

GM-free Ireland Network

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON PROPOSED GMO POTATO EXPERIMENT

22 February 2006 • Buswell's Hotel, Dublin, Ireland

This press conference was organised for the GM-free Ireland Network by Global Vision Consulting Ltd, on the day of the deadline set by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for submissions on a proposal by the world's largest chemicals company BASF to conduct a five-year experiment with genetically modified (GM or GMO) potatoes at the Teagasc Grange Research Centre in the Boyne Valley — one of the oldest cultivated sites in the world — not far from the Hill of Tara in Co. Meath.

The press conference was videotaped by Global Vision and by RTE, and was followed by a national protest at the entrance to Dáil Éireann (the Irish Parliament). It was covered (briefly) on RTE news, and received wide coverage in the press and radio.

This document can be downloaded from www.gmfreeireland.org/potato/GMFIpressConf22Feb06.pdf

For information about the proposed experiment, see www.gmfreeireland.org/potato

SPEAKERS

Michael O'Callaghan (chairman)
Co-ordinator, GM-free Ireland Network

Eddie Punch
General Secretary, Irish Cattle and Sheepfarmers Association (ICSA)

Seán McDonagh SCC
Columban Missionary priest and author

Oisín Coughlan
Director, Friends of the Earth Ireland

Dr. Elisabeth Cullen
Co-founder, Irish Doctors Environmental Association (IDEA)

John Brennan
Manager, Leitrim Organic Farmers Cooperative

Evan Doyle
Restaurateur. Spokesperson, Euro-Toques Ireland / European Community of Cooks

Kathryn Marsh
Member, Organic Trust Ltd. Member of the EPA's GMO Advisory Committee

Frank Corcoran
Vice-President, European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Pdraig Fahy
Chairman, Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association (IOFGA)

Seán McArdle
Director, Irish Farmers Markets

Trevor Sargent, TD
Leader, Green Party. TD for Dublin North

Marian Harkin, MEP
MEP for the Border Region, TD for Sligo-Leitrim

Senator David Norris
Independent, University of Dublin
TRANSCRIPT

Michael O'Callaghan (chairman)
Co-ordinator, GM-free Ireland Network.

This is an unusual press conference because it consists of a large group of people who are just going to convey — in a short sound byte of a maximum of 90 seconds or two minutes — their views about the proposal by the German company BASF to do a five-year experiment with genetically modified potatoes at a Teagasc research centre in Co. Meath, starting in April.

Today is the deadline for public submissions to the EPA about this proposal. A lot of organisations represented here have objected to the proposal.

One of the main things that you should all be aware of is that these potatoes are patented. This means that if GM crops of any kind, including these potatoes, they will inevitably contaminate farmers crops. And Irish farmers who are contaminated by GM crops will lose ownership of their produce. We think this is outrageous.

We are disgusted that the Government has allowed the situation to get this close to what would become an irreversible invasion by GM crops, and – in my personal opinion and in the opinion of many here – the biggest rip-off in the history of the State.

So I'd like to start by inviting Eddie Punch, General Secretary of the Irish Cattle and Sheepfarmers Association (ICSA) just to say a few words briefly, two minutes maximum, from your point of view.

Eddie Punch
General Secretary, Irish Cattle and Sheepfarmers Association (ICSA).

Thanks. What I'd like to say is that the Irish Cattle and Sheepfarmers Association is against GM because we believe that our natural clean green food island image must be protected. If we go down the GM route, we are compromising irrevocably our ability to sell to premium European markets, to the maximum amount of consumers.

We know that consumers have deep concerns about GM production methods. And whether they are right or wrong, the fact is that they are an important market for Irish food. We have members who, for example, are selling beef to Italian markets and in the last number of years beef sales to Italian markets have doubled. But the Italians are among the most concerned about GM production methods. In the long run, Italy is seen as a leader in food trends with the Slow Food movement and all of that.

I would also have to say we have deep concerns about the patenting of the means of producing food. This is something which I believe is a step in the wrong direction. What we need is food production to be in the hands of many different family farms in order to ensure our food security and food diversity.

I am deeply ill at ease with the thought that the method of producing food could be controlled, that farmers could be somehow "bonded" if you like, to a small handful of multi-national corporations. In the long run, this is not good for family farming. If we want to have collective farms it's a different matter. But where we have family farms, this means of production should not be totally in the hands of multinational corporations.

Michael O'Callaghan

I'd now like to introduce Fr. Seán McDonagh, Columban missionary priest who has been very active in the fight against GM food and crops.

Seán McDonagh, SCC
Columban missionary priest.
Author: Patenting Life? Stop! Is corporate greed forcing us to eat genetically engineered food?

I have worked in the Philippines for well over twenty years. My concerns are two. First of all there is evidence that genetic engineering can do damage to human health and the environment — the Arpad Pusztai study in 1997 and the Irina Ermakova study just last year. Now if there is any problem about it doing that, it is no longer a scientific issue, it is a moral issue, and the Precautionary Principle must be used. Because we don't need it. No-one is asking for this except the GM companies.

And then secondly, I have a major problem with the whole area of patenting. I actually believe that patenting living organisms — and don't forget how this all started: not through a discussion in Dáil Eireann or [the US] Congress. It started by a decision of the US Supreme Court in 1980 (Chakravarti vs. Diamond) when four voted for and four against, and four against and five for when it happened again in 2001. This is the corporations taking over your life.

The subtitle to my book is "Patenting Life: Stop!" I think it's evil. And coming down the road is greater evil, this Terminator gene, that life can be engineered to self-destruct. The subtitle is "Is corporate greed forcing us to eat genetically engineered food." It is. It is using every single tool, the WTO, and it's time we stood up and said "NO!"

Michael O'Callaghan

I'd like to now call on Oisín Coughlan, Director of Friends of the Earth Ireland.

Oisín Coughlan **Director, Friends of the Earth Ireland.**

Thanks. I will just emphasise a slightly different point because you will hear many of the points repeated. And that is the strong mention of the WTO. At the moment the US is using its right within the WTO to try to strike down the European Commission's decision, the European Parliament's decision, to allow countries to have national bans on GM crops and GM products in their markets. And at the moment the preliminary findings from that WTO hearing are that it is no longer legal to have those bans. And it isn't over yet, but certainly the European Commission itself has already weakened its position and has been seeking to lift national bans on GM products in some of the European markets.

So we need to be conscious also of that wider context, and we should not allow the WTO to decide whether or not we have to eat GM foods, particularly given as we know there is no market. Seventy percent of European consumers in surveys have said they don't want GM food. And as we know, you may have heard that 60% of Irish consumers said in a Teagasc-sponsored survey last week, that even if there were discernible health benefits, they would not want to have GM products.

So when there are other mechanisms, such as the UN Biosafety Protocol, we should not be allowing the WTO to trump human health and environmental arguments, and we must fight that battle as well if we are to be allowed to continue to develop Ireland as a GM-free island as well as stopping this particular release of GM foods now.

Michael O'Callaghan

Now I'd like to call on Dr. Elisabeth Cullen, a co-founder of the Irish Doctors Environmental Association.

Dr. Elisabeth Cullen **Co-founder, Irish Doctors Environmental Association (IDEA).**

Thank you very much. The Doctors Environmental Association has serious concerns about the health effects of genetically engineered foods. There have been no published papers of possible health effects of GM foods [on humans], but animal trials have given serious, serious cause for concern. I have documented here the recent animal trials and they are very very worrying.

The other point I want to make is that more and more research scientists all over the world, and institutions, are calling for more research to be done on the possible health effects of GM foods. If we allow GM foods to be sold and grown in Ireland, we are guilty of betraying the interests of future generations. And the Irish Doctors Environmental Association will do all in its power to stop this trial.

Michael O'Callaghan:

I'd like to call on John Brennan, who is the Manager of the Leitrim Organic Farmers Cooperative.

John Brennan

Manager, Leitrim Organic Farmers Cooperative.

I'm not a scientist; I'm really here to talk on behalf of consumers. And I have met no consumer yet who has shown any desire or interest to eat food that is de-natured or in some way plagiarized, vandalized, or distorted. Because at the end of the day we're here because we are all concerned about our own health, our children's health.

Trying to develop a small organic cooperative in Western Ireland is difficult any day of the week. This is an insurmountable obstacle: if we end up with a situation where we have contamination of crops, and especially in our case contamination of animal feeds — and right now we are looking at significant contamination of animal feeds on the basis that GM maize is included in so many feed rations here — we have no chance of producing good quality wholesome organic produce for markets at home and abroad.

So I urge you all as consumers: reject this hideous product and try and keep the island GM-free for all our sakes!

Michael O'Callaghan

I'd now like to introduce Evan Doyle, who is a restaurateur, the co-owner of Ireland's only organic certified restaurant, the Strawberry Tree restaurant at the BrookLodge in Macreddin. And he is also a spokesperson for Euro-Toques Ireland, the European Community of Cooks.

Evan Doyle

Restaurateur. Spokesperson, Euro-Toques Ireland / European Community of Cooks.

OK, thank you. I'm wearing two hats here today. The first one is my business hat. I have spent my entire career working with food and recently in 1999 I set up the Brooklodge Hotel in Macreddin Village [in the Wicklow mountains]. The second hat I'm wearing today is the spokesperson for Euro-Toques. Euro-Toques is the European federation of chefs and chef-owners which accounts for about three-and-a-half thousand chefs in Europe. Recently, that is last May, it released a letter signed by its three-and-a-half thousand members denouncing biopiracy and GM food production and stating that its only goal in food production is to preserve biodiversity, farming traditions and the free choice of consumers.

This is over three-and-a-half thousand chefs. These are people involved in food. It's their business. These people have made an educated stance against GM food production.

Back at the Brooklodge, as Michael said, the Strawberry Tree has been successful in becoming the first restaurant in Ireland to acquire an organic license. This license is issued on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and on behalf of the EU. It is illegal for me to have conventional foods and, more importantly, GM foods in my kitchen. I will lose my license. There is another body in Government that wants to issue a license for GM foods in Ireland.

This issue of GM food production for potatoes is critical to me. Last year I bought twenty tones of organic potatoes. If cross-contamination occurs — and both the UK and the US governments have stated that this does happen — organic potatoes in Ireland will become cross-contaminated, with the result that another government body will remove my license, that is the Department of Agriculture, and I will no longer be able to serve organic potatoes in an Irish restaurant to Irish consumers.

Michael O'Callaghan

I'd now like to introduce Kathryn Marsh, who is wearing two hats also. She is a board member of the Organic Trust, and she is also a member of the GMO Advisory Committee of the Environmental Protection Agency, which is going to be reviewing submissions about this proposal.

Kathryn Marsh

Member, Organic Trust Ltd. Member of the EPA's GMO Advisory Committee

Well actually I'm not a boardmember of the Organic Trust these days, I'm a member of the Organic Trust, a passport member.

There is a complete democratic deficit in the treatment of GMOs in Ireland. There is only one route for ordinary Irish people to get their voices heard. And only four of us — four individuals in Ireland — have had a chance to use that route. They are Father Seán McDonagh, myself, David Jeffries, and Eanna Ní Lamhna, as representatives of stakeholder organisations on the EPA.

Everybody else, on every committee that rules on GMOs in this country, has an interest in furthering biotechnology and GMOs. They are all either university scientists with their research funded by the biotechnology companies, or they are actually employees of biotechnology companies themselves. This is something to be borne in mind when we see that the Food Safety Authority says it's OK, the Bioethics Committee of the Royal Irish Academy says it's OK, the Inter-Departmental Committee on GMOs says it's OK. All of those are advised entirely or almost entirely (there are some exceptions on the Bioethics Committee where the medical profession is also involved), they are all advised by those with a financial stake in the biotechnology industry.

As we've already heard from Oisín, 70% of people in Europe don't want to eat GMOs. At the same time, the EU is weakening the definition of GMOs so that 1% is OK, that's not really GMOs. And as we've already heard, [animal] feed in Ireland, as John said, is heavily contaminated with GMOs. If a farmer buys a sack of feed it has by law to carry a label saying whether it has GMOs in it. And every single one of them, other than organic feed, carries that label. It says there are GMOs in this feed. There is no requirement that if you buy meat, if you buy milk, if you buy poultry, if you buy eggs, if you buy cheese, it doesn't have to say on that whether GMOs were used in producing it. They probably were, unless you're buying from the limited number of shops — supermarkets or individual shops — that make sure that farmers producing for them are working without GMOs.

I've actually spent my life in the organic movement. Literally, my parents were founder members of the Soil Association. I've been regarded as a crank for the first part of it, and then suddenly people came around.

People want their children and their grand-children to eat safely. Not just for themselves, they want it safe for future generations. At the moment, not only are they being denied that safety, they are being denied the right to find out whether it's safe.

Michael O'Callaghan

On the note of access to information, I'd now like to invite Frank Corcoran who is representing the European Environmental Bureau. You might briefly explain what that is for the audience, Frank.

Frank Corcoran

Vice-President, European Environmental Bureau (EEB).

I'm the Vice-President of the European Environmental Bureau. That's an umbrella organisation for 120 environmental Non Governmental Organisations across Europe, which represents 120 million people. And for each Presidency of the European Union — currently we have the Austrian — they produce this document which is the Ten Green Tests, a memorandum to the Presidency of the particular Council of Ministers at that time. And in that the set out just some very very basic demands that can be agreed right across the board by such a vast array of environmental organisations, right across the European Union. And in that we've asked the Council of Ministers to work towards allowing the Member States the right to set up GMO-free zones at local and regional level. That's the first thing. And secondly, to review the authorization procedure, particularly by legally binding the European Food Safety Authority to apply the risk assessment set out in Directive 2001/18/EC, and improving the transparency of the procedure through stakeholder involvement so as to put in place a credible decision-making procedure.

Because it is perceived at the moment that things are going on behind closed doors, and this worries people. They say, why do things have to happen behind closed doors? In such a matter, it should be out in the open. And then in the very detailed memorandum to that they list out those particular demands that there is not in place yet across the European Union a fail-safe procedure to allow these things to be released into the atmosphere.

So it is very heartening that right across the European Union, 120 Non Governmental Organisations — which is all of them really — representing the environmental movement have agreed on this stance. And I

have to say that the Austrian Presidency in particular is very interested in this particular issue. And they are willing to do something for this. And they have asked us to make a presentation shortly to the Council of Ministers, in March, on this particular topic and they will also be having a conference on that during the course of their Presidency to push the matter forward.

Michael O'Callaghan

Thank you very much. Before we end with elected representatives, I would just like to briefly ask Padraig Fahy if you would give a short opinion from the organic perspective.

Padraig Fahy

Chairman, Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association (IOFGA).

My name is Padraig Fahy and I'm an organic producer from Galway. I'm also the Chairman of IOFGA. We represent organic farmers, growers and producers throughout the island of Ireland.

We are appalled that the EPA may issue a license to allow this trial to proceed. To do so will risk contaminating surrounding lands and will jeopardise the livelihoods of organic farmers.

Every day we hear more and more reports about problems with GM technology: crops not growing as predicted, deleterious effects on animals and humans health, unforeseen impacts on wild and cultivated plants. And when you have an increasing body of evidence suggesting that there is considerable scientific ignorance about GM technology, and you also have an increasing body of evidence of serious and irreversible harm from some GM technology, then you really have to adopt the precautionary approach. And we urge the EPA to do this.

The Irish government has not agreed a clear approach to "co-existence" between GM crops and other crops, and especially organic crops. If the EPA approves this application from BASF, then it will prejudice the outcome of these discussions and would, in effect, be determining the Irish policy on "co-existence".

It does not make sense business-wise as well, to bring GMOs into our country. There is no demand for them. In the UK which is one of our biggest markets, it is viewed with disdain. Supermarket customers want nothing of it. So why are we risking our greatest marketing asset - our clean and green image?

Surely the best way to protect and enhance the market for Irish food and Irish farming is to keep GMO out, encourage sustainable food production such as organic farming. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

Michael O'Callaghan:

OK, we need to be very tight on time. Seán, would you like to say a few words? Seán McArdle is Director of the Irish Farmers Markets, and he will just briefly tell you about the demand for safe GM-free food.

Seán McArdle:

Director, Irish Farmers Markets

OK. Irish Farmers Markets: I will speak from my personal opinion because I run a business around the Leinster area. There are now over 90 farmers markets in this country. And that represents, we reckon, about 100,000 people coming into farmers' markets regularly each weekend. And that to my mind represents people who actually make a conscious effort to go for good food, because a farmers market represents food from the producer as opposed to supermarkets. That's the first line of defense against supermarkets who inevitably will get GMO foods in.

I can guarantee that my farmers markets and farmers markets around the country will not do that. They will safeguard the future of Ireland through their food.

Michael O'Callaghan:

OK. Is Senator Bannon here? I don't think so. Or Michael Mulcahy, TD? Neither. They didn't make it. So I'd like to call, then, on Trevor Sargent.

**Intervention from audience by Paddy Boylan
United Farmers Association.**

Before the politicians, could I just say that I represent small farmers, low-income farmers. I'm also in the organic movement now. The worst thing that has happened to this country, as one of our small farmers said a couple of years ago, was that the economy is on the very up. He didn't mean it in that way. But he just mentioned that most farmers left the land and got a job. The didn't give a Killarney about what was left at home, except part-time. But now we have the situation there in Ballinasloe – and Padraig knows all about it – where they lost all of their factories all of a sudden and there is nothing, very little.

Now they come along and just a couple of mile down the road from where these damn poisonous potatoes are going to be sown, the factory in Ballivor is after closing. Now if these people have the little bit of a backup, the little bit of land, the five acres, the ten acres, the forty acres, they can grow their own spuds, they can do their own thing, and they can make a living. They won't be totally dependent. But here we are, we're going all for one, all in one bag. If it's poisoned, we're finished! I'll leave it at that.

**Trevor Sargent, TD
Leader, Green Party. TD for Dublin North.**

Thank you Michael, and thank you Paddy.

I can relate to what you're saying there. I'm Trevor Sargent, Leader of the Green Party and Spokesperson on Agriculture and Food as well. I've spoken to many farmers, many farmers in Co. Meath indeed, and in my own constituency of North Co. Dublin, and they are deeply angry about this particular prospect of GM potatoes being grown as a trial in Co. Meath. They see this as nothing more than BASF coming to Ireland, effectively prostituting Ireland by using the name of Ireland to do their trial and then sell their global product with no benefit for Ireland, no benefit for Irish farmers, no benefit for Irish consumers.

And that has to be, for many people, the point of protest which has to finish with success. Because this is a slippery slope, which if we allow it to happen now will create the precedent for the future. And that means that we have to challenge the Government. The Minister for Agriculture in the Dáil told me that there were adequate safeguards, that it was watertight; that nothing could happen that would do any harm to anybody. And I have to challenge the Minister, and we all should challenge the Minister and the Government to say they do not have watertight regulations.

That report on "co-existence" is a draft. It has been found to use the same terms which failed in Spain and other countries where GM has been grown. It is not watertight either in terms of potatoes. You will not know if your potato crop has been contaminated until the second year after harvest when you go to grow seed again and discover the fatal result then.

So there's no way that this Government can give any guarantees about this trial. And BASF knows that well. The only buffer zone that will be of any use in this country is the Irish Sea, and that should be the one we insist on!

Michael O'Callaghan

Next I would like to invite Marian Harkin, MEP, who has very kindly flown in from Brussels I understand this morning.

But before her talk, I just want to give you a sense of what is going on at the European level. Ireland has never voted against GM crops out of about a dozen votes in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. We have actually played a leading role in getting GM crops legalized. The TRIPS agreement that Fr. Seán McDonagh referred to – the intellectual property rights agreement that gives corporations the right to patent GMO crops came in to the WTO under Peter Sutherland, and Irishman, the European-wide embargo against GM crops was terminated two weeks before he left office by David Byrne, as European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs, to the great annoyance of the majority of EU member states who are against GM crops.

In Europe at the moment Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Poland and Italy possibly are completely against any GM crops whatsoever. And there are 175 Regional Governments that have banned GM crops and

4,500 Local Authorities and smaller areas. Ireland keeps abstaining from voting now, and actually colluding with the European Commission which is widely viewed as having an undemocratic approach to the whole safety claims they are making. There are big demands for reform of the European Food Safety Authority to actually take into account independent scientific research. At the moment most of the approvals that are made by the EFSA are done on the basis of information given to them by the companies like BASF and Monsanto saying this is safe. There is no independent scientific research.

So to get a brief European perspective I would now like to invite Marian Harkin. Thanks.

Marian Harkin, MEP
MEP for the Border Region, TD for Sligo-Leitrim.

Thank you very much. When I heard the press conference and the march was on today I did fly in from Brussels this morning because I think it's very important that I'm here, that we are all here to air this issue, and you're right, Ireland's record in Europe is a disgrace on GMOs. We have either abstained or we have voted for [applause].

And as Frank mentioned, at least the Austrian presidency is going in the direction of anti-GMO. They are organizing a conference later this year. And certainly, I hope that that will raise people's awareness. But the problem is: is it going to be too late for Ireland? Because what are we talking about here? Potatoes that we don't need, that we don't want, and that we risk our future status of remaining GMO-free.

There are varieties out there that are blight-resistant. We don't need this, we don't want this. BASF wants this. This country doesn't need it and doesn't want it. And that's why I came here this morning.

And to me as well, what we're looking at here is the ugly face of globalisation. Patenting life forms should, in itself, be resisted apart from what we're talking about here today.

One or two final points because I know we're tight for time. You mentioned the democratic deficit and it was mentioned by somebody else. We have members of the Seanad, we have members of the Dáil here, and we have no influence on what happens here. I may have some influence on the European Parliament, on our vote in the European Parliament, but we have no influence on any of this. So there is a democratic deficit because most Irish people do not want GMO foods.

And I will just finish by saying: it's not just this generation. We have a duty to the next generation to make sure that we don't do anything that will impact negatively on their future. And I believe if this decision is taken to grant the license by the EPA, that's exactly what we'll be doing.

Michael O'Callaghan

My grandfather was in the first Dáil, and he was also a Senator. And his generation of men and women fought a very difficult struggle to get independence for Ireland from the British Empire. I believe that the introduction of patented GMO crops is a new form of colonialism. It will be irreversible this time if we let it in. So it's very important that this government, we're calling on the government to actually think seriously about standing up for the human rights of the Irish people to safe GMO-free food.

And if that means resisting pressure from the European Commission – which will say that you can't have a blanket ban on GMO crops – and resisting pressure from the WTO, then we should do it! Other countries are doing it. The Governments of Austria is saying they don't want any GMO crops. The same with Poland, the same with Hungary, [Greece], and Italy is very close to that position. So just to end this discussion I'd like to call on Senator David Norris, whom I greatly admire for as a champion of human rights.

Senator David Norris
Independent, University of Dublin.

First of all I would like to congratulate Michael and the others for organizing this. This is a burning issue - it's perfectly clear from the number, the range and the diversity of people represented here today.

The first thing I want to say is: this [i.e. BASF] is a German company. There is plenty of room in Germany. Why do they need to come to Ireland? Can't they do their bloody experiments there? [applause].

Second, I would like to pay tribute to Father Seán McDonagh. He has been a voice for the voiceless on this issue. He has bucked the trend, gone out beyond government, and he was superb on Pat Kenny this morning. He instanced a case which shows you exactly why it is dangerous, why the patenting of life forms is an obscenity. There was a farmer in Canada [i.e. Percy Schmeiser] going along in his normal farming occupations. They established one of these experiments next to him. It contaminated his crop. He was fined a hundred thousand. His entire crop was swiped. That is not fair. We don't want that happening in Ireland!

Then there is the question of blight-resistant potatoes. David McConnell, my former colleague – and I hope still a friend, although I disagree with him – acknowledged that blight-resistant potatoes can be produced, albeit sometimes in a slightly slower way, by traditional methods of breeding. Let's not go in the fast lane: we know from our road accident rate in this country that the fast lane can be bloody dangerous [applause].

I have one final thing to say, and it's a serious point. I am going to be calling on the government – and I know that Marian [Harkin] and Trevor [Sargent] and other people will also, I think, be disturbed by this – I learnt in just the last week that at the World Trade Organisation's recent meeting in Hong Kong, among the Irish delegation – which was used as a Trojan horse by Monsanto – there was a representative of Monsanto. I think that's disgraceful! Monsanto does not represent the Irish people! And I call upon Bertie Ahern and the Government to explain what that Monsanto representative was doing at the WTO trade discussions purporting to represent the Irish people. They do not represent Ireland! And this particular person wasn't even resident in Ireland.

I would just like to ask, because I'm not 100% sure: I've never been at these meetings, I know my colleague Oisín Coughlan has (he was not by the way the source of this, I don't know whether he would bother his barney if he was quoted as the source, but he wasn't) were they also at the meeting that you attended?

Oisín Coughlan:

They were at Cancún as well.

David Norris:

They were at Cancún as well! How much do the Irish people know about being represented by Monsanto with the connivance of the Irish government? I call upon Bertie Ahern and the Irish Government to explain how Monsanto is part of our delegation to the World Trade Organisation!