



GE Free New Zealand In Food and Environment Newsletter January 2015

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

Food Matters Aotearoa Conference shows the way forward

Our future farms, and food need your support- one of the most important things you can do for our food and environment in 2015.

Please tell everyone about the Food Matters Aotearoa conference and tour. www.foodconference.co.nz and [facebook.com/foodmattersaotearoa](https://www.facebook.com/foodmattersaotearoa) Share this info with friends and family - the conference is only a month away!

The Food Matters Aotearoa conference 14/15 Feb 2015 will host outstanding speakers from overseas and New Zealand. They will bring important information at a critical time highlighting GE concerns and providing solutions.

Independent scientist Professor Giles Seralini's ground-breaking research involved feeding studies into the effects of GE and Roundup foods on the health of rats. The rats developed increased tumours and liver and kidney disease. Seralini's paper was later withdrawn from the journal of Chemical Toxicology - an unprecedented decision – after industry scientists claimed his study lacked rigour.

The critics are scientists like Prof. Langridge from Univ. of Adelaide, a consultant to Food Safety Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) on GE food safety. His research centre receives A\$3.5 m annually from DuPont, one of the world's largest GM seed and agrochemical companies.

In today's world science is often commissioned rather than independent. Science should involve research and proof, but results can be compromised and funding stopped.

This directly disadvantages civil society. This is why GE Free New Zealand alongside other groups like Pesticide Action Network and the Safe Food Campaign are bringing these expert speakers to New Zealand. We have sought sponsorship to allay the costs from businesses, organisations and local government aligned with our aims we need you to join us to make the event a success.

2015 - GE Free NZ will host NZ experts and international speakers from 5 continents for Food Matters Aotearoa conference on 14/15 February. Talks in 3 major centres around NZ in February will feature our international guests. To register and for all details and go to: www.foodconference.co.nz

The conference will host speakers discussing modern agricultural technologies, food nutrition and heritage varieties, as well as how new techniques for genetically engineering food crops are slipping past regulatory bodies without proper scrutiny.

Our speakers will focus too on "agroecology", which new scientific research shows can supply the growing demand for food in an environmentally sustainable way. 80% of subsidies and 90% of research funding supports conventional industrial agriculture in the EU, yet 70% of world food is produced by small farmers.

The inspirational Dr. Vandana Shiva has worked with Indian farming communities, supporting small-scale organic farming, local marketing, seed banks and varieties, biodiversity, and protecting human rights in her aim

to prevent biopiracy.

In India there have been over 250,000 suicides as farmers using GE cotton seeds have watched their crops fail and their animals die from browsing crop residues.

Professor Don Huber will highlight independent research into Roundup and its depletion of minerals from our food and animal feeds. His career spans 50 years as a scientist in the US military and working with plant pathogens. His research into Roundup shows this widely used pesticide has deleterious effects on our health. All around the world research is showing glyphosate and associated chemicals appear in urine, blood and even in baby feeding tubes. See our media release on the Food Matters Aotearoa Facebook site along with a photo of parliament lawn appearing as though it too has been sprayed with Roundup.

Professor Seralini's research shows tumours form in rats fed Roundup sprayed feed as well as GM feed. He will talk in Christchurch and Auckland with Chef Douzelet exposing the health benefits of a more natural unsprayed diet.

Our speaker from China Professor Xiulin will discuss traditional Chinese farming methods and the effects of globalization on the food supply. A full line-up of all speakers and the programme on our website.

Register now to see our expert speakers. A discount will be given for GE Free NZ members. Contact Susie Lees, Jon Muller or Claire Bleakley (phone, email see back page) for details or visit: www.foodconference.co.nz

A review of the science code of practice indicates independent science in NZ is at risk from government edict.

Sir Peter Gluckman, the PM's science advisor last year travelled to the UK. Opinions there were that the muzzling of scientists and dilution of science was a potential outcome of bad policy. We must ensure that doesn't happen here during the review.

The election fiasco showed the government overstepped its mandate. This future term of National government will see controversial bills passed with a majority, threatening to tighten the noose, so civil society's defence of the environment must increase. Steffan Browning, the only Green MP with a good understanding of agriculture and the threats of GE and toxic chemical applications, will continue to keep an eye on legislation on primary production and food safety issues including GE.

Presently, he is looking into the most recent problem new agricultural technology - the HT (herbicide tolerant) swedes. The damage to the health of cows and deaths that resulted when cows ate these crops are the focus of MPI investigation. The chemicals sprayed on these crops are a problem not only for animal health but for farmland and waterways. There is no testing by councils to ascertain the chemical loading in our waterways. In the US glyphosate is found in most urine and blood samples. We need testing to see what the chemical overload there is in NZ. A Safe Food Campaign looking at pesticides in baby food has recently brought this health hazard for babies to the government's attention.

MPI have been slow to inform farmers and the public. GE Free NZ OIAs on the swedes have been stalled. It appears government departments are up to their usual tricks despite revelations during the pre-election period of the 24 hr turnaround of information releases to bloggers like Cameron Slater. The PM continues to evade questions as Nicky Hager's home is searched. Is this democracy?

Monsanto petition and Primary Production select committee.

On the 25th May 2013 an action took place around the world. Entitled 'March against Monsanto'. New Zealand embraced the action and a petition was circulated around the country which asked for a moratorium on GE food approvals, and that all GE foods already approved go through re-assessment in light of new evidence on health impacts and for labelling to include the variant of the GM food. Over 1600 signatures were gathered and these were presented to parliament. Last November the Primary production select committee heard Claire Bleakley's submission and received evidence showing the nature of health problems from recent reports.

A couple of weeks later the Ministry for Primary Industry MPI gave their response to the petition. Dean Stockwell from Food Safety Australia and New Zealand refused to acknowledge the scientific evidence of the reports, choosing instead to state the "there was no evidence from the broad scientific community" of harm and that they had 'evaluated the studies and found no cause to change their rulings' their 'conclusion being on balance and not across the broad spectrum of science'.

He was confident they had reached the right conclusions and safety was based on 'the best available information.'

Stating that animal feeding studies 'are not routinely required for proof of safety. He said they were difficult to perform, having difficulty in detecting adverse effects, whilst carrying inherent risks of confounding and that 'animal studies contribute little if anything to the assessment of GM foods.'

However he admitted that FSANZ can request them if they feel they are 'appropriate'. He also stated there is "no scientific evidence of public health issues." A MPI representative responded to a question about labelling stating there would be 'significant unjustified costs on consumers to label products'

We await the Primary production select committee response which will now be in the new year.

European standards are much higher than ours. Their maximum residue levels are lower, and monitoring of chemicals and animal testing of GE foods is routine. Reassessment of GE foods is routine after ten years.

Herbicide tolerant HT swedes

The death of hundreds of cows after eating herbicide tolerant swedes genetically altered by mutagenesis has caused debate about the cause of the problem.

Is it that the weather promoted flowering and changes in the levels of toxic compounds, that the chemical overload to the cows caused by eating large quantities of herbicide residue in/on the plant, or the effect of mutagenesis?

Tony Conner & Mary Christie were involved in the development of the swede by seed mutagenesis combined with traditional plant breeding techniques, which resulted in the development of the Cleancrop™ Brassica system. Seedlings of Brassica napus with increased chlorsulfuron resistance were identified following seed mutagenesis with ethyl methanesulfonate (EMS)

A Greenpeace International report shows better directions for New Zealand agriculture than the GE and chemical mutation technologies supported by Federated Farmers, and the National Government through its research funding packages.

CBD and synthetic biology

A recent meeting of NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade MFAT representatives in Korea to discuss the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nagoya and Cartagena protocols resulted in sobering reports of biodiversity loss around the world. Efforts to address it have to date been unsuccessful. We must act locally to make a difference in New Zealand and preserve our biodiversity.

Divisions amongst attendees regarding the wisdom of regulation of synthetic biology fortunately came out in favour of precaution. Together with the Sustainability Council we keep a watching brief on these controversial new technologies.

Pesticides in baby food

New Zealand has 800x as much pesticide and chemical toxins in baby food as the EU.

Meriel Watts from PAN Pesticide Action Network accompanied Alison White from the Safe Food Campaign to submit before the Primary production select committee in early December.

Analysis of a government study shows more than 30% of New Zealand baby food contained pesticide residues whereas less than 1% (0.04%) of European baby food did so.

Five pesticides were detected in 32 baby food samples of the last NZ Total Diet Survey of 2009, which included testing of formula, cereal based, custard/fruit and savoury weaning foods.

The EU analysis of 2,062 baby foods showed residues in only 0.04% of samples in 2010.

Some of the pesticides found are carcinogens and endocrine disruptors, for which no safe level has been scientifically established, and doses thousands of times lower than those generally considered toxic are known to interfere with normal human development.

The committee will report back in the New year when we will see MPI submissions in response.

In the US Roundup is found in urine and blood. Samples of this type have not been carried out in New Zealand but with the ever increasing use of Roundup on food is required now.

Glyphosate Found in Feeding Tube Liquid

5.1.15 momsacrossamerica.com/blog

Glyphosate has been found in feeding tube liquid which is given to babies and children with cancer in hospitals. The Pediasure Enteral Nutritional Drink tested is loaded with GM corn syrup, soy, and sugar, which have been shown to cause inflammation, and are sprayed with glyphosate during the growing season and at harvest as a drying agent.

Monitoring of pesticides in New Zealand just isn't happening.

A recent meeting with farmers groups in the Wairarapa region shows that Fonterra are monitoring waterways

on dairy farms but are they testing for Round-Up and pesticides used on farms and ending up in waterways? If they are they are not saying!

The Greater Wellington Regional Council does no monitoring of pesticide levels. Monitoring of pesticide levels needs to be standard procedure by councils.

The increasing use of Round Up and neonicotinoids could well be a legacy that will affect coming generations indefinitely. We must put pressure on local councils to test waterways especially those used for drinking.

Evidence Supports Moratorium 21 Oct 2014 PR [GE Free NZ](#)

Federated Farmers spokesman Graham Smith's call for a 'rethink' on release of GE organisms is misguided, and instead it is time for a formal moratorium on GMOs in the environment.

Claiming New Zealand legislation is preventing the use of recent GE techniques, the reality is that these techniques are now subject to oversight by the EPA but have not been banned.

The last ten years of GE use overseas has provided evidence of detrimental impacts from GE crops that New Zealand has been able to avoid. In many cases it has been detrimental to farmers and the environment.

Epigenetic and long term detrimental effects of GE are understood and warrant an indefinite moratorium on commercial release.

Our GE-Free status is a huge benefit to farmers and exporters and is a powerful marketing point of difference which consumers take as a signal of food safety. GE-free adds value and is a key part of lifting New Zealand products above commodity-status.

Federated Farmer's recently-elected president- Dr William Rolleston, has been advocating for New Zealand to follow the lead of Argentina, where GMOs have become widespread.

Federated farmers push for more GE technology.

radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ruralnews/audio/20154051/midday-rural-news-for-20-october-2014

New Food Safety Minister Jo Goodhew didn't have much to say about the food poisoning epidemic. 15.10.14

During the outbreak of 127 confirmed cases of yersinia pseudotuberculosis with 38 people taken to hospital because of the bug, the newly appointed Food Safety Minister refused to comment on the painful food poisoning epidemic that swept the country. The Ministry for Primary Industry were unable to pinpoint the source immediately despite reports from the Environmental and Scientific Research ESR indicating the possible source of the stomach bug. The ministry refused to release the list, and supermarket giant Foodstuffs declined to identify the farm supply.

GMOs and the High Cost of Running Ahead of Market Approval 1.10.14 Sustainability Council of NZ.

www.sustainabilitynz.org/busted-at-the-border/

Growing GMOs before they have been approved for use in export markets continues to result in punishing consequences. Were New Zealand to clear new types of GMOs for growing before they were approved offshore, that could be very costly for food exporters and take years to recover from, as US experience demonstrates.

The US is currently facing "the biggest genetically modified crop controversy to shake US grain exports since StarLink corn" after traces of a GM corn not cleared by Beijing were found in shipments to China.

Putin signs GMO labeling law. sustainablepulse.com/2015/01/03/russian-president-putin-signs-gmo-labeling-liability-law/#.VKvDCcIUU2A 3.1.15

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed the Russian Federation Code of Administrative Offences into law, including a new article establishing liability for the violation of mandatory requirements for the labeling of food products that contain GMOs.

Monsanto tomato patent revoked

sustainablepulse.com/2014/12/22/eur-ope-revokes-monsantos-fraudulent-tomato-patent/#.VKvE6MIUU2A

22.12.14 Patent EP1812575 held by Monsanto has been revoked by the European Patent Office (EPO) after the international coalition No Patents on Seeds

The patent covered conventionally bred tomatoes with a natural resistance to a fungal disease called botrytis, which were claimed as an invention. The original tomatoes used for this patent were accessed via the international gene bank in Gatersleben, Germany, and it was already known that these plants had the desired resistance. Monsanto produced a cleverly worded patent in order to create the impression that genetic engineering had been used to produce the tomatoes and to make it look 'inventive'.

"Revoking this patent is an important success. It was more or less based on a combination of fraud, abuse of patent law and biopiracy.

IFOAM joins GMO Free coalition

sustainablepulse.com/2014/12/09/%E2%80%8Bifoam-joins-global-gmo-free-coalition-protect-farmers-biotech-control/#.VKvGrSIUU2A

9.12.2014 The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has joined the Global GMO Free Coalition (GGFC) in a move that has added to the pressure currently being applied on the Biotech industry worldwide.

Our GM free policy website lists some companies who have a policy of sourcing non GM ingredients. See www.gmfreepolicy.com

Please help us to get a full list of GE Free foods. We hope to be able to put all of the companies on our site so you can choose too.

By ringing the 0800 No.s on your favourite food items and asking them if all their ingredients are GE Free, you can help us to find other food manufacturers. Email info@gefrees.co.nz and let us know your findings. We need your help.

NEW BOOK

Culinary Pleasures or hidden poisons?"- a dialogue between a chef and a scientist.

By Gilles-Eric Seralini and Jerome Douzelet

Translated in New Zealand and available soon. Contact us at GE Free NZ.

A concerning new study published in the *Brazilian Journal of Microbiology* titled, "Influence of glyphosate in planktonic and biofilm growth of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*," indicates that the world's most widely used herbicide Roundup (glyphosate) may be contributing to the enhanced growth of the pathogenic bacteria *P. aeruginosa* in our environment. See globalresearch.ca

URGENT-Make a submission

Tell the food safety authority what you think of GE corn resistant to Roundup now. Closes 10 February

Aus-NZ regulator paves the way for GM corn approval

By RJ Whitehead, 16-Dec-2014

Having assured consumers that food derived from a genetically modified corn strain poses no health concerns, the antipodean food regulator is now calling on the public and industry to voice their opinions on whether it should be permitted for consumption in Australia and New Zealand.

<http://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Policy/Aus-NZ-regulator-paves-the-way-for-GM-corn-approval>



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