

## **Genetically engineered crops contaminate fields and food around the world**

Greenpeace International press release, 30 May 2005

Montreal, Canada — Greenpeace, farmers' organizations and community representatives today called on delegates to the Biosafety Protocol meeting to urgently introduce strict liability regulations to make companies accountable for the contamination and damage caused by their GE products.

In a written invitation to Canadian Environment Minister Stéphane Dion, the groups called on the minister to join them for the opening of the biosafety protocol meeting, for a 'return to sender' activity in order to hand over to him Canadian GE canola found to be growing wild in Japan.

As predicted by environmental, farming and social movements, GE seeds have, since their introduction in 1996, contaminated food crops and the environment right across the globe. Over 50 incidents of illegal or unapproved GE contamination have been documented in 25 countries on 5 continents, and those are only the recorded incidents.

Illegal and unapproved GE contamination of seeds and crops has been recorded in maize in Mexico, rice in China, soya in Brazil, papaya in Thailand, oilseed rape in Europe, cotton in India, canola in Canada, and now, in the latest example, GE canola in Japan. In Chile, where the World Seed Congress starts today,

Greenpeace is calling attention to the latest case of illegal maize seed contamination, the first to be found in this country highly dependent on its export seed industry.

"GMOs have been found growing in the fields of farmers who never asked for, nor ever wanted, GE anywhere near their fields. Yet instead of compensation the farmers have found themselves forced by sharp lawyers and intimidation to pay the GE seed companies -- for damage to the company's patent!" Greenpeace GE Campaigner Doreen Stabinsky said.

Potentially allergenic GE maize (Starlink) has contaminated food products on two continents and dangerous GE pharmaceutical crops have been discovered in silos of harvested crops in the USA. In the meantime, field trials or commercial growing of anything from pig vaccines to industrial plastics continues apace in the USA.

"If states don't act now to make producers and exporters accountable, further and more dangerous GMO contamination is around the corner," said Stabinsky.

Greenpeace demands negotiators immediately establish an interim liability regime and compensation fund for harm done to farmers, consumers or the environment.

"The evidence shows that GMOs may cause irreversible harm to ecosystems and biodiversity even far away from their country of origin. As long as no binding international liability regulations have been agreed, importing countries risk that they may have to pay for the damage themselves," said Stabinsky. "Under these conditions, countries should simply refuse to accept imports of GMOs."

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