

GE Free New Zealand

In Food and Environment

Newsletter November 2011

* Please note that some articles have been abbreviated in order to meet size constraints *

NZ environment 14 years on - still GE Free Lets vote to keep it that way!

Another election upcoming – a good chance to take stock and focus on our objective. Most of our members have been with us on our journey and we thank you for all the help and support so kindly given over the years.

We are lucky in New Zealand our environment is GE Free – unlike other countries - the US in particular, some parts of Europe and more recently Australia. See P 3 where wilding canola and RoundUp Resistant weeds now proliferate.

Our locally grown food is in the main uncontaminated, although maize would be a possible exception.

Our dairy, egg and meat production despite continuing actions may be produced using GE feedstuffs but buying organic or from local egg producers who are using feedstuffs free of GE allows us to make a choice. Our choices at the supermarket and restaurants are also important. Most people I know won't buy processed foods with canola, soy or maize ingredients and have had to go to these lengths because of continuing refusals by government to ensure our food imports remain GE free.

US consumers took the issue to Washington on World Food Day 15/10/2011 asking for the 'right to know' in light of new evidence of organ damage & infertility. GE Free NZ initiatives took place around NZ with letters delivered to supermarkets in some areas and the launch of our postcard campaign. Our thanks go to all those who took part in actions. Zebra Zoo's legal team responded by threatening to take us to court for our allegations. Watch this space.

US citizens are protesting at last; their bankrupt country now polluted in so many ways - GE, pesticides and herbicides, fracking and other unconscionable activities promoted by corporations in league with government.

We knew from the beginning GE was not what we wanted in New Zealand – the anti-nuclear campaign set a precedent showing that the actions of positive people could make a difference. Unfortunately what the public didn't know at the time was that our government was persuaded by the US & other countries and WTO intent that GE was the way forward.

No matter how many people protested, and many thousands did around NZ leading to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into GE; government had NO intention of labeling food produced using GE or putting a moratorium on GE trials of crops and animals.

There are now around 70 GE foods and many GE food additives approved for our consumption by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), with no GE food applications ever turned down, despite risks to human safety shown in animal feeding studies.

Monsanto variants of corn, cotton, soy and canola resistant to one or more herbicides and/or pesticides add more and more chemical residues to our diet. Crops in the main come from the USA; consumers there now venting their anger on Monsanto. Many years ago a friend met their CEO at a corporate bash in the US, he freely admitted their intention to be the control of the world food supply.

Despite successive governments thinking the GE issue has gone away this is not so. See Scoop stories P2

Lets review party policy on GE :- National governments have always supported GE.

Our present National government surrounded by their biotech henchmen are avid supporters of GE; Bill English recently quipped that GE ryegrass would be good idea for NZ agriculture. No wonder with long term GE supporter Prof. Gluckman in John Key's newly created post of chief science advisor.

William Rolleston ex biotech Life Sciences Network and now Vice President of Federated Farmers is also very close to government.

He was appointed by Wayne Mapp, Minister of Science and Innovation as member of 2 new boards deciding \$150m/year of investment funding for science and innovation.

'Innovation' has a government role as a "projected economic-advancement lever." Rolleston is chair of the Innovation Board and a member of the Science Board. His business South Pacific Sera, produces animal blood products for the biotech sector and undertakes contract manufacturing of vaccines. His involvement in these boards could be considered a conflict of interest and would certainly favour the funding of biotech research projects.

www.national.org.nz/Article.aspx?articleId=34938

Another longterm biotech supporter Dr Tom Richardson, CEO of

AgResearch, was recently appointed chair of Science New .

Tom Richardson became CEO of AgResearch in 2010 following 5 years as CEO of Scion. Science promotes the value of science and technology for New Zealand. Its Board comprises the CEOs of the 8 Crown Research Institutes, which collectively employ 4,200 staff, with annual revenues of \$700 million. Two-thirds of the nation's publically-funded science researchers (outside health and IT) work at CRIs.

www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC1110/S0023/science-new-zealand-chairman-elected.htm

With NZ's present financial shortfall and borrowing of \$300m per week how can we continue to fund this obsolete GE research - See Genesis article P4 whilst letting our economic backbone – primary produce go to the dogs.

Recently Soil and Health spokesperson Steffan Browning stated after Fonterra's scaling back of organic milk production "Organic production has been identified as the main obstacle to introducing GE grasses and crops into New Zealand in a Ministry of Research Science and Technology (MoRST, now Science and Innovation) report written by Terri Dunahay, international biotechnology policy specialist with the United States Department of Agriculture." 23/08/11

Our democratically elected National government has been spending well beyond its means. Spending on setting up new boards, new positions promoting its agenda, biotech research and reports like the one above, it is supporting investors, corporate interests and its own interests over and above those of the NZ public who still oppose genetic engineering.

The signing of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement TPPA may also have an effect on the use of GE in NZ and unfortunately government refuses to release the details. It is likely to attack our GE and tobacco controls and food labeling and food safety standards; and weakens our controls on food imports where they might carry diseases under the guise of "open markets, fewer restrictions on

exports, more transparency, and an overall commitment to fairness."Hilary Clinton

11/10/11
www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1110/S00313/americas-pacific-century.htm

Neither does Labour have a better track record During their terms of government they regularly broke election promises on GE and certainly can't be trusted to deliver us GE Free food or a moratorium on GE trials.

During their term of office they allowed the removal of Country of Origin labeling (see P6) and then there was the "Corngate" fiasco during which they secretly allowed farmers to grow imported GE maize seeds.

Although GE Free NZ is non political we must look at what governments have done to deny our choices and vote to benefit our aims for the future.

GE Free NZ thanks Sue Kedgeley

Sue Kedgeley recently left parliament after 12 years with the Green Party advocating for GE Free food and a healthy environment; it is hoped if the Greens achieve enough votes Steffan Browning from Soil & Health will take the fight from here.

Grateful thanks from all GE Free NZ & supporters go to Sue for all her years of fantastic work. We are sorry to see you go and wish you every happiness in the future.

A recent concern of Sue's was around the new Food Bill's bureaucratic and excessive jurisdiction; and whether home gardeners, small growers selling food directly to consumers, & people who barter & swap food would be captured by food regulations and required to operate under a registered food control plan or a national programme

She asked the Minister to exempt these groups saying "We should be doing everything we can to encourage people to grow and swap food, not discourage local food production by imposing potentially onerous regulations on home gardeners."

The Food Bill is now on hold until the new Parliament and we hope be changed by way of Supplementary Order Papers to fix these problems.

Scoop Sci-tech Top Stories

www.organicnz.org/soil-and-health-press/1265/agresearch-transgender-goats-to-be-milked/

AgResearch Transgender Goats To Be Milked

12/6/11 SOIL & HEALTH

AgResearch's GE goat experiments have a new bizarre twist with surviving GE pregnancies producing mostly transgender offspring termed 'goys,' by AgResearch farm manager. About 25% were female & 75% "goys", females in sterile male bodies, which will be induced into milking to see if the intended (GE) human protein will be expressed in the milk.

With a success rate of around 15%, (although one flock of about 18 recipient does failed to hold one GE embryo in a particular experiment) AgResearch has a past track record of resultant GE offspring prone to a variety of disabilities including arthritis, respiratory distress, deformities and ruptured ovaries.

Concerns continue about animal welfare issues and also the level of contaminated surface water that drains off the experimental area.

"Considering that a recent report showed AgResearch scientists intentionally corrupting monitoring research of risky microbial horizontal gene transfer (HGT), these unnatural reproductive outcomes and continued animal welfare issues, should spell the end of the Ruakura GE experiments," said Steffan Browning.

"AgResearch is at the cruel operator end of a business partnership with a dirty drug manufacturer, Genzyme, who has been investigated and fined by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for poor manufacturing practices." Soil & Health wants AgResearch's cruel and unnatural animal experiments stopped immediately, and the reinstatement of the New Zealand Bioethics Council.

Contact Susan Thompson at www.epa.govt.nz for 2011 Annual Report covering animal welfare and deaths.

www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/Pages/applications-details.aspx?appID=ERMA200223

Bizarre Advice To Editors from NZ Science Media Centre

07/10/2011 GE Free NZ PR

The publicly-funded NZ Science Media Centre is offering bizarre suggestions to news editors and journalists about how to report the accidental spread of GE canola in Australia and the US.

SMC advises science reporters to talk about GE canola "*brightening the roadsides with yellow during their flowering,*" and to report that the latest research paper "*is unremarkable and not at all surprising*".

This advice comes as publication of research confirms the spread of GE crops and herbicide-resistance into the environment.

Rather than advising the media of scientific uncertainty and debate about the implications of GE crops spreading, the SMC advises media to say that contamination had happened before and was just being "repeated now in the US state of North Dakota." In Australia contamination from GE canola has ended up with farmers in court, and Western Australian growers are being asked to stop growing GM Canola by grain exporters.

New Zealand farmers are also alarmed at the risk to exports and local cropping from GE maize and GE wheat. There is concern that Monsanto may attempt to enforce the introduction of GE seeds through trade agreements like the TPPA.

The spin being pushed by the New Zealand Science Media Centre cannot be taken seriously when it deliberately ignores the scientific debate, and fails to consider the economic implications of GE contamination for New Zealand's clean-green image and global exports.

www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/2011/10/07/wild-gm-canola-in-united-states/

Australia's GE Mishap - Lesson for New Zealand. Soil & Health 15/8/11

A spillage of GE canola seed from a truck in a Western Australia GE free area, shows how easily contamination might occur should Fonterra continue its intention to have GE pastures in NZ. 15 tonnes of GE canola spilt when a fire started in a seized differential and melted a hole in the truck trailer about 160 km SE of Perth. It is uncertain how much canola was spread. GE seed was also spread by the water from fire fighting, some residual seed was germinating. Nearby farmers included some with lucrative GE free canola contracts with Japan, who are very concerned about the potential loss of business.

Scott Kinnear from the Safe Food Foundation in Australia said, "This GM canola spill in Australia follows the Canadian experience where widespread contamination of non GM canola has now taken place due to human error. It is inevitable that GM grasses in New Zealand will contaminate your non GM grasses and there will be no turning back."

Call for Moratorium as Farmers Switch Off GE-Canola, and Sales Fall GE Free NZ PR 2/10/11

Farmers are learning a hard lesson in Western Australia and are now switching back to GE free canola after GE canola sales have fallen. Contract Grain Traders have asked farmers to go back to growing GE-free canola for their export markets.

The experience of farmers across the Tasman signals that Brand New Zealand must preserve its GE-Free status. Our government needs to keep New Zealand production GE-free and restore the moratorium on commercial release; to realize the long-term economic benefit of clean, safe GE-free food production.

NZ Joins Millions Against Monsanto & R2K on World Food Day 15.10.11, PR: GE Free NZ

New Zealanders joined consumers around the world to mark World Food Day on October 16 in support of the USA's Right2Know campaign and Millions Against Monsanto.

The US consumer demand for labelling of GE foods has parallels with the battle for labelling and regulation in New Zealand in the early 2000s, which continues today with the latest approval of 2,4-D GE crops. Standing alongside consumers across the world the New Zealand campaign asks politicians to protect New Zealand's GE-free status and clean green image. The nationwide campaign with the headline "Keep it Natural" asks for government to establish a GE-Free Zone and for the restoration of the moratorium on commercial release of GE organisms.

Supermarket managers were also being asked to intervene in support of their customers by withdrawing or at least giving a warning about GM products.

US officials ignored their own scientific experts and approved GE foods, despite evidence GE foods should not have been allowed into the human food chain. The issue of clear labelling to warn consumers is a human right.

www.right2knowmarch.org/

<http://organicconsumers.org/monsanto/index.cfm>

In response to our PR the NZ Food & Grocery Council (FGC) felt obliged to put out the following PR 16.10.11

World Food Day is about world hunger not food company attacks
Political activists using World Food Day to revisit New Zealand's already clear and stringent GM labelling laws seem to have completely missed the point of the worthy FAO and United Nations initiative, say FGC.

"World Food Day has got nothing to do with New Zealand's labelling laws or where GM products might sit on a supermarket shelf.

Postcard campaign

Keep it natural: please send a message !!

...to candidates, MPs, party leaders and John Key...

We have enclosed a postcard for you to sign and send and pass to others to send a message! Please ask your friends to take action. They can send an e-card to one or more MPs and order cards at the

www.giantexperiment.co.nz

GE technology continues to fail

sticknz.net/2011/09/22/agricultures-failure-the-place-to-view-its-next-20-years-of-success-conference/?ScoopSrc=stick

The great irony of the NZ economy is that in spite of the Knowledge Wave & biotechnology, the powerhouse and backbone has continued to be agriculture and horticulture.

NZIAHS president Jon Hickford says "we need to show that the strength of our science really is in agriculture and horticulture" Hickford says that from a pragmatic viewpoint, NZ's economy can best grow and diversify from its existing strengths. "In spite of the financing of a whole lot of fancy gadgets, in 20 years time we're still going to be eating, if we're producing the best, safest, most nutritious and enjoyable food for wealthy people, we'll still be making money."

Genesis Research and Development says it desperately needs additional funds to run its business

It was forced to stop capital injection talks with UBNZ in the wake of the corruption charges leveled against May Wang and Jack Chen. The Auckland biotechnology company suspended its operations last year after running out of cash, and has survived by tapping investors for additional funds while it searches for profitable research opportunities.

Genesis posted a first-half net loss of \$148,000 for the six months to June 30. The research firm is involved in research in the fields of agriculture and human medicine. It developed a key gene-silencing technology. www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/5810161/Research-firm-caught-short-by-charges

GM may be answer to citrus problems

4/11/11

Genetic modification and antibiotics may be among the long-term solutions to overcoming two serious diseases affecting the Florida citrus industry, says the chief operating officer for the Citrus Research and Development Foundation in Florida. 90 per cent of US orange juice is supplied from Florida

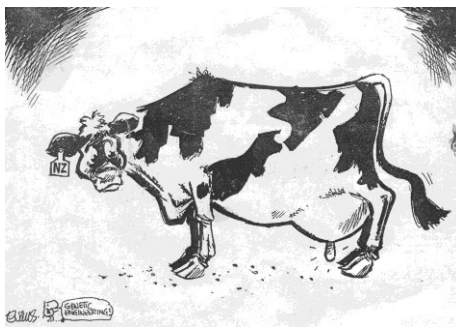
Fonterra's Gutting Of Organic Dairying Is The Next Step To GE Farms.

Soil & Health 23/8/11

Fonterra has taken its next step towards genetically engineered pastures, announcing the scaling back of organic production by half, showing a lack of support for good environmental practice or consumer health.

"Organic production has been identified as the main obstacle to introducing GE grasses and crops into NZ in a MoRST report, by Terri Dunahay," says Steffan Browning "Government also stopped real support for the organic sector following a briefing in 2009 to the Agriculture Minister by Terri Dunahay, an international biotech policy specialist with the US department of Agriculture."

"Dunahay and other US lobbyists, along with New Zealand based pro-GE scientists fail to mention the significant GE contamination of non-GE farms, the loss of markets, the massive increase in herbicide use, the new resistant weeds and disease problems, higher seed and production costs, loss of biodiversity, or the human and animal health problems associated with genetic engineering (GE)."



Natural Health Products Bill

Submissions are likely to be due early in the New Year. Read the bill and have a say

www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2011/0324/latest/versions.aspx

For more read Organic NZ Nov/Dec 2011

Pure NZ' Quality Standards Face Destruction Under TPPA

GE Free NZ PR 8/11/11

New Zealand's reputation and high standards of food safety and export quality produce are at risk from the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement, with the election on 26th November potentially allowing open slather for government to further undermine the country's unique marketing advantage.

"This election may be interpreted as providing a mandate for signing up to the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement (TPPA) and the sale of assets to partnership countries," says Claire Bleakley from GE-Free NZ. "But nothing could be further from the truth; secret agreements undermining our bio-security and food safety standards aren't good governance."

Information about the TPPA is to be secret for 4 years, but signs are the TPPA will lead to a lost sovereignty over issues that directly affect every New Zealander. This is because the proposed legislation will be vetted by partnership parties and possibly vetoed.

Leaked documents highlight US interests will be able to lobby to deny New Zealand producers their clean-green reputation for food safety and purity, as they compete against US GE contaminated products.

One issue is the potential loss of New Zealand's zero tolerance for imported GE seeds, which has preserved the integrity of NZ production for more than a decade, securing export dollars and protecting the environment and public health.

Official Smokescreen Undermines Science & Food Safety GE-Free NZ

Officials at Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) are using spin to sideline published research on the impact of GM foods on animals and are abandoning sound science needed to protect public health. FSANZ has again sacrificed the scientific approach and dismissed the urgent need for follow-up research after newly-published analysis of 19 animal feeding studies found serious health effects from sterility to kidney and liver damage.

FDA Knew: Genetically Modified Foods Produce Unexpected Toxins, Carcinogens & Allergens

In 1992 the US FDA (Food & Drug Administration) released its policy on GM organisms, claiming that "the agency is not aware of any information showing that [GMO] foods...differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way. In 1999 attorney Steven Druker after securing (via a lawsuit) 40,000 pages of FDA files, found 'memorandum after memorandum contain[ing] warnings about the unique hazards of GE food,' including the possibility that they could contain 'unexpected toxins, carcinogens or allergens.'

Call for Review of Contaminated Gardasil Vaccine

GE-Free NZ PR 12/.9/11

The Ministry of Health must immediately recall and review the potentially life threatening Gardasil vaccine as 6 NZ batches have tested positive for the synthetic recombinant Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) DNA. Health Authorities were told that all viral DNA had been removed from the vaccine through purification.

The Merck Sharpe and Dohme (NZ) HPV Virus vaccine Gardasil has been linked to adverse reactions leading to hospitalisation and disability. Dr. Sin Hang Lee a pathologist at Milford Hospital pathology laboratory US, says that "once a segment of recombinant DNA is inserted into a human cell, the consequences are hard to predict. It may be in the cell temporarily or stay there forever, with or without causing a mutation. Now the host cell contains human DNA as well as genetically engineered viral DNA."

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21827815

Calls for GE Free Poland 4/10/11

5 days before the Polish general election, anti GMO activists questioned the Ministry of Agriculture's double standards. Ministers have been claiming that they are calling for an EU wide ban of GM crop planting - but are do nothing to legislate for a secure ban in Poland. 50,000 Polish citizens aware of the GMO threat have signed petitions calling for a GMO Free Poland.

www.gmo.icppc.pl www.eko-cel.pl

Minister Called To Intervene against 2,4-D in Food

GE Free NZ PR 25.8.11

GE-Free NZ are asking that the NZ Food Regulation Ministerial Council and Health Minister immediately review the Food Standards Australia New Zealand approval to release 2, 4-D corn line DAS-40278-9 into the food supply. Consumers submitted valid health concerns, these issues have not been addressed.

This GE corn has caused deleterious effects in very small doses in animal studies, and has not been tested on humans for safety. The GE corn withstands high levels of herbicide 2, 4-D and glufosinate and doesn't require labeling unless over the threshold of regulated detectable DNA levels.

FSANZ approved it despite an absence of essential safety data about the acceptable maximum residue levels (MRL) of the herbicides.



Most processed foods like bread, biscuits, cereals, junk food, etc in NZ contain GE corn or Soya.

www.mediafreedominternational.org/2011/08/29/organ-disruption-linked-to-genetically-modified-crops/

EU court bans honey contaminated by GE crops

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has ruled that honey contaminated with pollen from a GE maize produced by Monsanto cannot be sold on the market. This means that if beekeepers keep beehives in areas where the GE crop is cultivated, they will have no hope of selling their products.

greenpeace.org/international/en/news/Blogs/makingwaves/eu-court-bans-honey-contaminated-by-ge-crops/blog/36671/

Consumers Want GM Pulled Off Shelves: UK Study

Most consumers want GM food removed from sale, says a recent survey of UK shoppers. Even when subjected to misleading and deceptive trade practices two thirds of people remain averse to GE/GM food.

"Deceptive trade practices designed to make GM food 'more acceptable' may still be working, but only on the uninformed," says Jon Carapiet from GE Free NZ.

The UK study echoes surveys showing similar rejection of GM foods by NZers, as well as strong support for the positives of organically produced, locally grown and affordable food.

The findings of the UK food survey demonstrate the importance of New Zealand protecting our GM-free status for agricultural exports to international markets demanding clean, safe GM-free food.

The NZ public demand for GE-free food is being subverted by our government official's support for imported GE ingredients, with worse to come if **trade agreements like the TPPA are able to prevent labelling or testing of GE foods.**

1) The Crop Protection Association's survey found 1/3 of shoppers think GM foods should be allowed to be sold in the UK, a majority (over 50%) do not think GM foods should even be allowed to be sold in the UK. Well over 50% of shoppers wouldn't buy GM, or allow it into UK shops, even if it were cheaper, more nutritious and safe for the environment.

www.gmwatch.org.eu

For a different spin check out

Shoppers back GM in face of rising food costs Farmers Weekly, 3/8/11
fwi.co.uk/Articles/2011/08/03/128181/Shoppers-back-GM-in-face-of-rising-foodcosts.htm#.Tjlco0muv3k

It's Cool when we know where our food comes from

1/11/11

Are the ingredients in your food from NZ? Half the time, packaging won't say, or the manufacturer will fudge it – "Made In New Zealand from local and/or imported ingredients".

Manufacturers don't have to say where food comes from. Unlike just about all our trading partners, we don't have any rules. Last year we imported \$700 million of fresh & processed fruit and vegetables, \$63m from China. Just 3 items from China – garlic, grapes and pears – were fresh. The rest of it was processed – 711,000kg of jam and marmalade.

If you want to be sure of buying NZ food the words to look for are "Produced in New Zealand".

The manufacturers look for the cheapest product they can find and usually it is cheaper to import fresh and processed foods than grow it here. Why don't we have mandatory Cool "country of origin" labelling?

The Food Safety Authority say the reasons are the cost and that it would be more difficult to argue for reduced trade barriers with other countries.

The trade argument is the one that has swayed successive governments. The World Trade Organisation doesn't like Cool, saying it could punish developing nations because people make assumptions about standards.

The Food Safety Authority has confidence that food manufacturing standards overseas are comparable with our own. However, concerns still arise about the over-use of chemicals in growing and processing food in other countries.

Australian tomatoes, capsicums or zucchinis are being sprayed with the insecticide dimethoate to stop fruit fly entering NZ, tests of zucchinis have found twice the maximum residual level.

We already have country of origin labelling for clothing, shoes, wine and white-ware. I am sure we all want to buy Kiwi-made food - BusinessDay www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/5884678/Its-Cool-when-we-know-where-our-food-comes-from

Northland Area news

The good news from Northland continues - thankyou Zelka for all those years of hard work that you and the rest of the Northland team have put into this mammoth effort.

The Inter Council Working Party on GMO Risk Evaluation & Management Options continues to go from strength to strength. Recently a GE agenda item was passed by Kaipara District Council committing to continued involvement in the Working Party and issues of GMOs

New Zealand GE Free Petition

A petition by Hugh Halliday asking the government to declare NZ GE Free is available for you to show support at

www.declarenzgmfree.co.nz/

Questions for your local politicians

Some suggested ideas

What is your party policy on the commercial use of GE organisms in the field. Are you for or against?

What is your party policy on Country of Origin labelling?

Does your party intend to sign the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement If so will you ensure that our food sovereignty and safety laws aren't watered down and zero tolerance of GE seed imports remains in place?

Are you prepared to protect New Zealand's GE Free Status?

Truefood Guide – Kids edition

This Truefood Guide, is a special kids edition. Thanks go to the many companies who made a GM-free commitment. We've had some big positive changes (eg Kellogg's & Snackbrands Australia), and unfortunately some disappointments (eg Kraft and Pepsico brands).

truefood.org.au/documents/TrueFood_Guide_Kids_2011.pdf

"The Future of Food"

Videos are available in NZ Price \$25 per DVD more info contact GE Free. A fantastic documentary, the film is an effective tool in educating people at all levels of awareness about GE food.

Bumper stickers + GE Free corflute signs are available from Head office see website.

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