

## Corporate pressure in solving world hunger through GMO's

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How can one attain sustainability by losing the very basis of sustainable food? Diversity being replaced by corporate-controlled monoculture farming with patented seeds from other countries would only be the basis of sustainable destruction.

Take the case of Schmeiser, a Canadian farmer who did not intentionally grow GM seed yet Monsanto's position was that it didn't matter whether Schmeiser knew or not that his canola field was contaminated with the Roundup Ready gene, or whether or not he took advantage of the technology; that he must pay Monsanto their Technology Fee of \$15./acre.

I can't put it into any better words than Neil E. Levin, who wrote *"Starvation and malnutrition are very real problems, but they are caused by unequal distribution of wealth, not by food scarcity. According to the United Nations World Food Program, there is currently more than enough food produced to feed everyone on the planet an adequate and healthy diet. The reason that approximately 800 million people go hungry each year is that they don't have access to food by either being able to afford it or grow their own. Biotechnology, by turning living crops into "intellectual property," increases corporate control over food resources and production. Rather than alleviate world hunger, biotechnology is likely to exacerbate it by increasing everybody's dependence on the corporate sector (large patent-holding multinational biotech corporations angling for their next quarterly profit) for seeds and chemicals. We have already seen how well for-profit commercial interests have done to reduce hunger that is largely due to people being poor or to their living in remote areas."*

While the term "organic" may have become a fad word for the rich, we must not overlook the importance of "organic" agriculture – Sustainability. The philosophy of organic food production maintains certain principles: biodiversity, ecological balance, sustainability, natural plant fertilization, natural pest management, and soil integrity.

Christos Vasilikiotis, Ph.D. , Berkely has a logical opinion...*"Do we really need to embark upon another risky technological fix to solve the mistakes of a previous one? Instead, we should be looking for solutions that are based on ecological and biological principles and have significantly fewer environmental costs. There is such an alternative that has been pioneered by organic farmers. In contrast to the industrial/monoculture approach advocated by the biotech industry, organic agriculture is described by the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) as "a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity."*

The consensus on most recent studies show that organic techniques can provide much more food per acre in developing countries than conventional chemical-based agriculture.

A recent study by the University of Essex also looked at farming projects in 57 developing countries, covering three per cent of the entire cultivated area in the Third World, and revealed an average increase of 79 per cent with organic principals. Research at the University of Michigan also concluded that organic farming could increase yields on developing countries' farms three-fold.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) issued a report last year which found that 114 projects, covering almost two million African farmers, more than doubled their yields by introducing organic or near-organic practices.

Even more important, as the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development points out, going organic almost always boosts the incomes of small Third World farmers, because they no longer have to buy expensive chemicals.

Dependence on chemicals is not sustainable, neither is dependence on seeds. When a farmer can no longer save seeds from their own crop but rather will need to sign a contract with seed houses promising not to save seed and replant it.

Even worse, a 'Terminator' gene has been developed that will ensure that harvested seed has no genetic viability, thus ensuring dependence on the corporation.

There are literally thousands of species of edible plants that can be grown, yet most people are only aware of the thirty or so species. Renewing interest in the principals of the Japanese Farmer-Philosopher Masanobu Fukuoka on greening the deserts and focus on researching the diversity of alternative heirloom plants, which are naturally suitable for the area will create a sustainable future for food.

Freedom, independence & biodiversity = Sustainability.

Judie

Links of interest:

<http://www.saynotogmos.org/ud2005/ujun05b.html#afraid>

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=7849>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/5990854/Organic-is-more-than-small-potatoes.html>

<http://ikjeld.com/en/news/72/japanese-farmer-philosopher-masanobu-fukuoka-natural-farming-greening-the-deserts>