerned about the economic, environmental and social impacts of genetically modified crops.

Northern Plains Resource Council, www.nprcmt.org/ourwork
Organizing farmers in opposition to GMO wheat and in support of a local food system.

Organic Consumers Association, www.organicconsumers.org
A broad range of information on GMO foods and crops, with a regular news update, including reports on our Measure H campaign!

Percy Schmeiser, www.percyschmeiser.com
Everything you want to know about Percy's epic battle against Monsanto.

The Biotech Industry...

Brazil - Agriculture - January 2004

US Company Ads Vex Brazilians

Using emotionally-charged ads in the Brazilian media, American-based company Monsanto is trying to get the consumer to believe that transgenic production promotes food and environmental security, citing the benefits that biotechnology can bring. The commercials are getting a barrage of criticism.

"Imagine a world which preserves nature, the air, the rivers. Where we can produce more with fewer pesticides, without destroying the forests. Imagine a world with more food, with more nutritious food, and people with better health. Can you imagine it? Ah, but you never imagined that GMO's could help us do this. Have you ever thought of a better world? You should think like we do. A Monsanto initiative with the support of the Associação Brasileira de Nutrologia."

From a Monsanto ad campaign

The Campaign for a Brazil Free of GMO's now publicly manifests its opposition to the propaganda Monsanto has produced on Brazilian TV, radio and press regarding GMO's. With emotional appeal, Monsanto is trying to form public opinion based on a nonexistent relationship between transgenic production and the conservation of the environment. The commercial tries to get the consumer to believe that transgenic production promotes food and environmental security, citing the benefits that biotechnology can bring.

Let us analyze a few points of the advertising.

1. The commercial implies that transgenic production can help to "preserve nature, the air, the rivers." It is important to establish that there are two types of transgenic plants that are being produced commercially today. The first class makes up 75 percent of all transgenic plants. These plants are herbicide-resistant. In other words, with proper care, the farmer can spray as much herbicides over the fields as he needs, and all the plants except those that are transgenic will die. It is important to note here that Monsanto, which produces the seeds for these plants, also produces the herbicide to which these plants are resistant.

2. The second type makes up 17 percent of transgenic plants. These plants receive genes from a bacteria in the soil and then produce toxic insecticides. An insect eats part of the plant, then dies. The other 8 percent are a combination of these two technologies.

Up until now, no tests have shown that GMO's benefit nature, air or water. Quite the contrary. These plants tend to need a greater quantity of herbicides, thus contaminating even more nature. The second type of GMO's also kills beneficial insects, thus disturbing the balance of nature.

2. The propaganda goes on to insinuate that transgenics can produce more with less chemicals. According to studies done in the US, genetically modified soy beans produce 5-10 percent less than conventional soybeans. Concerning other types of plants, production has been less or at most equal to that of conventional crops.

As noted above, there has been no less use of chemicals in transgenic production. It is also relevant to note that the use of glyphosate (the main component of Monsanto's herbicide Round-Up) has tripled in the state of Rio Grande do Sul—exactly during the period when the cultivation of these illegal transgenic plants began to spread (1998-2001).

It is equally unacceptable to say that transgenic plants help to prevent deforestation. Most cultivation of GMO's (soy, corn and cotton) are export commodities and require vast areas of land. Large farmers continue to buy forest lands throughout Brazil in order to increase their production of soy.

3. The commercial implies that GMO's make for healthier food and healthier people. Concerning this claim, no country in the world has properly evaluated the effects of GMO's on people's health.

As if this were not enough, Monsanto is soliciting Anvisa (the Brazilian Food and Safety department) to increase by 50 percent the Maximum Limit of Residues (MLR) of glyphosate on its soybeans. In addition, Monsanto has refused to do environmental impact studies since 1998 when the Justice Department ordered the

company to do so. At the same time, Monsanto is fighting against a law which would require companies to label products which contain GMO's.

If Monsanto is so sure about the safety of transgenic plants, why do they refuse to do impact studies to evaluate the risks. Why are they trying to change Brazilian laws without doing any evaluations?

Good for Babies

4. We find it disturbing that in their TV ads Monsanto presents images of pregnant women and children, implying that GMO's are good for mothers and infants. In 2002, the Studies of the Royal Society of the United Kingdom recommended that special attention be given to transgenic food destined for babies because of the risks GMO's have: "Babies fed with a bottle might become undernourished if they are fed infant formula made with GMO's as there is inadequate regulation and regimented tests for transgenic foods" (Daily Telegraph, February 5, 2002)

5. Besides being deceitful, Monsanto is producing propaganda for products prohibited in the country. In spite of Provisionary Measures 113 and 131 which authorized the commercialization of transgenic soy, the sale of transgenic seeds continues to be prohibited by the Justice Department.

All this being the case, we urge the Brazilian authorities to suspend Monsanto's deceitful advertising and oblige the company to pay for ads which will correct their misinformation and present clearly the facts concerning transgenics.

This material was written by activists from Campanha por um Brasil Livre de Transgênicos and supplied by Sejup, which has its own Internet site: <http://www.oneworld.net/sejup>

Debunking the Myths

Do GMOs reduce pesticide use?

NO. A comprehensive 2003 study shows that GM crops planted in the US since 1996 have increased pesticide use by 50 million pounds.

Will GMOs end world hunger?

NO. University studies show that GMO crops produce significantly lower yields than natural varieties.

Furthermore, GMOs are patented and make it illegal for farmers worldwide to save seed as they have done for thousands of years.

Won't Measure H increase taxes and bureaucracy?

NO. Measure H will not create additional costs for enforcement because the Agricultural Commissioner already inspects every shipment of agricultural products that enter Mendocino County. Only Mendocino County voters can increase taxes.

Protect your health!

Protect our farms!
Protect our economy!

Protect our environment!

Protect your private property!

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December 30, 2003

GMO-FREE MENDOCINO WINS LAWSUIT AGAINST BIOTECH INDUSTRY

Ukiah, Mendocino County - In a sweeping victory for Mendocino's effort to ban the growing of genetically modified crops and food, a Superior Court judge refused today (Wednesday, Dec. 30) to change language in the upcoming March election ballot.

Earlier this month, California's largest consortium of biotechnology, agri-chemical corporations sued the County Elections Clerk as well as the proponents of Measure H - the citizen-led initiative to make Mendocino the first county in the nation to ban the growing of GMOs. The lawsuit launched by the industry consortium of

multinational corporations attempted to prevent Mendocino County voters from reading key ballot arguments in support of Measure H.

In today's ruling, Superior Court Judge Leonard J. LaCasse decided not to change a single word on the ballot in support of Measure H. His judgment clears the way for the election ballots to be printed in time for the March election - and uncensored.

"Judge LaCasse in his opinion recognized the effort for what it really was - an effort to keep the truth from the voters of Mendocino County," said Ukiah attorney Susan B. Jordan, who represented the Measure H citizen group pro bono. "Judge LaCasse endorsed the intelligence of the Mendocino County electorate and said they can read the arguments, and they can decide for themselves."

The group behind the lawsuit, the California Plant Health Association, represents some of the biggest names in GMO production and the world's leading producers of herbicides and pesticides including Monsanto Corporation, Dow AgroSciences, Bayer Corporation, Helena Chemical and DuPont.

The biotech industry's Sacramento-based law firm attempted to strike sections of the election ballot arguments in favor of Measure H before voters even had a chance to read the pamphlet.

For example, their attorney told Judge LaCasse that since GMO-contaminated wine is not yet on the shelves, Mendocino County voters should be prevented from reading that GMO-contaminated wine is unmarketable in Europe and Japan.

But after it was revealed in court that there are 30 laboratory trials of GMO-grapevines currently under development in California, it simply underscored the need for Measure H as protection for the future of Mendocino County's agricultural economy.

"These corporations don't care about Mendocino County," said Els Cooperrider, a local owner of the Ukiah Brewing Co. & Restaurant, who was named in the lawsuit. "They don't live here. They don't work here or own farms here," she said. "We care about protecting our local crops from future contamination from GMOs. These outside corporations only care about profit and their multi-billion dollar industry."

If approved by voters in the March election, Measure H will prohibit the "propagation, cultivation, raising and growing of genetically modified organisms in Mendocino County." It is not a labeling law. And Measure H does not affect food products found in the aisles of grocery stores or livestock feed.

The initiative has drawn the support of Mendocino County Sheriff Tony Craver, local physicians such as Dr. Marvin Trotter, who is Mendocino County's Public Health Director, and local families concerned about the untested health risks of GMOs.

In addition, some of the County's leading grape growers - both organic and conventional, endorse the measure including Dan Fetzer, Frey Vineyards, Roederer Estates and Hubert Germain-Robin of Redwood Valley's Germain-Robin, makers of world-renowned brandy and cognac.

www.nerage.org

www.gefreevt.org

www.biotechimc.org

www.non-gm-farmers.com

www.nffc.net

www.biodev.org

Last Updated May 2, 2005 7:20 AM

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Prout Assembly.

The World Prout Assembly is a non-profit organization affiliated with Proutist Universal Global Headquarters, Kolkata, India.

**One World, One Humanity, One
Family!**