



[WWW.GMFREEIRELAND.ORG](http://WWW.GMFREEIRELAND.ORG)

# GM-free Ireland

**BULLETIN • 1 OCTOBER 2005**

Irish politicians call for action.....	page 1
EC approves live GMO seeds.....	page 2
8 steps to prevent disaster.....	page 3
Percy Schmeiser interview.....	page 7
Background information on GT73	page 9
Useful resources.....	page 12
Please support GM-free Ireland....	page 16

## IRISH POLITICIANS CALL FOR ACTION TO PREVENT INVASION OF GMO SEEDS AND CROPS

The GM-free Ireland Network, the Irish Cattle and Sheepfarmers Association and Friends of the Earth Ireland participated in a parliamentary debate on GMO issues in Leinster House on 15 June, organised by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Local Government. Following this discussion, both committees gave unanimous cross-party support for the sovereign right of EU member states to ban specific GM products when there are questions over their safety, and urged Environment Minister Dick Roche to support the existing bans put in place by other EU member states. A growing number of Senators and TDs now support the call for Ireland to remain GMO-free.

"An unelected body, the European Commission, has made an incredibly important decision that is unacceptable and illegal. We are sullyng Ireland's reputation as a green environment and food producing country. Shame on the politicians and officials who supported it and shame on us for allowing it to happen. I call on Ireland to prohibit these products!"  
— **Michael Mulcahy TD (FF)**

"All of us, from officials to public representatives, have failed to discuss the issue and it is regrettable that we are only doing so no."  
— **Senator Ann Ormonde (FF)**

"A great opportunity exists to market Ireland as a GM-free zone. 70% of the EU do not want GM foods. We should encourage our Government to introduce a ban to keep this country free of them for the foreseeable future."  
— **Senator Don Lydon (FF)**

"The introduction of GM foods by Monsanto and other companies would give rise to significant concerns in terms of the health of the population. I seek a GM-free Ireland."  
— **Mae Sexton TD (PD)**

"I am totally opposed to the introduction of GM foods because of the serious health repercussions. Experts throughout Europe observe that supermarkets and food manufacturers are concerned at the introduction of GM foods because the public does not want them and there is no market for such products. Moreover, the warnings from experts and doctors dictate that such products should not be forced into our food chains. I hope the Government will oppose the introduction of GM foods at EU level."  
— **Senator James Bannon (FG)**

"Ireland's reputation for clean, green food is an important marketing asset for Irish farm producers and the food industry. There is no benefit to be gained if this image is compromised."  
— **Mary Upton TD (Labour)**

"We are committed to making Ireland a GM crop free zone. We must will not allow Ireland's clean and green image to be sold to the highest bidding multinational GM lobbyist."  
— **Trevor Sargent TD (Green Party)**

"The EC should heed the warning that GM products are unwanted in Ireland."  
**Mary Lou McDonald MEP (SF)**

"GMO crops are an experiment. I have told the European Parliament that I do not support the GMO experiment but if it is to go ahead in Europe, I recommend Ireland as the perfect control. It is an island with predominantly westerly winds and therefore significantly protected from GMO contamination from neighbouring countries. With this control, the EU will be able to properly assess GM crops in 5, 10, 50 years time. And if GM bellies up European farmers and consumers will be able to get safe food and seed stocks from us in Ireland."  
— **Kathy Sinnott MEP (Independent)**

## EC APPROVES IMPORTATION OF LIVE GMO SEEDS

On 31 August 2005, following two vote abstentions by our Environment and Local Government Minister Dick Roche TD, the European Commission approved the import of the first animal feed to consist of patented living genetically modified organisms (GMOs) — against the wishes of the majority of EU member states and EU consumers. Roche was advised to vote NO on this issue in a GM-free Ireland briefing to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Local Government in December 2004.

Monsanto's patented GT73 oilseed rape is *substantially different* from other genetically modified (GM) animal feedstuffs widely used by conventional farmers, because it consists of live GMO seeds which (a) proliferate, (b) are proven to contaminate related crops by seed dispersal, volunteers and wind-borne pollen (within at least a 26km radius), and (c) can never be recalled after their release.

If a single ship carrying live GMO seeds were to arrive in Ireland or Northern Ireland, the inevitable seed spillage that would occur (during unloading, haulage, storage, handling, and processing) would create a *de facto* release of the first GMO crop in Ireland without the EC and Irish authorisations, liability laws, insurance and stakeholder agreements required for its cultivation.

This undemocratic EC decision has created a national security emergency that can, *inter alia*:

- (1) result in rapid and irreversible GM contamination of Irish farmland & protected areas;
- (2) catastrophically reduce the biodiversity of Irish ecosystems and agricultural seeds;
- (3) infect farmers with a plague of herbicide-resistant "superweeds" and crop failures;
- (4) contaminate all cultivated and wild Irish oilseed rape within 4 to 5 years;
- (5) may transfer GMO genes to bees and related Brassica crops (including broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, charlock, cauliflower, collards, kale, mustard, radish, rocket & turnip);
- (6) require contaminated food produce to carry a GM label which EU consumers refuse;
- (7) subject contaminated farmers to expensive GMO analysis, monitoring & patent royalties;
- (8) unleash a flurry of uninsurable patent-infringement and cross-contamination lawsuits;
- (9) reduce Ireland's share of the European farm, food and tourist markets;
- (10) ruin organic horticulture farmers by causing them to lose their organic certification;
- (11) violate consumers' right to choose safe GMO-free conventional and organic food;
- (12) terminate Ireland's world-famous reputation as the "clean green food island" - forever.

Oilseed rape is used to produce animal feed (now legal), oil for use as human food (pending approval) and biodiesel. Rape seeds fed to cattle and sheep are first milled into an oily "cake" which is mixed with other ingredients including GM maize gluten and GM soya to produce the final feed compound. Most oilseed rape fed to Irish farm animals is currently milled abroad, due to lack of large rapeseed milling facilities on this island. But smaller rapeseed mills around the country already produce biodiesel. As more of these mills come on-stream because of rising oil prices, Ireland's oilseed rape milling capacity is expected to increase rapidly in the years ahead.

In epidemiological terms, the EC's decision is equivalent to forcing us to have unprotected sex with someone infected with HIV, in the sense that *contamination is inevitable*.

GMO contamination = biopiracy because the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement and EC + Irish patent law appear to transfer ownership of any crops contaminated with patented GMO genes to the patent owner — in this case Monsanto Inc. (see our interview with Percy Schmeiser on page 8). The EC decision thus gives possession of Irish food crops — the rightful property and heritage of current and future Irish citizens — to a private foreign transnational corporation. This violates our Constitution, is unethical, unsustainable and must surely be the biggest conceivable rip-off in the history of the Irish State!

Our Government should now exercise its legal right to ban all GMO seeds before the first ship unloads its unwanted cargo on this island.

## 8 STEPS TO PREVENT THE DISASTER

### 1. Implement an immediate national ban on GMO seeds, crops, trees, fish and livestock

Ireland's legal right to ban GMOs is made explicit under:

- (a) the Biosafety Protocol (Cartagena Protocol) to the Convention on Biodiversity, and
- (b) the "safeguard clause" of Directive 2001/18/EC.

#### (a) Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity

Art 10.6 of the Protocol, which is EU law, recognises that when governments make decisions regarding the import of living genetically modified organisms,

"Lack of scientific certainty due to insufficient relevant scientific information and knowledge regarding the extent of the potential adverse effects of a living modified organism on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Party of import, taking also into account risks to human health, shall not prevent that Party from taking a decision, as appropriate, with regard to the import of the living modified organism in question [...], in order to avoid or minimize such potential adverse effects."

Furthermore Article 11 defining the procedure for living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing, also states the following (Paragraph 8):

"Lack of scientific certainty due to insufficient relevant scientific information and knowledge regarding the extent of the potential adverse effects of a living modified organism on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Party of import, taking into account risks to human health, shall not prevent that Party from taking a decision, as appropriate, with regard to the import of that living modified organism intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing, in order to avoid or minimize such potential adverse effects."

These two articles are the recognition, by the international treaty that regulates the international trade in living genetically modified organisms, of the precautionary principle whereby governments faced with reasonable cause for concern should take **preventative action before environmental damage starts to occur**. Since the Biosafety Protocol was negotiated in 1999 and 2000, scientific backing to the precautionary principle has increased in the light of additional evidence on GMO risks to biodiversity (e.g. the Mexican maize contamination case, among others). A ban or embargo on GMOs in Ireland is therefore fully legitimate and backed by science.

#### (b) Directive 2001/18/EC

Article 23 (the Safeguard Clause) of Directive 2001/18/EC allows for specific environments, eco-systems and geographical areas to be exempted from the growing of GM crops. The full reads:

1. Where a Member State, as a result of new or additional information made available since the date of the consent and affecting the environmental risk assessment or reassessment of existing information on the basis of new or additional scientific knowledge, has detailed grounds for considering that a GMO as or in a product which has been properly notified and has received written consent under this Directive constitutes a risk to human health or the environment, that Member State may provisionally restrict or prohibit the use and/or sale of that GMO as or in a product on its territory.

The Member State shall ensure that in the event of a severe risk, emergency measures, such as suspension or termination of the placing on the market, shall be applied, including information to the public. The Member State shall immediately inform the Commission and the other Member States of actions taken under this Article and give reasons for its decision, supplying its review of the environmental risk assessment, indicating whether and how the conditions of the consent should be amended or the consent should be terminated, and, where appropriate, the new or additional information on which its decision is based.

2. A decision shall be taken on the matter within 60 days in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 30(2). For the purpose of calculating the 60 day period, any period of time during which the Commission is awaiting further information which it may have requested from the notifier or is seeking the opinion of the Scientific Committee(s) which has/have been consulted shall not be taken into account. The period of time during which the Commission is awaiting the opinion of the Scientific Committee(s) consulted shall not exceed 60 days. Likewise, the period of time the Council takes to act in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 30(2) shall not be taken into account."

## **2. Request an Injunction to prevent the importation and use of GT73 seeds in Ireland and/or in your Region or County**

Your Regional Authority and County Council should consider the option of protecting local farmers and consumers by applying to the Circuit Court or to the High Court for an Injunction to prevent any importing, storing, handling, transporting, distributing, processing, selling or planting of GMO seeds in its area. If you decide to do this, be sure to file the Injunction in the public interest to avoid exposure to the other side's legal costs in the event the injunction is declined. The named parties against which such Injunctions could be filed include (a) animal feed importers, grain importers, haulers and distributors, (b) the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, (c) the Minister for Agriculture and Food, (d) the Environmental Protection Agency and (e) the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

You can request an Injunction in three ways: Ex Parte (immediate effect, but only valid for two weeks); Ad Interim (need to inform other side, full hearing in six months); and Perpetual. If your Injunction is accepted, it may take six months until a judge will rule on the substantive issues; this would provide a window of protection during which time no-one could legally import, transport, distribute, sell or plant GMO seeds in your County. If you do this in October 2005 and your injunction is accepted, you will have at least six months protection until April 2006, when the European Commission is expected to decide whether or not to set up EU-wide legislation on the so-called "co-existence" of GMO crops with conventional and organic farming.

By that time, the WTO trade dispute panel is also expected to have reached its final decision on a lawsuit filed by the USA, Canada and Argentina against the EU which alleges that our mandatory labeling of GM animal feed and food violates the WTO Free Trade Agreement, based on the scientifically untenable concept that GMO foods are "substantially equivalent" to their conventional counterparts. The WTO dispute panel is expected to issue its Interim Report on this matter on 10 October 2005.

## **3. Declare your County and Region a GMO-free zone**

Irish Regions, Counties and other local areas have the legal right to be exempted from the growing of GMO seeds, crops, trees, fish and livestock under (a) the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity (to which Ireland is a party) and under (b) EU law (Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC). See page 3 for details.

On 19 March 2005, Clare County Council unanimously passed a motion declaring itself a GMO-free zone. The motion was adopted to prevent the growing of particular GM crops in Co. Clare, to ensure protection of the environment, to ensure that no GM crops are grown on land over which it has control, and to adopt a GM-free policy for all goods and services for which that Council is responsible. The adoption of the motion also requires that no GM crops be grown over land that the Council has control over, and that the Council adopt a GM-free policy over all goods and services for which it is responsible. In a related press release, Clare Co. Council said: "In the unanimous passing of this motion, Clare County Councilors have displayed considerable foresight that backs up the image necessary to promote Clare's farm and food produce on the world market. That image is of clean wholesome food and this Council, in conjunction with other groups like the Clare-based Irish Seed Savers Association, are ensuring that this image abroad is supported by the reality at home." For more information please call Clare County Councilor Brian Meaney on 087 215 2215.

Co. Fermanagh and Co. Monaghan have also passed GM-free motions. City Councils and other Local Authorities which have done likewise include Clonakilty, Derry, Mourne, Navan and Newry. GM-free motions have also been tabled in Co. Leitrim, Dublin City Council and South Dublin County Council.

On 22 April, Earth Day 2005, over 1,000 local areas North and South of the border declared themselves GMO-free zones. These sites require legal protection from any contamination and liability resulting from GMO animal feed, seeds, trees, crops, livestock and fish. For details (including 32 County maps) see [www.gmfreeireland.org/map](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map)

Note that all our National Parks and designated ecological sites need legal protection and buffer zones to preserve their biodiversity from contamination by GMOs. These areas include Nature Reserves, SACs (Special Areas of Conservation for wildlife habitats under EC law), SPAs (Special Protected Areas for birds under EC law), Natural Heritage Areas, Refuges for Flora, Refuges for Fauna, and Europa 2000 sites (Atlantic Biogeographical region Sites of Community Importance

listed in 2004/813/EC). The centre points of each of these sites are shown on the GM-free Ireland map at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map>

A growing number of EU national governments approve the GMO-free zones declared by their internal Regions and local authorities. Others do not. For example, the government of Italy supports Tuscany's law which imposes a €50,000 fine or two years in prison for anyone who cultivates GMO crops. On the other hand, the UK does not recognise the Welsh Assembly's right to declare Wales a GMO-free zone. But this did not prevent Wales – together with the Highlands of Scotland, the Duchy of Cornwall and 40 UK counties in Britain – from prohibiting GMO crops. So we need to be proactive at the County, Regional, National and European levels, and let the Government, EC and WTO face the consequences. Follow Co. Clare's example: declare your county GMO-free, and the Assembly of European Regions will lobby the EC to recognise its right to do so.

#### **4. Lobby our TDs and MEPs to support your County's right to remain GMO-free**

Lobby our TDs for new national legislation that recognises your County's right to remain GMO-free should it wish to do so. Also ask our MEPs to lobby the European Commission for new legislation that recognises the democratic right of the European Regions (including those in Ireland) to do likewise.

#### **5. Sign the EU-wide Petition to the EC to guarantee your Region's democratic right to decide local GMO policy**

Please sign the following EU-wide petition to guarantee our democratic right to ban or restrict GMO crops in this County, should we choose to do so. This can be done by any elected politician. Please sign this today yourself and send it to the address below. Then ask our County Council to sign it, emphasising that the Petition does not commit the Council to a pro- or anti-GMO position, but only asserts your right to have the final say. Please also request our Regional Authority to sign the petition as soon as possible. The Republic of Ireland comprises 8 EU Regions: Border (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan, Sligo), Dublin, Mid East (Kildare, Meath, Wicklow), Midland (Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath), Mid West (Clare, Limerick, Tipperary North), South East (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South, Waterford, Wexford), South West (Cork, Kerry, Limerick), and The West (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon).

##### **GMO-free zones: Petition to the European Commission**

Across the European Union, thousands of local and regional government authorities want to exclude the growing of genetically modified (GM) crops in their area. The reasons for taking such an initiative include:

- concerns about the many scientific uncertainties surrounding the long term safety of GM foods and the effect on the environment of growing GM crops;
- the clear difficulties of growing GM crops without contaminating traditional, conventional, and organic crops, and the economic effects this will have on the agri-food sector;
- the demands from their citizens for GM-free food and a GM-free local environment.
- Current European law fails to protect these local and regional government authorities. And internationally, there is increasing pressure to force GM crops into the European Union, especially via the US-led trade dispute at the World Trade Organisation.

WE, the undersigned, believe that in order to protect our local economy, culture, environment and health of our citizens, EU law must include the democratic right of local and regional governments to decide whether GM crops can be cultivated in their given area.

We also believe that there should be no EU-wide approvals for the cultivation of GMOs until these matters are resolved and that there should be strict labeling regulations for any presence of GMOs in conventional and organic seeds (including those approved for use as animal feed) at the practical detection limit.

.....

(Name of local/regional authority or constituency)

Signed

.....

(Name and position)

For more information about the petition see <http://www.gmofree-europe.org/Petition.htm>  
Please return your signed Petition by post to the following person, who will deliver it to the European Commission along with the other signatories in all EU member states:

Kenneth Richter, European GMO Campaign, Friends of the Earth  
26-28 Underwood Street, N1 7JQ London, UK  
email: [kenr@foe.co.uk](mailto:kenr@foe.co.uk) • tel: + 44 207 566 1716 • mobile: + 44 77 1284 3211

## 6. Get your Regional Authority to join the Assembly of European Regions (AER)

The Assembly of European Regions is campaigning to support its members' democratic right to choose whether or not to allow GMO seeds and crops in their area. As mentioned in section 5 above, the Republic of Ireland comprises 8 EU Regions, only one of which (the Border Region) is a member of AER.

It is vitally important that your Region joins the AER to ensure that our voice is clearly heard in Brussels ~ on many other issues as well as GMOs. So please propose and implement a Motion for our Regional Authority to join the AER. For details visit <http://www.a-e-r.org>

## 7. Denounce the illegal "National Strategy to Ensure the Co-existence of GMO crops"

Ireland's "National Strategy to Ensure the Co-existence of GMO Crops with Conventional and Organic Agriculture" will soon be published by an inter-departmental / inter-agency Working Group set up by the Department of Agriculture and Food. This document should have been forged through a democratic and transparent stakeholder consultation process that included the views of all groups that will be materially affected by Ireland's policies on GMOs, including County Councils. But this so-called "public consultation process" (a) excluded 86% of the stakeholder groups who will be materially affected by the policy, (b) did not provide the time and means for those stakeholders who were invited to become adequately informed about the complex political, legal, economic, agronomic, ecological, and health issues involved, (c) refused repeated stakeholder demands for more time and input prior to the publication of the final document, and (d) thus failed to comply with the legal obligation for public participation in environmental policy decision-making required by the Aarhus Convention (including its GMO Protocol), and the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity. For details see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/>

Moreover, the EC's non-binding Recommendation for National Governments to make this document is based on faulty interpretation of European Law. On 23 July 2003, the European Commission issued Recommendation 2003/556/EC on guidelines for the development of national strategies and best practices to ensure the coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming. The Recommendation asks Member States to put in place legal measures for "co-existence" which should not go further than to keep GM contamination of non-GM and organic crops below the threshold set down in European GM labeling legislation (currently 0.9 per cent). It also says that measures should ignore health and environmental concerns and be limited to economic issues. The problem is that if member states put in place measures, like separation distances, based on this guidance, widespread GM contamination of crops and food is very likely to occur. The EC's Recommendation takes GM contamination of up to 0.9 per cent as its starting point and therefore restricts people's ability to have meaningful choice between GM, non GM and organic food. Countries around Europe are already putting in place laws to control contamination from GM crops, but they are being misguided by flawed advice. There is a growing movement for GM free areas in Europe, and consumer demand for GM free food is stronger than ever. The Commission must now ditch its misleading guidance and replace it with tough, EU-wide laws that will truly protect our choice for GM-free food, our health and the environment from the threat of GM crops

On 21 March 2005, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, GeneWatch UK, Which? and Five Year Freeze issued a joint press release stating that this Recommendation is legally flawed and called for it to be withdrawn. A legal opinion by leading European lawyer Paul Lasok QC was presented to the EC Commissioners for Agriculture, Environment and Consumers, condemning the EC position as "fundamentally flawed" and criticising the UK Government for following this approach, which has no basis in community legislation and is legally incorrect. You can download the Opinion from <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/FOE/CoexLasok.pdf>. The opinion concludes:

"...the Recommendation is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the relevant legal provisions, and risks advising Member States to adopt coexistence measures that are incompatible with the aims of the legislation or which would result in preventing, in practice, the use of the "organic" label and the reliance on the GM labeling exemption."

The European Commission should now go back to the drawing board on GMO seeds and crops. Since its assumptions about how to stop contamination between GMO and normal crops are wrong, it follows that subsequent decisions to allow some GM crops to be grown in Europe and proposals for permissible levels of GM contamination of regular seeds are also flawed. This legal opinion could stop the Commission disregarding their own legislation and forcing GM crops into Europe based on faulty science. So please denounce our National Strategy and the EC Recommendation on which it is based.

## **INTERVIEW WITH GMO-CONTAMINATED FARMER PERCY SCHMEISER**

Percy Schmeiser is a 75-year old Canadian farmer who got sued by Monsanto after his fields became contaminated by their patented GMOs in 1996. Monsanto wanted the profits from his entire crop, a technology charge, plus a million dollars in court costs. Eventually, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed Monsanto's financial claims but ruled the patented GM crops are the company's property. This ruling opened the door for massive class action lawsuits currently underway against Monsanto for losing control of its patented crops.

This Global Vision video interview was produced and directed by Michael O'Callaghan at the Terra Madre festival hosted by Slow Food in Turin, Italy in October 2004:

**Michael O'Callaghan:** What's the story with you and Monsanto?

**Percy Schmeiser:** Monsanto laid a lawsuit against me back in 1996. This was a patent-infringement lawsuit where they said I was growing Monsanto's GMO canola (i.e. rapeseed) without a license.

Now I had never ever bought their seed and never been to one of their meetings. I didn't even know any Monsanto rep.

This was a big concern to us at that time, because we were seed developers of canola for over half a century. So we realised there was a strong possibility our pure seed was contaminated, and indeed later on we did find it was contaminated by Monsanto, against our wishes.

Our fields got contaminated through direct seed movement from GMO canola blowing in from other farmers' fields, or when farmers hauled it with their trucks it blew off. So that's what happened. We were contaminated, and we stood up to Monsanto, and eventually it went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

**Did Monsanto win that case?**

No. In the initial pre-trials, Monsanto withdrew all allegations that we had ever obtained or grown their seed illegally. But they said that didn't matter. The fact that Monsanto found some of their GMO canola plants in a ditch along one of our fields meant that we had violated their patent. So that's basically what it went to court on – patent law. They have a patent on a gene which they inserted into canola which makes it resistant to their chemical Glyphosate or Roundup [also known as "Rodeo" and "Accord", glyphosate is the most common worldwide weedkiller; it has known health risks for humans – Ed].

The first trial judge at the Federal Court of Canada ruled – and this is what made my case become internationally known – that it doesn't matter how Monsanto's GMOs get into any farmers' fields, whether you're an organic farmer or a conventional farmer. If it gets in there, you no longer own your seeds or plants. They become Monsanto's property. The rate of contamination doesn't mean anything. If it's one percent or fifty percent, you no longer own your seeds or plants. And furthermore, he ruled, even though we were seed developers who have been developing our own seeds for over half a century, we no longer could use our seeds or plants and they became Monsanto's ownership.

He also ruled that all our profit from our 1998 canola crop (we had approximately 500 hectares seeded) had to go to Monsanto – even from fields in which tests showed there had been no contamination. He said since we were seed developers using our own seeds from year to year, there was a probability of contamination. So basically, he ruled that a farmer ought to and should know when his fields were contaminated.

But how do you do that when your seeds look identical and your plants look identical? So that's why we then stood up to Monsanto again and took it all the way to the Supreme Court.

Now the Supreme Court ruled that I did not have to pay Monsanto one red cent. At one time Monsanto had wanted their court costs and came after me for a million dollars. They wanted a \$15 per acre technology charge, they wanted all my profits from my 1998 crop on 500 hectares. So they didn't get a cent. But the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Monsanto owns and controls the gene if they have a patent on it. And that, I think, was a major loss for Monsanto, because if you own and control the gene and it gets out of control, you have a massive liability issue!

I think that's what Monsanto is going to be faced with now. If you own and control it and it gets out of control, you are responsible. I think you are going to see Monsanto faced with liability issues in the not-too-distant future.

[Note: The Organic Agriculture Protection Fund, based in Percy Schmeiser's Canadian province of Saskatchewan, filed a class action lawsuit against Monsanto and Aventis (now Bayer) for damages caused by the introduction of GM canola and for an injunction to stop GM wheat. Following Monsanto's withdrawal of its application for regulatory approval of its Roundup Ready GM wheat in Canada and the USA in June 2004, the class action lawsuit is now focusing on the biotech companies' liability for GM canola contamination. On 2 February 2004 the claim was amended to include compensation for the ongoing costs of removing GM canola from certified organic farmers fields and seed supplies. The Organic Agriculture Protection Fund claims that, if biotech companies are allowed monopoly rights over their patented genes wherever they occur (as per the Canadian Supreme Court decision in Schmeiser vs. Monsanto in May 2004, then these companies must also be liable for the losses due to unwanted presence of these patented genes. This case is expected to set a world-wide precedent that will establish liability of companies for the uncontrolled spread of GMOs. Details may be found at [www.saskorganic.com](http://www.saskorganic.com) - Ed.]

Really what Monsanto is after is total control of the seed supply, which ultimately would give them total control of the food supply. The threat is very crucial regarding the seed supply, because an organic farmer or a conventional farmer could wake up tomorrow morning and no longer own his seeds or plants – or no longer be allowed to use his seeds or plants, which would become owned by Monsanto. So you would lose all your indigenous seeds, your heritage seeds – everything – through cross-pollination, direct seed movement or contamination.

That's why it's so important not to introduce GMOs into any region of any country. There are two important things that come up:

Number one, and this is very important: there is no such thing as containment. Once you introduce GMOs into the environment – a new life-form – the seeds will spread by wind, the pollen will flow, cross pollination will take place, there will be direct seed movement by people, farmers hauling it, birds, bees, animals and so on.

The second important thing is that there is no such thing as co-existence! Once you introduce a GMO into a country or region, like happened to us in Canada, you will destroy the organic farmer and you will destroy the conventional farmer because of the cross-pollination and the contamination.

And because a GMO gene is a dominant gene, it will render any seeds or plants it contaminates into GMOs, so you no longer have a choice. Back in Western Canada, the organic farmers no longer have a choice in raising canola. It is all contaminated with GMOs so their choice has been taken away. It's the same with farmers growing organic soybeans; no longer can they do that, because within five or six years it has all been contaminated with GMOs. So we have now ended up with only GMO canola and soybeans in Canada.

So it's very important for farmers in Ireland or any country to be concerned, because you will never have a choice left again, all your crops will eventually become GMOs.

Then there are the contracts, the suppression of farmer's rights and their freedom of speech with the contracts. Some of the issues in the contracts: if you commit some violation you have to sign a non-disclosure form and you can not tell the press or your neighbours what Monsanto has fined you or that it has made you destroy your crop.

And you also have to permit Monsanto's police. They have a very large police force in Canada; in the States they hire investigation services to police farmers, to go out to farmers' fields or granaries, to check without their permission, to go on their land or into their granaries.

And you are not allowed to use your seed. You only can buy the seed from Monsanto. You have to use chemicals from Monsanto. You have to pay them a license fee or technology charge of \$15 an acre each year. So I don't think that farmers want this control!

And then there are the lawsuits by Monsanto against farmers, of which there have been hundreds and hundreds in Canada and the USA.

So don't introduce GMOs because it does not increase yields. The quality is poor. And you have more chemical use than ever before, because a lot of the canola plants have turned into superweeds which now require a multitude of new chemicals to control.

Remember what Monsanto said to Canadian farmers back in 1996: increased yields, more nutritious crops, and less chemicals. All that turned out to be false. You do not have increased yields, you do have more chemical use, and furthermore the crops have poorer quality.

### **Is it true that Monsanto is bombing farmers in Canada?**

Yes. They try to intimidate and harass farmers. If they can't find a farmer at home, they'll take a small plane or helicopter and fly over the centre of a farmer's field. Our fields are quite large, normally about 160 acres, and in the centre they'll drop a Roundup herbicide-spray bomb. This will cover an area of 30 feet diameter area with the herbicide.

They will then fly back after about 10 or 12 days when the chemical has had time to activate, to see where they dropped the bomb. And if the crop has died, they know the farmer was not using Monsanto's GMO Canola or soybeans. But if it hasn't died after being sprayed with the Roundup herbicide, they know the farmer has been using (or been contaminated by) Monsanto's seeds.

This is just one of the ways Monsanto tries to control farmers by harassing them or checking on them without their permission.

### **Is it true Monsanto has a clause in its GM seed contract which forces the farmers and their children and their grandchildren to forever waive their right to hold Monsanto liable and sue them if something goes wrong?**

Right, yeah! If you have any problem, if you were growing Monsanto's GMO canola and you had a major problem with it, you couldn't even take Monsanto to court. You waive your rights of ever taking Monsanto to court in a lawsuit or talking to the media about your problem.

So basically they got control over your freedom of speech and expression, you cannot sue them, and you cannot use your own seed. You always have to go back to buy your seed each year, and you have to use their chemicals! It's a total domination of the seed supply, which is what they want, and it will ultimately give them total control of the food supply.

That's what its all about. Increased chemical use, but most of all they want to control of that seed supply and farmers will lose it if they go the GMO way.

Farmers in Ireland should look at GMOs very closely. Don't allow it in, because once you do there is no calling it back! I guarantee you, if you introduce it today and I come back four or five years from now, it will be all over your country."

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MONSANTO'S GT73 LIVE GMO ANIMAL FEED**

Leading Irish farming groups, restaurants, environmental organisations and consumers are furious about the EC's undemocratic decision to legalise Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape through the back door, because it allows patented living GMO seeds to be imported for use as animal feed, even though any spilled seeds will inevitably produce a crop.

Oilseed rape (also known as "Canola" in the USA and Canada) is the familiar pale yellow flower which grows wild along our motorways. Monsanto's lone canola biotech trait, which allows it to resist applications of the company's Roundup herbicide, was introduced in 1996. According to Monsanto, Roundup Ready oilseed rape was planted on 6.2 million acres in Canada and 600,000 acres in the United States in 2005. By contrast, the company's biotech soybeans covered 120 million acres globally; corn was planted on 53.1 million acres and cotton on 16.7 million. Canada, which developed and is the world's top producer of canola, harvests an average of 11.3 million acres a year, according to the Canola Council of Canada. Oilseed rape is produced mainly for oil, which is used in cooking. The remaining meal is processed as animal feed.

In the UK, wind-borne pollen from GMO oilseed rape has contaminated conventional varieties 26 km from its source. The speed of cross-contamination will be exacerbated as Irish farmers plant more and more oilseed rape to create the biofuel that will be needed to replace diminishing and increasingly expensive diesel.

In large areas of the USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, GMO contamination from seeds and/or wind-borne pollen has already made it impossible to grow GMO-free oilseed rape, maize and soya crops. GMO crops can never be recalled after their release.

Monsanto's GT73 is genetically modified to be immune to Monsanto's Roundup and other glyphosate-based weedkillers. Its introduction will encourage farmers to use more of these herbicides, which have recently been found to be far more toxic than previously known. This will increase the levels of their residues in the food chain and in human bodies, and lead to a plague of herbicide-resistant "superweeds" that farmers will find difficult or impossible to control.

The EC's decision (which Environment Minister Dick Roche failed to oppose despite being asked to do so following a Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Environment and Local Government debate in the Dáil last November), means that millions of these tiny GMO seeds can now be shipped into Irish and Northern Irish harbours, hauled to animal feed processing centres around the country, and placed on the market. The inevitable spillage of the seeds along the way (during unloading, transportation, storage, distribution, and processing) will result in the de facto release of the first GMO crops into the Irish environment - without the EC and government authorisations that are legally required for their cultivation.

In a joint petition 300 organisations representing over 25 million members and 200,000 individual citizens of Europe demand a strict EU law to protect the purity of seeds from GMO contamination. Seeds are the kernels of life, the foundation of our food supply and humanity's oldest heritage. A single GMO oilseed rape seed spilled at dockside during unloading from a ship in any of Ireland's ports could lead to its GMO genes being found from coast to coast all the way from West Cork to Donegal and from Galway to Dublin in four or five years time. Contaminated farmers will no longer own their crops, because the GMO genes within them have been patented by (and therefore now belong to) Monsanto. Farmers will owe annual patent royalties to Monsanto and/or face patent infringement lawsuits. Farmers will no longer be allowed to save and plant their own seeds. Farmers will also face a flurry of contamination lawsuits from each other. Farmers who are contaminated will lose market share. EU law requires any farm produce containing more than 0.9% of GM ingredients to carry a GM label. But GM-labelled food is refused by the 30 largest food brands and by the 30 largest food retailers in the EU. A Friends of the Earth Europe survey shows that 94.6% of EU citizens want the right to choose GM-free food, and 70.9% simply refuse GM food. And because GMOs are prohibited in organic farming, Ireland's organic growers will lose their constitutional right to earn a livelihood from growing these horticultural products, and many will go out of business. Consumers will lose their freedom to choose safe GMO-free conventional and organic varieties of these foods. Ireland's clean green food island image will be destroyed forever!

Independent scientists warn that GMO crops contain novel proteins and enzymes that may cause allergies and threaten the integrity of the immune systems of plants, beneficial insects and other animals, and humans. The World Health Organisation, the British and American Medical Associations, the Irish Doctors Environmental Association and several other groups have expressed concern that if the "antibiotic resistant marker genes" used in GM foods also transfer to bacteria, they could create superdiseases that cannot be treated with antibiotics. Genetic material from GM food could become integrated into the DNA of otherwise harmless bacteria inside the human gut, potentially turning people into living pesticide factories.

There have been no long-term health studies to prove GMO foods are safe. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the European Food Safety Authority deny this evidence, but their staffs include former biotech industry executives who often take the biotech industry's risk assessments at face value without comprehensive independent studies to confirm their safety claims. This gives science a bad name.

Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK have the most pro-GMO voting record in the European Union. Ireland was widely criticised following Consumer Affairs Commissioner David Byrne's last-minute lifting of the 5-year old moratorium on GMO crops just before leaving office under the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2004. Apart from the most recent vote in favour of allowing national bans on GMOs on 15 June, Ireland has never voted against the legalisation of GMO seeds and crops in the European Parliament.

Our government specifically colluded in the EC-backed approval of Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape by failing to vote against it at the EC Standing Committee on Release of GMOs into the Environment on 16 June 2004, and again failing to vote against it at the second Council of Ministers meeting on 20 December 2004. These Irish abstentions contributed to the lack of a Qualified Majority Vote on both occasions, empowering the EC College of Commissioners to

approve the controversial seeds against the wishes of the majority on 31 August 2005. The majority voted against the application because of unanswered food and feed safety questions. These include the likelihood of seed spills into the environment and the discovery of Monsanto documents which revealed potentially adverse effects including a significant increase in liver weight in rats. Monsanto still refuses to make the original data of these studies available for public scrutiny.

Our government also allowed this invasion without the informed consent of farmers, food producers and consumers, and before the publication of Ireland's "National Strategy to Ensure the Co-existence of GMO crops with Conventional and Organic Farming" which is due for imminent release by the Department of Agriculture. This so-called National Strategy was forged through an undemocratic public consultation process which (a) excluded 86% of the stakeholder groups (including all County Councils and many large and small food businesses) who will be materially affected by the policy, (b) did not provide the time and means for those stakeholders who were invited to become adequately informed about the complex political, legal, economic, agronomic, ecological, and health issues involved, and (c) thus failed to comply with the legal obligation for public participation in environmental policy decision-making required by the Aarhus Convention (including its GMO Protocol), and the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity.

To add insult to injury, our government has allowed this invasion without first setting any statutory rules to govern the so-called "co-existence" of GMOs with conventional and organic crops. Such rules are essential before any GMO seeds or crops are released (a) to empower local areas to conserve their GMO-free status if they chose to do so, (b) to establish GMO-free buffer zones to avoid cross contamination, (c) to determine who will be liable for cross-contamination, damage caused to the environment and human health, or economic loss to farmers whose crops become; (c) to define the amount of compensation in each case; and (d) to provide mandatory and affordable insurance cover to farmers for GMO-related lawsuits. The latter is vitally important since insurance and biotech companies cover against GMO-related lawsuits.)

Both the European Commission and the Irish Government are also guilty of allowing the GMO invasion before any EU Directive on "co-existence" which may not even be given the go-ahead until after a two-day conference to be held in Vienna in April 2006.

Live GMO seeds for use as animal feed are a Trojan horse. If the Commission has its way, they will soon be followed by many more varieties of transgenic organisms (including the so-called "pharma crops" which have been modified to produce plastics, industrial chemicals, vaccines, and drugs), GM trees, fish, crustaceans, poultry and livestock. Beyond that lies the Brave New World of cloning and organ harvesting. In this connection, Monsanto has already filed patent applications in over 160 countries (including the EU) on pig breeding methods, pig herds, and their offspring - including patents on naturally-occurring genes and any pigs that contain them. This could empower Monsanto to legally prevent Irish farmers from breeding pigs whose characteristics are described in the patent claims, or force them to pay patent royalties. If the EU and Ireland approve these patents, many Irish pigs, their offspring, and the use of the genetic information for breeding will be entirely owned by Monsanto, Inc. and any replication or infringement of their patent by man or beast will mean royalties or jail for the offending farmer.

All levels of governance — from the global, through the European, down to the national, regional and local — have not only failed to protect our food security but are actively jeopardising it.

For this reason, the best line of defence for the time being is at the local government level. There is fast growing and unstoppable movement against the cultivation of genetically modified crops all over Europe. A new alliance of local and regional authorities, nature protection agencies and farmers unions with environmental and consumer organisations has emerged to defend their freedom of choice and the self-determination of the regions. 163 EU Regions and over 4,500 sub-regional areas in 22 EU member states have already banned the cultivation of GMO crops because of their threat to biodiversity and many scientific uncertainties concerning their long term health risks to plants, animals and humans. 1,000 GMO-free zones were declared in Ireland on 22 April 2005 (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map>). But current EC law does not clearly define the matter and offers little support for them. To make the voices of these regions and communities heard in Brussels, the Assembly of European Regions (<http://www.a-e-r.org>), Friends of the Earth Europe and a wide coalition of NGOs have launched an EU-wide petition which Irish Counties and Regional Authorities are invited to sign, to ensure that a future EC Directive on the so-called "Co-existence" of GM crops with conventional and organic farming will specifically recognise our democratic legal right to decide whether GM crops can be cultivated in our area.

Links to scientific and legal information on Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape may be found below.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### More information on Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape:

A full transcript of the Irish Parliamentary debate of 24 November 2004 on Monsanto's GT73:  
[www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-24november2004.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-24november2004.pdf)

The GM-free Ireland Network Briefing paper submitted for the Irish Parliamentary debate on 24 November 2004:  
[www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf)

Comprehensive fact sheet on GT73: [www.saveourseeds.org/dossier/fact\\_sheet\\_GT73.htm](http://www.saveourseeds.org/dossier/fact_sheet_GT73.htm)

European Commission press release announcing the legalisation of GT73:  
[www.gmfreeireland.org/news/index.php#EUGT73](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/news/index.php#EUGT73)

UK Defra summary of concerns on GT73 (July 2004):  
[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/acre/advice/pdf/acre\\_advice36.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/acre/advice/pdf/acre_advice36.pdf)

The official UK government advisors on GM foods and feeds – ACRE and ACAF – have said that they are not satisfied with the explanation that Monsanto has provided for the observed increased liver weight in rats fed GT73. They are not convinced by EFSA's assurance that GT73 "is as safe as conventional oilseed rape for humans and animals, and in the context of the proposed uses, for the environment." ACAF says it can only draw such conclusion "on receipt of satisfactory data from a further rat-feeding study using 15 per cent oilseed rape meal." Source: Statement by Mr. Elliot Morely, UK Minister for the Environment and Agri-Environment. In: minutes of the UK's European Standing Committee A, Tuesday 2 November 2004.

Greenpeace wrote several letters to national authorities to get hold of the Monsanto data on GT73. After Greenpeace won a court case allowing it access to Monsanto's confidential data of feeding trials with GM maize in June 2005, it was expected that the data on the feeding trials with GT73 would be made public; but so far the documents have not been published. Contrary to EU law German officials explicitly refuse access to the data. Greenpeace is awaiting a reaction from the government of the Netherlands, where Monsanto originally filed the data.

Reports on spread of GM oilseed rape in Japanese ports as result of spilled imports:  
[www.saveourseeds.org/downloads/oilseed\\_rape\\_in\\_japanese\\_ports\\_2005.pdf](http://www.saveourseeds.org/downloads/oilseed_rape_in_japanese_ports_2005.pdf)

Austrian Office for the Environment (UBA): Risk Assessment of GMO products in the EU - Detailed analysis of toxicity assessment, allergenicity assessment and substantial equivalence in practice (July 2004):  
[www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/publikationen/BE253.pdf](http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/publikationen/BE253.pdf)

Institute for Science in Society: No to GM Oilseed Rape GT73 (September 2004) Description of GT73 and why it should be rejected by Prof. Joe Cummins, Dr. Mae-Wan Ho and Lim Li Ching:  
[www.i-sis.org.uk/NTGMORGT73.php](http://www.i-sis.org.uk/NTGMORGT73.php)

Greenpeace critique of EFSA opinion on GT73: Greenpeace technical critique of EFSA Opinion on Monsanto's Roundup Ready Oilseed Rape, GT73i which you can download from  
[www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/Greenpeace/GPTechCritiqueOfEFSAOpinion.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/Greenpeace/GPTechCritiqueOfEFSAOpinion.pdf)

Friends of the Earth critique of EFSA opinion on GT73: letter to the UK Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural affairs on 11 June 2004. Details may be found on page 10 of the Forging a GM Policy for Ireland briefing to the Irish Parliament on 24 November 2004, which you can download from  
[www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing1.pdf)

### Additional resources

GM-free Ireland web site: [www.gmfreeireland.org](http://www.gmfreeireland.org)

Updated register of world-wide GM contamination incidents:  
[www.gmcontaminationregister.org](http://www.gmcontaminationregister.org)

No Market for GM-labelled food in Europe (2MB PDF file):  
[www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/NoMarketForGMFood.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/NoMarketForGMFood.pdf)

Gaps in the Public Participation requirements of the EU Directive on GMOs as compared with the Aarhus Convention: a comparative analysis by the European ECO-Forum, January 2004 - (924K PDF file): [www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/EU/GMOs\\_ECOFORUM\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/EU/GMOs_ECOFORUM_analysis.pdf)

EC accused of "ongoing conspiracy" to suppress research on GM health hazards: [www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/GMFC1.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/GMFC1.pdf)

GM Forest Trees - the ultimate threat: [www.gmfreeireland.org/trees/index.php](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/trees/index.php)

GM Foods are Inherently Unsafe: [www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/smith/GM\\_Unsafe.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/smith/GM_Unsafe.pdf)

Eating GM Foods is Gambling With Your Health: [www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/smith/GM\\_Gambling.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/smith/GM_Gambling.pdf)

Seeds of Deception: Exposing corporate and government lies about the safety of genetically engineered food: [www.seedsofdeception.com](http://www.seedsofdeception.com)

Proceedings of the Forging a GM Policy for Ireland workshop held in April 2004: [www.gmfreeireland.org/events/workshop1/index.php](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/events/workshop1/index.php)

EU member states voting record on GMO seeds and crops: [www.saveourseeds.org/int/eu/voting\\_meter.html](http://www.saveourseeds.org/int/eu/voting_meter.html)

The case for a GM-free sustainable world (400 kb PDF file): [www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/A\\_GM-Free\\_Sustainable\\_World.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/A_GM-Free_Sustainable_World.pdf)

### **Ireland in lead position to become EU biosafety reserve**

Ireland is ideally positioned to become a GM-free biosafety reserve for the food security of all EU member states because we are: (i) upwind from most transboundary GM pollen contamination (80% of our wind blows from the Atlantic), (ii) geographically isolated and surrounded by water, and (iii) we probably have the lowest previous GM exposure in Europe. EU governments, regions and NGOs opposed to GM crops are invited to support this endeavour under the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity.

### **The Future of Food**

This award-winning film by Deborah Koons Garcia provides an in-depth investigation of GMO foods. Highly recommended. Available on DVD from <http://www.thefutureoffood.com>.

### **Throwing Caution to the Wind**

This Friends of the Earth review of the European Food Safety Authority and its work on GM foods, is deeply critical of EFSA's pro-biotech position and close industry links: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/FOE/EFSAreport.pdf>

### **GMO-free zones**

Assembly of European Regions demand "power-sharing" over GMO crop decision - GMO Free zones reach all time high: [www.a-e-r.org/press/2005/20050517/](http://www.a-e-r.org/press/2005/20050517/)

Map of 1,000 sites requiring legal protection from GMO contamination in Ireland: [www.gmfreeireland.org/map](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/map)

GMO-free zones in Europe: [www.gmofree-europe.org](http://www.gmofree-europe.org)

Transcript of the Dáil debate of 15 June 2005 on the EC proposals to revoke the national bans on GM crops made by six member states: [www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-15June2005.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-15June2005.pdf)

GM-free Ireland Network Briefing paper submitted for the Dáil debate of 15 June 2005 on the EC proposals to revoke the national bans on GM crops made by six member states: [www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing2.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/briefings/GMFIbriefing2.pdf)

Charter of the regions and local authorities of Europe on coexistence of genetically modified crops with traditional and organic farming, adopted in Florence 4th February 2005:

[www.gmo-free-regions.org/Downloads/Charter\\_of\\_Regions\\_Feb\\_05\\_en.pdf](http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/Downloads/Charter_of_Regions_Feb_05_en.pdf)

European Conference on GMO-free Regions, biodiversity & rural development:

[www.gmo-free-regions.org](http://www.gmo-free-regions.org)

Consumers International Conference on co-existence, contamination, GM-free zones and consumer choice (September 2005):

[www.consumersinternational.org](http://www.consumersinternational.org)

### **EU Agriculture policy**

Time to change European policy on GMOs in agriculture: position paper issued to the new EC Commissioners on 17 March 2005 by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Community of Consumer Cooperatives (EURO COOP), Friends of the Earth Europe (FOEE), Greenpeace European Unit, and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) EU Group,] (924K PDF file):

[www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/EU/BriefingGMOs\\_March05.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/coexistence/EU/BriefingGMOs_March05.pdf)

### **Statement by Italian Agriculture Minister Giovanni Allemano**

“When we speak of agriculture in the context of international trade, we must not confuse the issue by equating it with a productive activity like any other. Agriculture is different. It is something profoundly different, because it deals inevitably with people and their communities. All the peoples of the world have the right to their own agriculture. We need to find a way to change the system of [trade] negotiations which has the bad effect of setting farmers of some countries against farmers of other countries. And we have to transpose this into international agreements... The first priority is to give agriculture back its own identity, its own specificity, and not make it subservient to the logic of commerce. Trade must support and recognise the value of agriculture. Because when trade crushes farming, it crushes something which is alive and human and which is then difficult to restore... We need to create a large international movement to substract the living world from international trade rules... This will not be easy. To preserve the logic of life, life itself, from the logic of utilitarianism. We have to work on this issue. We need a large movement to assert that farming and living things can not be put in the same category as the rest of our productive activity.”

### **GM animal feed in Ireland**

Most Irish dairy and meat produce comes from livestock fed on animal feed compounds made from genetically modified (GM) soya beans and GM corn gluten (maize). The introduction of GM animal feed began in 2001, but few farmers and consumers were aware of this until 2004 when the European Commission introduced mandatory GM labelling of animal feed and food containing more than 0.9% of GM ingredients. But EU law fails require to GM labelling of dairy and meat produce from animals that have been fed a GM diet. Marks & Spencer is the only Irish retailer which guarantees that all of its fresh dairy and meat produce comes from GM-free livestock. Consumers International has called for the practice to end because of scientific evidence of health risks.

The Irish Government's assurances that it can safely regulate GM animal feed were shattered following the discovery of an illegal shipment of 2,546 tonnes of a prohibited variety of American Bt Maize called Bt10 (which contains antibiotic resistance genes) at Greenore port in Co. Louth on 26 May 2005, months after emergency measures were adopted by the EC to prevent Bt10 seeping through European borders.

In an attempt to cover up the scandal, a Department of Agriculture press release failed to mention the 2,546 tonnes and merely referred to them as "a sample". Although this shipment (which was imported by Arkady Feeds Ltd, and still remains in a warehouse at Greenore Port) is prohibited from being sold, the fact that so many tonnes arrived aboard a single ship at an Irish port long after the EU required the USA to terminate these illegal exports, raises the question of how many hundred thousand tonnes of mislabelled Bt10 GM feed may have been fraudulently sold to Irish cattle and sheep farmers - and consumed by Irish livestock and people - over the past 4 years or more.

Nobody knows how much Irish dairy, beef and lamb produce contaminated by Bt10 has been consumed, or exported under Ireland's clean green food island image since 2001. For more on this scandal see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/scandal>

## **GMO crops increase use of Roundup weedkiller, which is more toxic than previously thought**

Monsanto's Roundup weedkiller, which contains the chemical glyphosate, is the world's most common agricultural herbicide. It is widely used on Irish farms and may also be used in Coilte's monoculture tree plantations.

Genetically modified "Roundup Ready" crops have been responsible for increased use of the herbicide in recent years.

Monsanto's sale of glyphosate has expanded approximately 20% each year through the 1990s, accounting for 67% of the company's total sales as of 2001. More Glyphosate is now being introduced into the environment and the human food chain through cultivation of GMO crops that are tolerant to the herbicide and contain glyphosate residues.

A recent study of Roundup presents new evidence that the glyphosate-based herbicide is far more toxic than the active ingredient alone. The study, published in the June 2005 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives, (Sophie Richard, Safa Moslemi, Herbert Sipahutar, Nora Benachour, and Gilles-Eric Seralini, Environmental Health Perspectives, Vol. 113, No. 6 June 2005, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/members/2005/7728/7728.html> and <http://ga4.org/ct/k71TIKE1WzfS/>) reports glyphosate toxicity to human placental cells within hours of exposure, at levels ten times lower than those found in agricultural use. The researchers also tested glyphosate and Roundup at lower concentrations for effects on sexual hormones, reporting effects at very low levels. This suggests that dilution with other ingredients in Roundup may, in fact, facilitate glyphosate's hormonal impacts.

Roundup is a mixture of glyphosate and other chemicals (commonly referred to as "inerts") designed to increase the herbicide's penetration into the target and its toxic effect. Since inerts are not listed as "active ingredients" the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not assess their health or environmental impacts, despite the fact that more than 300 chemicals on EPA's list of pesticide inert ingredients are or were once registered as pesticide active ingredients, and that inert ingredients often account for more than 50% of the pesticide product by volume.

## **Monsanto's suppressed report on health effects of GMO maize**

In late 2004, the German government commissioned Dr Arpad Pusztai, one of the few genuinely independent scientists specialising in plant genetics and animal feeding studies, to examine Monsanto's secret study on the feeding of MON863 GM maize to laboratory rats over a 90-day period. The Pusztai report found that the Monsanto study contained evidence of "statistically significant" differences to kidney weights and certain blood parameters in the rats fed on the GM maize as compared with the control groups. You can download the report at [www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/scandals/Pusztai1.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/scandals/Pusztai1.pdf).

A number of scientists across Europe who saw the study (and heavily-censored summaries of it) expressed concerns about the health and safety implications if MON863 should ever enter the food chain.

Professor Gilles-Eric Seralini of the University of Caen, who scrutinises the safety of GM products for the European Commission and French government, describes the findings as "very worrying".

But following the release of the Pusztai report and pressure by environmental groups and the European Commission, a German court ordered Monsanto to disclose the secret study to Greenpeace.

On 24 May 2005, Dr Brian John of GM-free Cymru (GM-free Wales) issued a press release ([www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/scandals/index.php](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/resources/documents/science/scandals/index.php)) stating that it would be "irresponsible and cynical in the extreme" to pass the corn for human consumption. But the EC went ahead and legalised the maize.

## PLEASE SUPPORT THE GM-FREE IRELAND NETWORK

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world".

— Margaret Mead

The GM-free Ireland Network is a rapidly growing association of organisations and individuals collaborating to keep the whole island of Ireland free of genetically modified (GM) animal feed, seeds, trees, crops, livestock, fish and food. Visit [www.gmfreeireland.org](http://www.gmfreeireland.org) for details.

Our members now include over 32,000 farmers, foresters, food producers, food distributors and exporters, leading chefs and restaurants, NGOs, professional associations, doctors, economists, lawyers, journalists, students, and consumers. The Network was launched at the *Forging a GM Policy for Ireland* workshop in 2004. The Network is being incubated, financed and co-ordinated pro bono by Global Vision Consulting Ltd. ([www.global-vision-consulting.com](http://www.global-vision-consulting.com)).

We hold the Irish and UK governments accountable under EC law to forge an all-island GM policy that is democratically informed by the stakeholders whom it will affect. We support the Assembly of European Regions / Friends of the Earth campaign for the preservation of traditional and organic agriculture and for GM-free Zones and Regions. We reject the myth that GMO crops can "co-exist" with conventional and organic farming. We support the farmer's right to a sustainable future and the consumer's right to choose safe food.

### Expertise

Our knowledge of the agricultural, economic, health, environmental, political, and security aspects of GMOs is informed by the expertise of our international partners (including the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, the Assembly of European Regions, the Independent Science Panel on GM, the European Network of GMO-free regions, the European NGO Network on Genetic Engineering, Greenpeace Europe, Friends of the Earth Europe, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, IUCN - World Conservation Union), our member organisations, and leading scientists, farming bodies, consumer groups, government agencies, NGOs and politicians around the world. GM-free Ireland is a member of the European NGO Network on Genetic Engineering.

### Membership

Membership is currently free of charge and open to all individuals, farmers, businesses, and organisations (north and south of the border) who want to keep Ireland GM-free. We welcome farmers, stud farms, seed traders, animal feed distributors, food producers and retailers, hotels, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, pubs — including those who cannot yet guarantee their produce completely GM-free, but who aspire to do so.

### Financial support

Since its formation in April 2004, the GM-free Ireland Network has been generously funded by Global Vision Consulting Ltd. Additional funding was provided by Ballymaloe House, Biodynamic Agricultural Association, The Body Shop, Cavan Leitrim Environmental Awareness Network, Chapter One restaurant (Dublin), Douglas Hyde restaurant (Cork), Euro-Toques Ireland, Friends of the Earth Ireland, Global Vision Consulting Ltd, Irish Association of Health Stores, Irish Farmers Markets, Irish Organic Herbs Ltd, Irish Seed Savers Association, ItsaBagel, Oakfield Organic Gardens (Uachtar Ard), Dennis & Helen O'Kane, Otto's Creative Catering (Bandon), Ross Communications, Slow Food Dublin, Strand Inn (Dunmore East), Sustainable Ireland, and The Hopsack health store (Dublin).

**The GM-free Ireland Network is now seeking philanthropic contributions and/or institutional sponsorship of €400,000 to empower us to employ a professional staff of 6 people for one year, and to produce a high-level all-Ireland stakeholders' conference on GMO issues. Please contact us ASAP for funding or sponsorship enquiries**

### Person to contact

Michael O'Callaghan, Chairman  
Global Vision Consulting Ltd,  
Little Alders, Knockrath, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow  
tel (0404) 43 885 • mobile 087 799 4761 • email: [mail@gmfreeireland.org](mailto:mail@gmfreeireland.org)  
[www.global-vision-consulting.com](http://www.global-vision-consulting.com)