

GM-free Ireland Network

WWW.GMFREEIRELAND.ORG



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Absolutely Organic
An Gáirdín Ecology Centre, Co. Galway
An Taisce / the National Trust for Ireland
An tIonad Glas Organic College
Atlantic Organics Ltd • Atrium Cafe, Sligo
Bantry, Co. Cork
Barca Wine, Lismore, Waterford
The Body Shop
Bray, Co. Wicklow
BrookLodge Hotel & Wells Spa, Co. Wicklow
Café Fresh Restaurant, Dublin
Cavan Leitrim Environmental Awareness Netw
Chapter One restaurant, Dublin
Clonakilty, Co. Cork
Columban Missionaries • Columban Sisters
Corry Lane Smokery
County Cavan
County Clare
County Fermanagh
County Kildare
County Kerry
County Meath
County Roscommon
County Monaghan
County Westmeath
Cottage Bistro, Waterford
Courthouse Restaurant, Kinelough, Co. Leitrim
Derry, Co. Derry
The Douglas Hyde Bar and Restaurant, Cork
Dublin Food Coop
Earthwatch Clare • Earthwatch Kerry
El Paso Restaurant, Howth, Dublin
Euro-Toques Ireland
Forest Friends Ireland - Cárde na Coille
Friends of the Earth Ireland
Friends of the Irish Environment
Fruit Hill Farm
Food and Wine Magazine • Food Writers Guild
Forge Restaurant, Carnaross, Co. Meath
Galway City
Garryvoe Food Products • Georges Patisserie
Glendalough Estate
Glenisk Organic Ireland
Global Vision Consulting Ltd
GreatFood.ie • Green Planet
Gubeen Cheese Ltd.
Harvest Fare Health Food Store
Highdell Organic Farm
Irish Association of Health Stores (IAHS)
Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association
Irish Doctors' Environmental Association
Irish Farmers Markets
Irish Institute of Nutrition and Health
Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association
Irish Organic Herbs Ltd
Irish Pages literary journal
Irish Peatland Conservation Council
Irish Seal Sanctuary
Irish Seed Savers Association
Irish Wildlife Trust
ItsaBagel • Jacques Restaurant, Cork
Jaipur Restaurant, Sandycroft, Dublin
Joop Café, Douglas, Cork
Just Forests
Kerry Earth Education Project • Kerry Organics
Kildare Chilling Company
Ladybird Organic
Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-operative
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Little Irish Apple Co.
Marc Michel Organic Life, Co. Wicklow
Meitheal Chill Mhantain
National Beef Association (Northern Ireland)
Navan, Co. Meath
Newry & Mourne
Oakfield Organic Gardens
Old Bakehouse Restaurant, Bruff, Co. Limerick
Organic Matters magazine
The Organic Trust Ltd
Oscars Restaurant, Galway
Organico Cafe Shop & Bakery
Otto's Creative Catering
People Against Pesticides
Restaurants Association of Ireland
Roscarbon Organic Eggs
Roscommon Environmental Alliance
Royal Root Guild
Slow Food Ireland
Sol Rio Restaurant, Westport, Co. Mayo
Sonas Health Foods, Newcastle, Co. Limerick
Spire Restaurant, Duleek, Co. Meath
Sustainability Research Design Group
Sustainable Ireland Co-operative
Thornton's Restaurant, Stephen's Green
Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment
Waterford Natural Oils
Wexford Flower and Foliage Producers' Group
Woodland League

[Name and address of TD]
23 December 2006

Re. opportunity for voters to support you in the General Election

Dear [name of TD] ,

The majority of citizens now oppose the Government's policy to contaminate our food chain with patented genetically modified (GM) seeds and crops. The GM-free Ireland Network has grown to include the largest number and the broadest diversity of stakeholder groups of any NGO on this island. The members of our 130 constituent organisations — and the citizens of the 9 counties and 9 town councils which already prohibit the release of GM seeds and crops — now exceed 1 million people. Our campaign is endorsed by *all* the opposition parties and by TDs, Senators and MEPs in Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Féin, the Green Party, the PDs and Fianna Fáil.

GM seeds and crops are completely banned in Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Greece, most of Italy & France, and 175 Regions in 22 EU countries because of their environmental and economic risks. Scientific evidence links GM food to deaths and disease in laboratory animals, livestock and humans. Contamination incidents in 40 countries prove that GMOs can *not* "co-exist" with conventional and organic crops; they rapidly contaminate them and can not be recalled after being released. (Illegal GM rice from a 1998 experiment in the USA was still being sold in Irish supermarkets this year!) According to the Irish Patent Office, EU law does not prevent GM patent owners like Monsanto from claiming ownership of contaminated farmers' seeds and crops. This expropriation of our food supply would be the greatest rip-off in our nation's history!

This government violated Fianna Fáil's 1997 pledge to never allow GM food and crops in Ireland, and has since colluded with giant agribusiness-biotech corporations, the WTO, and the EC to force GM food and crops into the EU against the wishes of the majority of member states. The Minister for Agriculture Mary Coughlan is now about to launch a legally flawed and undemocratic policy "to ensure the co-existence of GM crops with conventional and organic farming". This will irrevocably violate our farmers' and consumers' right to safe GM-free food, ruin our image as the "clean green food island", and have disastrous impacts on our food, farm & tourism sectors.

Government sovereignty derives from its ability to protect its citizens. Unfortunately, many Irish politicians and civil servants still blindly accept the agri-biotech lobby's pseudo-scientific claims that GM food is safe, that we are not allowed to ban GM crops, and that Ireland must accept GM farming "to remain competitive". But in reality there is no market for GM food in Europe, and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety clearly recognises Ireland's legal right to ban GM crops based on the Precautionary Principle. Future generations will hold us all accountable for allowing the GMO invasion unless we take decisive action now to prevent this disaster *before it happens*.

What you can do to mobilise voters in your favour:

1. Since there has been no national forum for politicians, civil servants and stakeholders to inform themselves about the scientific evidence of the risks of GM food and crops, please make up your own mind by taking the time over Christmas to review the enclosed items:
 - *The Future of Food* DVD which provides a clear and concise overview of the subject;
 - *Patenting Life? Stop!* — a book by the Irish missionary Fr. Seán McDonagh;
 - *Keep Irish Food and Farming GMO-free* flyer + quotes from Irish politicians.
2. Kindly respond to me in writing by 31 January to let me know whether we can count on:
 - (a) your declared support for the whole island of Ireland to remain a GMO-free zone and
 - (b) your commitment to introduce legislation to prohibit all experimental and commercial release of live GMO seeds, crops, trees, crustaceans, fish and livestock on this island.

GM-free Ireland will publish your response (or lack thereof) on our web site in February and widely disseminate your position to voters in the lead-up to the forthcoming General Election.

For more information, please visit our web site at gmfreeireland.org and /or call me anytime on (0404) 43 885.

Wishing you a successful GM-free New Year,

Michael O'Callaghan
Co-ordinator