



# GE Free New Zealand

## In Food and Environment

### Newsletter February 2006

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

**The GE Free movement has been consistently stalled by central government policies. Read about their reprehensible support of terminator technology P2.**

**A new report on options local government can take to preserve their areas sustainability shows a way forward for our GE Free communities.**

#### **New Report Sounds Warning Bells for Local Authorities**

GE Free NZ PR 16.11.05  
Regional and local authorities will have to protect their local economies from negative impacts of GE organisms or risk major costs falling to ratepayers under the government's current system for regulating GE organisms.

The "Risk Evaluation and Options Report", commissioned by Waitakere City Council, Rodney, Kaipara, Whangarei and Far North District Councils, is a timely warning for local government and conservation bodies throughout New Zealand.

The report examines in greater depth the risks to local authorities and their communities posed by centralised decision-making in Wellington where ERMA will decide on GMO releases into the environment.

Under existing legislation in New Zealand, an approval by ERMA effectively acts as a publicly-funded subsidy for GE companies when things go wrong and contamination of land or loss of markets results. Without strict liability on users and promoters of GE organisms, downstream costs are set to fall to taxpayers and ratepayers through central and local government.

GE Free NZ encourages all local authorities to work together to prevent the unreasonable imposition of

these costs on the public and to ensure their regional economy and environment is protected through changes to the District Plan and Long Term Council Community Plan.

Local Government NZ should also be prepared to act on behalf of its members to ensure central government do not follow US authorities in attempting to deny local communities a say in keeping their region GE-free by excluding them from the statutory decision-making process.

There is no denying that New Zealand benefits enormously from being able to market produce as 100% GE-free and many regions are ideally placed geographically to achieve the distinction of a Regional Exclusion Zone for GMOs. Co-existence of GE-free and GE production is now being shown overseas to be either impossible or unacceptably costly to all farmers as they struggle to change long-established farming methods to battle contamination.

Ultimately a nation-wide exclusion zone is the best way for the Labour led government to protect primary exports for New Zealand, and meet the concerns of scientists, local authorities and our key markets, as well as the majority of New Zealanders.

GE Free NZ are shocked and saddened by Rod Donald's sudden death. Rod was an inspiration to all of us in Aotearoa who wish to preserve New Zealand's GE Free status.

We will miss his positive energy, unbounding optimism and the support that he gave to the GE Free vision.

Our deepest sympathy and thoughts go to his family.

#### **Innovative and ground-breaking report on GMO management**

4 options for managing GMO activities under the RMA involve changing councils' district plans to allow extra safeguards to be set at the local level – acting in addition to those set by the national regulator, ERMA. The options evaluated are: making all GMO land uses discretionary activities, prohibiting all GMO land uses, and two others that would make some classes of activity discretionary while others would be prohibited.

The report identifies a series of economic, environmental and cultural risks associated with the outdoor use of GMOs. It highlights risk of the cultivation of GM crops, namely economic damage through GM contamination in non-GM crops and documents serious gaps in liability law applying to the use of GMOs. There is no liability for losses resulting from a GMO release with ERMA approval. Costs will instead tend to fall on those suffering the loss or damage (eg. non-GM farmers and local authorities).

An important deficiency noted is that the exercise of precaution is a matter for ERMA's discretion. Precaution is an option, not a requirement under the law governing ERMA. Some Northland councils have developed policies requiring precaution with respect to GMO risk management. The report recommends that councils consult with the public to gauge the level of community support for local management of GMO land uses.

*Community Management of GMOs II: Risks and Response Options* was written by Simon Terry Associates & Mitchell Partnerships is accompanied by a related legal opinion from Dr Royden Somerville QC.

## NZ Under Threat for Joining "Axis Of Evil" on Terminator

GE Free NZ 31.1.06  
New Zealand's backing for Terminator technology at UN Convention on Biodiversity meeting in Spain has seriously threatened this country's international reputation. New Zealand has been condemned for joining an "axis of evil" with Australia, and is accused of deliberately undermining international consensus for a moratorium on sterilization technology like "Terminator". NGO observers said NZ backed Australia apparently lobbying for US interests. Such is the worldwide community rejection of 'Terminator' and other gene patent control techniques, that New Zealand could become the target of international boycotts of its products for undermining a global moratorium.

The international community voted to stop Terminator given concern about the deleterious consequences of sterility techniques, including ending farmers' rights to save and re-sow seed, harming insect and bird life which depend on pollen and seed for survival, and the probability that terminator genes will contaminate other genus species through inadequate segregation and harvesting procedures. The increasing control by multinational companies of the global food supply will also have a profound effect on farmers in all countries, including New Zealand.

"New Zealand business benefit from our 'brand' values by billions of dollars, but our government's unethical backing for Terminator puts that reputation seriously at risk," said Mr Carapiet. "Boycotts of New Zealand products would harm our economy and action is urgently needed by the government to prevent our country becoming an international pariah because of its support for Terminator."

**NZ is backing 'case by case' use of Genetic Engineering (GE) 'TERMINATOR' techniques that can make seeds grow only once but then become infertile, forcing farmers to buy new seeds. Public support is needed to ban Terminator seeds now.**

## References

UN Meeting Undermines Moratorium on Terminator: Goal to Approve Terminator Now Clear 28.1.06  
[banterminator.org/news\\_updates/news\\_updates/un\\_meeting\\_undermines](http://banterminator.org/news_updates/news_updates/un_meeting_undermines)

## ETC Group Ban Terminator Campaign 27.1.06

[www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)  
[www.banterminator.org](http://www.banterminator.org)

## Australia challenges global ban on GE Terminator Technology Gene-Ethics Network 27.01.06

Australia is doing dirty work for the USA and its genetic engineering industry by trying to end the de facto global ban on GE terminator technology which will be used to make seeds infertile, to prevent seed saving and enforce corporate seed patents.

"Farmers world-wide would be shackled to buying new seed each season and unable to replant saved seed as they've been doing for thousands of years," Bob Phelps of Gene Ethics said. "Farmers' selection of seed that is adapted to changing environmental conditions and local practices would end, ...global food production and security may fail".

[www.geneethics.org](http://www.geneethics.org)  
Meeting reports see:  
[www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wg8j-4/](http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wg8j-4/)

### CALL FOR DONATIONS

**There is a strong case for Judicial Review on the latest decision, as case law needs to be clarified by Erma on interpretation of the HSNO Act. A leading law firm may be involved, around \$12,000 will be needed any donations would be gratefully accepted.**

## ERMA Failing Public by Forging Ahead with GE Cows

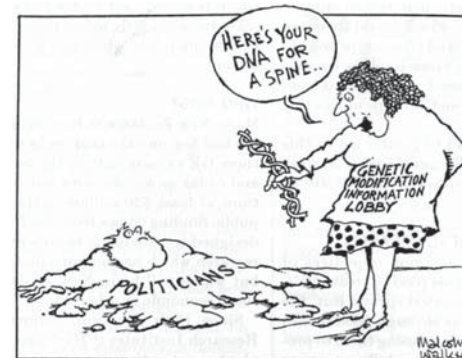
GE Free NZ PR 20.11.05  
ERMA's latest GE approval fails the New Zealand public by going against a key recommendation of the Royal Commission 2001...7.5 ( p. 355 of vol. I RCGM report) "that, wherever possible, non-food animals, or animals less likely to find their way into the food chain, be used as bioreactors rather than animals that are a common source of food."

ERMA approved 3 amendments to

GMD02028 and refused to allow public involvement in the process. One amendment is for an extension for another 3 years to allow research objectives to be achieved. Another is to allow the use of a single selection marker gene (conferring resistance to the antibiotic puromycin), used in research but not in human or animal medicine. Puromycin has been found in high concentrations in AgResearch containment facility soil, raising concerns about horizontal gene transfer HGT and the possibility of creating new pathogens.

The last amendment to the approval potentially allows overseas speculators to be involved in NZ experiments with GE. AgResearch will use imported GE cattle embryos and semen from Dutch company Pharming (NV). Pharming bought intellectual property from PPL Therapeutics, who produced GE animals in NZ before going bankrupt and leaving the public to fund any clean-up of the site. The use of GE cow embryo's incorporating a human gene, antibiotic markers and viral genes to produce a product already marketed by New Zealand farmers, goes against public ethical values identified by the Royal Commission on GM. Such a controversial amendment should have been notified for a full public hearing. Any future "field testing" (defined in section 2 of the HSNO Act) of GM cattle would require AgResearch to obtain a new approval which would be required to be publicly notified. ERMA states they will not be able to produce a commercial herd on the basis of this decision.

**Please write to ERMA to express your concerns about the lack of public notification over amendments to GMF 98009 and GMD 02028 send to: ERMA New Zealand PO Box 131 Wellington**



**Rural NZ supports GE Free production** Rural News, 26.10.05  
A poll on public attitudes to GMOs shows rural and urban dwellers equally support the concept that New Zealand should remain a GM Free food producer. Rural responses showed fractionally higher support at 75.5% while urban respondents were marginally lower at 74.1%. 79% New Zealanders would support the current policy of zero tolerance to GM contamination of seed imports. It further found 77% support for zero tolerance to GM contamination of crops in the field.

**Opportunity for organic milk producers, if they don't use GE rBGH.** NZ HERALD 07.10.05  
Fonterra's needs 17,000 tones of NZ organic milk by 2009 from cows, which are not treated with GE rBGH, a recombinant bovine growth hormone used on American farms, for US Stonyfield Farm, the world's largest organic yoghurt producer, now 80% owned by Danone. GE rBGH, was rejected by the New Zealand milk industry in 1999 after advice from NZ vets and GE Free proponents highlighted its risks.  
[www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c\\_id=3&ObjectID=10349126](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c_id=3&ObjectID=10349126)

**Ministerial Call-in Powers Must Protect New Zealand from GE roses, GE Onions..... and the Rest!**

The Sustainability Council of NZ has questioned whether a possible GE application for " Blue GE Roses" is just 'Kite Flying' by sectors of the biotech industry. The Sustainability Council reports that documents show the Minister for the Environment has been told by officials to expect an application to come before ERMA that may seek to be New Zealand's first deliberate GMO release. But while the Ministry for the Environment's advice to its minister suggests at least one developer is giving more than passing thought to such an application, both its business case and its fit with any national strategy are believed to be poor. ERMA says that they have no indication of such an application being 'in the wind'.  
[www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3495788a6160,00.html](http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3495788a6160,00.html)

**Dangers of CaMV promoter gene**  
Most foods from GE crops and many trialled in New Zealand eg. GE tamarillo, have used 35s CaMV [www.gmwatch.org](http://www.gmwatch.org) 13.11.05  
Cauliflower mosaic virus 35S CaMV promoter is used to secure expression of the transgene in most GE crop plants commercialised so far. Claims that 35S promoter is plant-specific and not active in mammalian cells, so without risks as human food in the event that plant DNA fragments are taken up from the mammalian gastrointestinal tract, have not been supported by experimental data.

Reports indicating the potential of the 35S promoter to be active in mammalian systems, and evidence that it is active in mammalian cell cultures, initiating significant protein expression levels in host cells that share important characteristics with those lining parts of the human gastrointestinal tract. Given the potential for 35S promoter to initiate gene expression, if the intact 35S promoter is taken up, the biological consequences are potentially great (eg. inappropriate expression of genes may occur).  
[www.biosafety-info.net](http://www.biosafety-info.net)

**Govt opts out of CoOl Labelling**

Despite adoption by Australia of CoOL measures allowing labeling of imported foods, New Zealand foods will not be labeled. Criticised earlier by Wellington economists as adding 'no significant consumer value', it appears that our rights as consumers have again been eroded overnight by shortsighted government policy. A recent call to government to support Country of Origin labeling and peoples right to choose where their food comes from went unheeded, despite 96% of the submissions Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) coming from NZ. Consumers wanted to make informed purchasing decisions on methods of production of food as well as the potential toxicity of chemicals and pollution. The public will be angry that government policy puts trade liberalisation policy ahead of their rights to know where their food comes from. A key objective of FSANZ is "the provision of adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices."

**Farmers being fed rubbish on CoOL**  
Greens PR 29.11.05  
Safe Food Spokesperson Sue Kedgley says Federated Farmers and Meat and Wool NZ congratulated the NZ Government for its decision not to adopt mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL). "They seem to be treating their own membership with contempt. Farmers are smart. They know that CoOL would actually expand their market. Consumers, given the choice, would prefer to buy NZ meat and other food products, but in the absence of labelling they do not have the choice. Consumers may have no idea that our farmers are facing competition from imports, yet we imported about 29,000 tones of meat last year."

**Can New Zealand prevent GE contamination from new maize plantings?**

GE Free NZ PR 10.10.05  
As Australian canola contamination becomes evident and NZ farmers are preparing to harvest their maize crops there are calls for MAF to improve biosecurity protocols. Since most maize seed is sourced from imported US seed consignments, MAF must ensure that the current zero tolerance standard for GE contamination remains in place. Even Federated farmers want to maintain their economic advantage as GE Free producers. Japan and Europe, two of New Zealand's major trading partners, specify that non-GE crops, which command a premium price, must contain no GE DNA.

MAF allowed farmers to replant maize at some North Island sites when illegal GE-contaminated maize Liberty Link T25 was discovered, despite concerns raised by local authorities and primary producers about GE volunteers, being wind pollinated even small amounts of GE pollen can cause extensive contamination. A threat to our food supply, health & agricultural economy, published research has shown immune system damage, heart and kidney abnormalities and blood disorders in laboratory animals fed GE crops.  
**Please call for MAF to improve biosecurity protocols!**

## WORLD NEWS

### **GM pea causes allergic damage in mice** *NewScientist.com* 21.11.05

A decade-long project at Australia's national research organisation, CSIRO to develop genetically modified peas with built-in pest-resistance has been abandoned after tests showed they caused allergic lung damage in mice.

When the protein is expressed in the pea, its structure is subtly different to a harmless original protein expressed by a gene extracted from a bean. This may be to blame for the unexpected immune effects seen in mice. The work underlines the need to evaluate new GM crops on a case-by-case basis, said the researcher calling for comprehensive tests to screen GE plants. Each new GM food should be very carefully evaluated for potential health effects. Generally, digested proteins do not create a specific immune system response, but researchers found that mice that ate transgenic pea seed did develop antibodies specific to the protein.

Jeremy Tager, Greenpeace Australia's GE campaigner. "These results indicate the potential for unpredicted and unintended changes in the structure of transferred proteins. And I'm not aware of any country that requires feeding studies as part of its approval process."

*Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (vol 53, p 9023)

**Roundup Ready Sudden Death, Superweeds, Allergens. Time to Wipe GM Crops Off the Globe.** Dr. Mae-Wan Ho and Prof. Joe Cummins. ISIS PR 03.10.05  
[www.i-sis.org.uk/RRSDSA.php](http://www.i-sis.org.uk/RRSDSA.php)

**GM crops for Africa? No thanks!**  
[www.i-sis.org.uk/RRSDSA.php](http://www.i-sis.org.uk/RRSDSA.php)

**Government still intends to keep Tasmania totally GM-free.** ABC  
[www.abc.net.au/news/items/200510/1493816.htm?northtas](http://www.abc.net.au/news/items/200510/1493816.htm?northtas) 30.10.05 The Tasmanian Government restated its commitment to a GM-free status, despite voting for a more relaxed national policy allowing 0.5 per cent contamination of GM canola seeds in all states.

**Switzerland 'backs GM crop ban'**  
BBC News 27/11/05  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4475044.stm>

Swiss voters have approved a five-year ban on the use of GM crops. 55% voted in favour of the moratorium. Supporters included the farmers, who believe that introduction of GM crops would undermine organic produce. The biotechnology industry campaigned against the ban. The Swiss have long been suspicious of GM crops. Only one small trial crop of GM wheat was ever grown on Swiss soil. Surveys show Swiss consumers would not buy GM produce. The EU lifted its own moratorium on GM crops last year. Switzerland, not a member of the EU, was pressured to do the same.

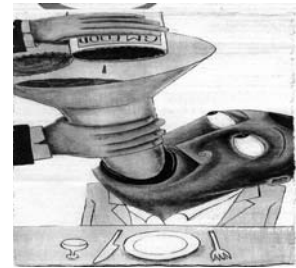
**Please call on our government to hold a referendum or reinstate the moratorium now.**

**New GM Contamination Confirmed**  
AAP NewsWire, Australia 26.10.05 The state government is concerned up to 150,000 hectares of the state's canola crop could be affected by the latest GE contamination of West Australian crops. WA Agriculture Minister Kim Chance said "It is either a malicious act, or unbelievable sloppy practice, but either way we will be investigating".

**Australian GM contamination threshold level adopted** 28.10.05  
News of an adopted Australian threshold level set at 0.9 % GM contamination for canola crop and 0.5 % for seed in 2006 and 2007, and thereafter the intention a limit of 0.1 % has appalled the Network of Concerned Farmers, who are insisting on compensation for any losses caused by acceptance of GM tolerance levels. The PIMC communiqué states "Council agreed that where jurisdictions wish to adopt a GM free standard, industry will be required to develop effective testing, standards and protocols for a supply chain able to provide confidence that the grain is free from GM material."

Farmers should not be expected to subsidise the GM industry, they are now expected to pay for trying to develop an effective testing regime

while Bayer Crop-science obviously couldn't manage to achieve it. Farmers may well not grow organic canola in Australia from now on.  
[www.nongmfarmers.com/news\\_details.asp?ID=2497](http://www.nongmfarmers.com/news_details.asp?ID=2497)



**Ban trials until Bayer Cropscience pays for damages**

Network of Concerned Farmers. PR , 01.11.05  
[www.nongmfarmers.com/news\\_details.asp?ID=2507](http://www.nongmfarmers.com/news_details.asp?ID=2507)

GM contamination of the non-GM canola variety Grace in Tasmania was not caused by importation of contaminated seed.

Non-GM seed was being bulked up for resale at the same location that GM trials of Topas had been grown. The Network of Concerned Farmers (NCF) is calling for a complete ban on all trials grown by Bayer Crop-science until damages are paid.

"Bayer Crop-science must be made to pay all costs and losses caused by their negligence, not rewarded by allowing contamination without liability redress." NCF said, "reports show Bayer made little effort to contain their product in these early self regulated trials. "

**Minister won't meet anti-GM farmers** ABC (Australia), 24.11.05  
[www.abc.net.au/news/items/200511/1515859.htm?westernvic](http://www.abc.net.au/news/items/200511/1515859.htm?westernvic)  
Agriculture Minister Bob Cameron refused to talk with Horsham farmers with contaminated canola crops.

**Canola GM contamination traced to late 1990s trial** ABC, 2.11.05  
[www.abc.net.au/news/items/200511/1496141.htm?tasmania](http://www.abc.net.au/news/items/200511/1496141.htm?tasmania)

Tasmania's head of biosecurity is welcoming an inquiry, to determine exactly how GM canola contamination occurred. Contracted by the Victorian Government to grow a variety of canola in 1999, recent tests show that while the seeds were apparently GM-free, return shipments were contaminated.

**The bioweapon is in the post**  
[www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=mg18825252.900](http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=mg18825252.900)

9.11.05

A New Scientist investigation found that armed with a fake email address, a would-be bioterrorist could probably order the building blocks of a deadly biological weapon online, and receive them by post within weeks. Dozens of biotech firms now offer to synthesise complete genes from the chemical components of DNA, some carrying out next to no checks on what they are being asked to make, or by whom, raising the prospect of terrorists mail-ordering genes for key bioweapon agents such as smallpox, and using them to engineer new and deadly pathogens. Researchers with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that they used similar means to recreate the virus that caused the 1918 flu-New Scientist 8 Oct, p 16

**Soya milk may be responsible for infant deaths** NY Times 21.10.05

A porridge made of EdenSoy Extra soy milk and cornmeal may be responsible for the deaths of two infant brothers living in Brooklyn. On attempting to wake them, their mother found them unconscious and took them to hospital, both were dead on arrival. Ideas the twins had been overcome by a gas leak proved wrong when tests showed no leak. Medical examiners also found no evidence of choking as a result of consuming the food, or signs of foul play, so police looked at what the infants had eaten, cleaning out nearby supermarkets of EdenSoy milk and cornmeal for testing. The autopsy is inconclusive and tests on the food are not yet complete

**1/5<sup>th</sup> of Human Genes Patented**

National Geographic News 13.10.05

A new study in the journal Science, shows more than 4,000 genes, or 20 percent of the almost 24,000 human genes have been patented in the United States, primarily by private firms [62%] and universities [28%].

"Gene patents give their owners property rights over gene sequences - for example in a diagnostic test, as a test for the efficacy of a new drug, or in the production of therapeutic proteins."

**BioEthics Council Backing for Xenotransplantation is 'Premature'**

[www.gefree.org.nz](http://www.gefree.org.nz)

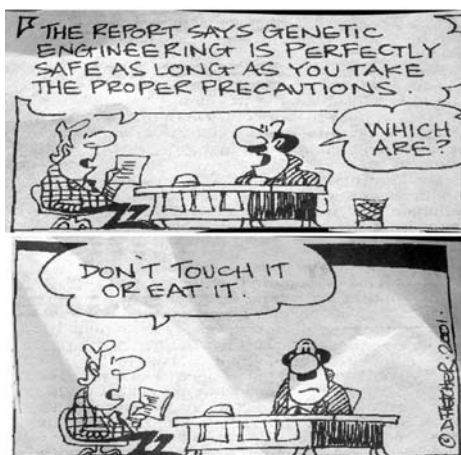
14.12.05

The BioEthics Council is premature in backing the use of animal-to-human transplantation since only a small-scale dialogue with the community shows a whole range of major concerns remain. Decisions to allow xenotransplantation at this stage of scientific knowledge risks ignoring the fact that it is highly experimental, and should be the subject of much broader public debate. "There is concern that the way the BioEthics Council report is being covered in the media may mislead people into believing such techniques are proven safe and effective, when neither is true."

**Humans may get animal organs**

The way is open for animal body parts to be transplanted into humans after a high-powered report to Government.

[www.stuff.co.nz/hlc/1,85652~3510976a10~,00.html](http://www.stuff.co.nz/hlc/1,85652~3510976a10~,00.html)



**Disappointing Biotech**

British Medical Journal;331:895-897, 15.10.05 (UK)

We assessed the biotech medicines approved by the European Medicine Evaluation Agency from 1995 to 2003. Summary points:

- \* Only a small proportion are innovative. Most new products were variations on existing drugs.
- \* Evaluation of these substances was not always based on rigorous methodological criteria.
- \* Most are no less toxic than conventional drugs.
- \* [They] are generally more expensive, and this deserves evaluation.

**Some articles on this page thanks to GE Info see full article at :**

[www.geinfo.org.nz/112005/07.html](http://www.geinfo.org.nz/112005/07.html)

**GM 'Ruins fields for 15 years'**

The Independent, 9.10.05 (UK)

GM crops contaminate the countryside for up to 15 years after harvest[ing], new government research shows.

The study, published by the Royal Society, examined 5 sites across England and Scotland where GM oilseed rape has been cultivated, and found significant amounts of GM plants growing even after the sites had been returned to ordinary crops. The researchers found one plant per sq. m., 15 years after a single GM crop, enough to break the EC limit on GM contamination.

**Farmers get go ahead to plant GM Maize in UK.** FT 16.11.05 (UK)

The biotech industry must compensate UK farmers who suffer losses after contamination by the spread of GM seeds. Margaret Beckett, Britain's environment secretary approved the planting of GM maize - the first transgenic crop permitted in the UK - but insisted neither the British taxpayer nor non-GM farmers should be expected to pick up the bill for commercial damage to farmers who lose their "non-GM" status.

**Austria to launch EU wide GMO debate after Swiss Referendum**

EUobserver.com, 29.11.05 (EU)

Austria is planning to hold a pan-European debate about GM farming, after indicating they view the Swiss vote for a 5 year ban as strong proof of European public's opposition to GM farming. Vienna took over presidency of the EU in Jan and aims to host a GM crop conference in April.

Austria is a staunch opponents of GM technology and has a ban on GM plants within its territory.

[www.GEinfo.org.nz/122005/09.html](http://www.GEinfo.org.nz/122005/09.html)

More info [www.gmwatch.org](http://www.gmwatch.org)

**Peruvian Farmers Move to End Terminator Seeds.** 11.10.05 (UN)

Inter Press Service.

Peruvian indigenous leaders are urging the UN to expose the dangers of Terminator technology and uphold the moratorium, also demanding indigenous people have a say in the process equal to the influence of the agribusiness lobby. The Convention's officials acknowledged the input from the Peruvian farmers was compelling.

## India Maps Basmati DNA to save it from the West

Independent, 4.11.05 (India)  
Indian scientists are mapping the DNA of one of the country's basic food products: basmati rice, concerned that Western corporations may try to take out patents on the food, their aim is not to produce GM rice but to protect one of India's most treasured natural products & prime exports from foreign takeover. Already the country has fought off an attempt by an American company to copyright the name basmati for its own product, a crossing of American rice & Indian basmati.  
[www.GEinfo.org.nz/122005/08.html](http://www.GEinfo.org.nz/122005/08.html)

## GMOs out of control in Romania

Romanian Daily, 11.10.05  
At a Greenpeace press conference, Monsanto's former Romanian general manager, Dragos Dima, warned that massive illegal cultivation of GE crops threatens farmers and the economy and authorities have totally lost control over GM organisms.

## Deregulation of Glyphosate Tolerant Creeping Bentgrass Out of Question

[www.i-sis.org.uk](http://www.i-sis.org.uk) 7.11.05  
APHIS of the US Department of Agriculture have been asked to de regulate Monsanto's creeping GM bent grass tolerant to the herbicide glyphosate. It could invade urban, rural and natural areas An APHIS report concluded off-site movement of GM creeping bent grass as inevitable, but that GM grass or its hybrids could be controlled using stronger herbicide. Most contamination occurred within 2 km of the GM trial, but could go 14 and 24 km. Clippings from GM bent grass stands were toxic to unmodified grasses, and would require special handling.

## China Committe not recommending GE rice

Reuters, (China) 28.11.05  
A Chinese government committee has failed to reach a consensus on the safety of GM rice, putting off the world's first large-scale production of transgenic grain. "There has been no safety agreement for commercial release," said one of 74 Chinese govt agriculture department led committee members "Next year, if they provide sufficient safety information, we will assess again."  
[www.GEinfo.org.nz/122005/05.html](http://www.GEinfo.org.nz/122005/05.html)

## Scientists seek genes, critters to fend off tree-killing beetle

Assoc.Press 2.12.05  
Ohio - The wasps listen for sounds of their prey, drill through bark to reach them, then they paralyze the juvenile victim and glue eggs to its back, or pierce it to lay the eggs inside. When the eggs hatch, the wormy wasp young munch away. The target is emerald ash borer larvae, Asian beetles that have been 100 % fatal to N. American ash trees. Arriving in 2002, it has blanketed lower Michigan and appeared in Ohio, Indiana and southern Ontario. Scientists are studying the possibility of breeding a tree that makes its own insecticide. At least 2 years away, government would need to draw up regulations including a requirement that the tree be sterile.

## Nippon Paper Industries, University of Tsukuba jointly start salt tolerant eucalyptus outdoor cultivation experiment

2.11.05  
The GE plant was engineered with choline oxidase, using NPI's proprietary genetic technology MAT Vector System. The tree's salt tolerance has been confirmed in greenhouse cultivation, where trees were supplied saltwater of 30% salinity, similar to seawater. This, the first experiment in Japan to grow GE plants outside, lasts until 2009. The partners aim to evaluate growing conditions, salt tolerance levels, and impacts on the surroundings of the salt tolerant eucalyptus, which can be raised in dried and salt damaged soil.

## Australian wine industry advice is 'no' to GMO. Australian Wine Research Institute.

25.11.05  
GM wine yeasts are now on the US market.: Springer Oenologie (a division of Lesaffre Yeast Corp) has released the first GM wine yeast, known as ML01. The GMO debate has largely been academic to date for Australian grape growers and winemakers and the yeast has not yet been approved for use in Australia, since before GMOs can be used in food production or processing in Australia they are subjected to prescribed risk assessments and public consultation is required.

## TAKE ACTION

### CoOL labeling action

Inadequate testing and loop-holes in labelling allow people to be deceived into buying GE. It is still up to consumer pressure to ensure food companies avoid GE ingredients and commit to a GE-free Policy .

**\*ACTION : The NZ government has refused to require "Country of Origin Labelling" on food, making it harder for people to support NZ-made. Without country of origin labels we need to write our concerns to Helen Clark, Parliament Buildings Wellington**

Call manufacturers' 0800- numbers and ask where they are getting their ingredients. When purchasing in the supermarket you can demand to know where an unlabelled product is from, if the shop can't tell you, you can refuse to purchase it. Foodtown, Pak-n-Save and other supermarkets are allowing GE foods on sale. Ingredients like GE canola oil, maize or soy, are not labelled, other GE labels are hard to see. Stagg's Chilli Beans (Vegetable and one meat variety use GE. Ask your supermarket to take such products off the shelves and ban GE foods until properly tested or have clear warnings on the labels.

**Foodtown/Woolworths**  
[customerinfo@progressive.co.nz](mailto:customerinfo@progressive.co.nz) or 0800 40 40 40

**Pak n Save / New World**  
[melissa@foodstuffsnz.co.nz](mailto:melissa@foodstuffsnz.co.nz) or 09 621 0600, 04 527 2510, 03 353 8700



**Wording of final resolution passed by The Whangarei District Council passed a resolution regarding GE Organisms on:  
Wednesday 1 February 2005**

1. That the following documents be received:

Community Management of GMOs II: Risks and Response Options  
Review of GE Issues and Options Report for Whangarei District Council  
Karen Cronin Legal Opinion on Land Use Controls and GMOs by Dr. Royden Somerville, QC  
Briefing Paper on GE Initiative by Dr. Kerry Grundy, Whangarei District Council

2. That Council adopts a precautionary stance to the risks posed by the release of GMOs to the environment and continues to work in collaboration with other territorial authorities on the Northland peninsula to reduce those risks to a level acceptable to the community.

3. That, subject to the agreement of all or most territorial authorities on the Northland peninsula, Council participates in and jointly funds a collaborative community consultation programme to gauge (a) the level of community support for local/regional regulation of GMO land uses and (b) the level of risk the community is willing to carry in relation to those land uses, i.e. which of the options outlined in the Risks and Options Report is preferred (c) regulation of GMO land use by joint Central Government and local/regional government framework. The consultation programme would be structured as outlined in the Briefing Paper on GE Initiative, i.e. a joint telephone survey/submission-consultation process. On the amendment being put Cr Lieffering called for a division:

4. That Council continues to lobby the Government and all other political parties to address the regulatory gaps in the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 and the resulting environmental, economic and liability risks which are faced by local government in respect of the field release of genetically modified organisms.

GE FREE NORTHLAND is delighted with the innovative work done to date and precautionary approach to GMO land use taken by Whangarei District Council and other territorial authorities (Waitakere City Council and Rodney District Council to date) in Northland peninsula.

Kaipara District Council will be holding a GE Workshop shortly (other councils invited to participate) and Far North District Council will be tabling the same GE documents soon.

Groups in other areas are urged to get their Councils to pass similar resolutions to eventually get coverage over the whole country.

Zelka Grammer, Chairperson,  
GE FREE NORTHLAND in food & environment

**Action Needed on Local Plans**

\***ACTION-** Table a report at your local council environment committee meeting or write a submission on the Annual Plan to your local and regional councils. Reference the reports and demand a statement is included in the plans showing support from local government for community demands that GE-free production be protected.

<http://www.wdc.govt.nz/customerservice/?lc=reader&m=tssd&i=3433>

To link to Community Management of GMOs II: risks and Response Options, the community management document, legal opinion and briefing paper, go to

<http://www.wdc.govt.nz/customerservice/?lc=reader&m=tssd&i=3433>

**Te Papa pro biotech roadshow**

The Te Papa GE exhibit, funded by MoRST, has been on the move, see it and make a comment. The travelling exhibit has a pro science bias. Unlike the show at Te Papa (ended 23.1.06) it doesn't even pay lip service to the GE Free movement, or NZers concerns over GE food and crops.

At Te Papa, statements supported GE Free, but showed more controversial items like the MADGE 4 breasted poster image. NZ Geographic magazine (no. 76 Nov/Dec 05 issue supports the perspective of the GE exhibit at Te Papa, "those who are fixed in their attitudes to GM will find little to please them. This is an exhibition for the sane & thoughtful."

Is it unreasonable for New Zealanders who have concerns about GMO land use, or controversial experiments with cows and human genes, or farmers who want a strict liability regime to protect their business, key markets, premiums and land?

Check out the article and/or the exhibit and make your comments or write to the editor of NZ Geographic [editor@nzgeographic.co.nz](mailto:editor@nzgeographic.co.nz)

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand.**

Despite continuing evidence of the risks of eating GE foods, and the lack of independent testing to demonstrate their safety, 3 more applications for GE foods are in the process of approval by FSANZ. Most are herbicide tolerant GE crops which are hazardous to health and the environment. If approved they will join 25 others already approved for food use which current labelling laws allow to remain unlabelled in most processed foods.

The foods from 2 GE crops to resistant to herbicides and one both resistant to herbicides and containing insecticide resistance Bt. More info is available at [www.foodstandards.gov.au/standards/development/notificationcirculars/index.cfm](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/standards/development/notificationcirculars/index.cfm)

>>>>>>.Issues Summary >>>>>>

**The NZ government has refused to require "Country of Origin Labelling" on food**, making it harder for people to support NZ-made. It's time to call manufacturers' 0800-numbers and ask them where they are getting their ingredients.

**NZ is backing 'case by case' use of Genetic Engineering (GE) 'TERMINATOR' techniques** that can make seeds grow only once but then become infertile, forcing farmers to buy new seeds. Public support is needed to ban Terminator seeds now.

**ERMA has amended AgResearch's approval to develop GE cows.** The decision goes against the recommendation of the Royal Commission on GM against using animals this way.

**New Zealand should take the lead from Swiss** citizens who voted in a national referendum for a 5-year ban on GE releases.

Latest book from *Robert Anderson* ***The Ultimate War Crime*** reveals the truth about use of **depleted uranium** (DU) weapons in modern war zones, how they came to be, how they endanger humanity and more. These wars have created an on-going legacy of suffering with thousands dying from cancer and other illnesses caused by DU contamination. Most vulnerable are the children. The cover features Safaa, an eight-year-old Iraqi girl who developed leukemia and was sent home from hospital because there were no medicines left with which to treat her. **Profits from the book will go towards medicines for Iraqi children.**



*The Ultimate War Crime*, NZ **\$15.00**, including delivery in NZ.



Also available, ***The Final Pollution***. Allan Baddock (Editor, *Organic NZ*) says the book "is everything you'd expect from Robert Anderson - a straightforward, easy

to read examination of the GE debate from all sides. While a tireless campaigner against the ills of genetic tinkering, Dr Anderson doesn't hesitate to call it like it is, good or bad. 'Is it all bad?' he writes. 'No, biotechnology - as opposed to the much narrower field of **genetic engineering** - is cutting-edge science that should and does bring humanity many good things.' To paraphrase Dr Anderson, the future is not about changing genes, but understanding them. This book takes those of us who are not scientists a long way to that understanding."

*The Final Pollution* NZ\$ 24.95, including delivery within NZ. Please send cheque with book orders to R G & J Anderson Books, PO Box 8188, Cherrywood, Tauranga. Enquiries: 07-576 5721 or [roberta@clear.net.nz](mailto:roberta@clear.net.nz)

### First Documentary on GE Trees

A Silent Forest: The Growing Threat,

Genetically Engineered Trees', 45 min docu narrated by Dr. David Suzuki. "The rush to apply these ideas is absolutely dangerous because we don't have a clue what the long term impacts of our manipulations is going to be." The biotechnology industry has been stacking the legal deck in their favor, responding to campaigns for GE-Free zones, it is working to establish pre-emptive US state laws prohibiting local governments from regulating GE plants. GE trees have the potential to transfer pollen for hundreds of miles carrying genes for herbicide or insect resistance, sterility and reduced lignin. They may impact on wildlife and rural and indigenous communities dependant on forests for food, shelter, water, livelihood and cultural practices.

Available for purchase at [www.customflix.com/207574](http://www.customflix.com/207574) [info@globaljusticeecolog](mailto:info@globaljusticeecolog)

### "The Future of Food"

Videos are now available in NZ Price \$25 per DVD postage for more info contact us at Head Office.

A fantastic documentary, the film is an effective tool in educating people at all levels of awareness about the GE issue and motivating action. It cuts through the propaganda.

*Exploring a gamut of issues from so-called suicide seeds to lax food-safety enforcement laws, and from the controversy over patented genes to infected cornfields, the film is a comprehensive and chilling example of anti-GMO rhetoric." - Jason Silverman, Wired*

**T Shirts** natural unbleached cotton with rainbow GE Free NZ logo \$20.00 incl.P&P from Head office. Bumper stickers + GE Free corflute signs also available see website.

### REGISTER YOUR HOME AS A

**GE FREE ZONE** Pass the info on to all your friends and any folk in rural areas you know support the initiative. Properties registered - 5398 covering a total 353,307.45 acres.

[www.gefreeregister.org.nz](http://www.gefreeregister.org.nz)

**When you have finished with your newsletter, pass it on ...**

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