



GE Free New Zealand In Food and Environment NewsletterMarch 2002

What's going on?

The government are even now putting in place policy on GE whilst at the same time some GE researchers continue with their controversial experiments. **The Forest Research Institute GE pine tree trial** approved in December 2000 is now planted out in the open environment in their Rotorua research centre apparently intending to "use GE field trials to explore 'leakage'. FRI herbicide resistant pine tree trials will check for environmental damage." RSNZ 3.02

The taxpayer is being forced into subsidising the biotech industry against the public will. Government now says that **the Law Commission will look at liability issues and report back in May**. "This review of liability issues is vital due to the complexity of the legal issues involved and the controversial nature of the subject. The Law Commission as an independent body will have an important role to play in exploring the various options for a genetic liability system for New Zealand and in weighing the costs and benefits of those options. Hon. Margaret Wilson. 26.2.02

A **Bio-Ethics council** proposed by government, not a Commissioner for Biotechnology as was suggested by the RCI, is due to be set up by July, playing an advisory role on policy. A preliminary meeting of 8 groups (incl. RSNZ) held recently was headed by Sir Paul Reeves.

Marian Hobbs stated, "Sir Paul, with deep understanding of ethical, cultural and spiritual issues, and his experience of Government decision-making at the highest levels, will be invaluable in helping us establish the council."

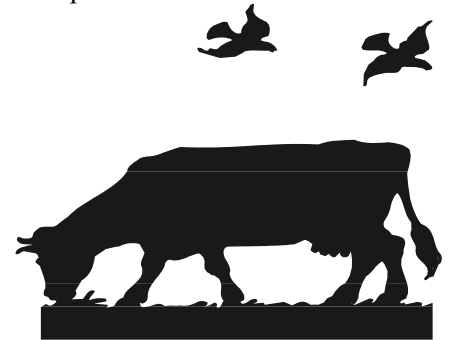
The Finance and Expenditure Select Committee has been reviewing **the HSNO (Hazardous substances and New Organisms) Amendment Bill which allows for the continuation of field trials with potential medical applications**. Whilst preventing commercial releases before October 2003, the Bill allows for continued trials and even releases for potential medical benefits. The 'moratorium' will be automatically lifted October 2003 allowing commercial applications.

GE Free New Zealand were among those making submissions to the Select Committee and looking to define the existing term 'heritable material' to include the possible results of Horizontal Gene Transfer to soil micro-organisms whilst the pro biotech lobby are pushing for that of the complete organism only. This would mean that genetic pollution could result from gene used

as a reason to refuse the trial.

We are also seeing **a review and amendments to the Treaty with Australia regarding food standards and the body ANZFA** – the Australia and New Zealand Food Authority set up to regulate these. This may well affect the laws governing GE foods in ways that may prevent New Zealand acting as a sovereign and independent country in regard to regulations.

Genetic engineering continues to be a 'hot potato'!



Public submissions to ERMA – the Environmental Risk Management Authority recently closed on **Crown Research Inst. AgResearch's application for a development of GE cattle with human, mice, goat, deer and sheep genes experiment over the next 10 years**. ERMA received over 375 submissions most "overwhelmingly" opposed. ERMA says they may hold hearings in May, so look out for media coverage Dr. Neil MacGregor said in his submission that it shouldn't be even considered given the weak analysis of the risks of contamination by the applicant.

AgResearch's last trial resulted in 4 live calves with human genes from over 50 implanted cloned embryos. Cloning and the use of GE in farm animals results in the suffering of both surrogate 'vessels' and the loss of huge numbers of foetuses. It has become more common since the prospect of finding new potentially useful proteins in milk to be used for pharmaceuticals was proposed.

Dolly was originally cloned to improve farm stock but public hostility towards GM food in the UK has forced the Roslin Inst. to reassess its research goals. "People will permit technology to be used in producing drugs that they would be uncomfortable being used in agriculture." Cloning is a focus of Compassion in world farming, see www.ciwf.co.uk

World going GE Free?

Councils ban GM trials - The Australian, 14.2.02 - A growing number of **Australian** councils are forging ahead with moves to outlaw GE crop trials despite the industry ridiculing the bans as unenforceable. Rosalie Shire Council, in Queensland's Darling Downs food cradle, is the latest of about 30 local governments across Australia to pass a resolution declaring itself a GM-free zone.

USA - 29 Vermont towns debated resolutions on GE foods at town meetings, 26 towns passed resolutions opposing GE foods, 2 towns tabled resolutions, and one voted it down. Most resolutions included language stating that GE foods have been shown to cause long-term damage to the environment, the integrity of rural, family farm economies and can have serious impacts on human health and called upon legislators and congressional representatives to support labelling of GE foods and seeds, in addition to a moratorium on the growing of GE crops.

8 towns took steps toward ending the use of GE crops within their towns, whether by declaring a town moratorium or urging that the planting of GE seeds be actively discouraged. 5.3.02 - CropChoice

Committee member David Ford raised the possibility of **Northern Ireland** being declared a GM-free zone for ethical and economic reasons.

Welsh farmers reject GM crops Farmers Guardian, 15.2.02 Concerns expressed in two major new reports on the potential health effects of GE foods are being seen by the Farmers' Union of Wales as confirmation of its bid for a GM-free Wales.

Import of GM Crops Banned

37 GE crops are to be banned from entering Thailand except for scientific research, said the Dept of Agriculture. The crops, including oranges, apples, coffee, trees and wheat would be put on the prohibited plant list under the 1964 Plant Quarantine Act. 31.1.02

Agency Must Disclose Location And Owners Of Transgenic Crops

Santiago Times 7.1.02: Organic farmers and public interest attorneys won their first ever 'freedom of information' case, when a Santiago court ordered Chile's Cattle and Agricultural Service to disclose information concerning the location

and ownership of farmlands planted in transgenic crops.

Italy Will Not Tolerate GM Seed Contamination

24.1.02 (Reuters) - Italy will not tolerate the accidental contamination of seeds with genetic material and needs to invest at least 50 million euros to enforce its policy. "The position that we have on seeds is a position of 'zero tolerance' within the technical limits," said the Farm Minister just ahead of the country's spring crop sowing campaign.

Pope warns scientists about genetic manipulation

Deutsche Presse 5.2.02 Vatican City: Pope John Paul II issued a new warning about genetic manipulation, telling scientists that "not all that is technically feasible is morally right". The achievements of modern day medicine and biotechnology could tempt man into wanting to modify the "tree of life". Life, the pope said, should be viewed as "a gift from God" and not as "private property". The Vatican traditionally opposes any form of genetic manipulation, human cloning and research using stem cells from young embryos.

A chip to automatically create hundreds of cloned embryos at a time is being developed by Californian biotech company ACT.

Cloning

Dolly's arthritis raises fear of fast ageing in clones.

5.1.02 The discovery that Dolly the cloned sheep has arthritis has raised fears that the cloning process may cause premature ageing, calling into question the ethics of producing animals that are destined to suffer unnecessarily.

Biotech co.s aim to clone chickens

13.1.02 U.S Chicken producers want meatier chickens. By minimizing the influence of the skinny genes Origen Therapeutics and AviGenics idea is to create identical copies of eggs with desirable traits that can roll off assembly lines by the billions. The hatched chickens would be identically disease-resistant, grow and eat at exactly the same rate.

Cat Charities Condemn Cloning

US Humane Society and UK Cats Protection condemned the recent cloning of a cat as dangerous and unnecessary. The announcement of the first cloning of a cat has provoked strong reactions from animal welfare organizations.

Cloned animals meet early deaths

Cloned animals may indeed die young suggests the first direct study of their lifespan, carried out by Japanese researchers on mice. Cloning involves removing the nucleus from an egg and replacing it with the nucleus of a donor cell. Many of these "nuclear transfer" embryos never develop or miscarry. Even after birth some clones die.

China's first cloned calf dies soon after birth.

RSNZ 20.1.02

Cloned cow kidney works, company says

29.1.02 Scientists at US Advanced Cell Technologies (ACT) said they created an organ by coaxing the embryonic stem cells of cows to grow into kidney cells, then used to make miniature kidneys, which were transplanted into and functioned in an animal. The work has yet to be independently verified

ACT caused controversy in Nov. saying it created cloned human embryos, which divided for a few days in the lab before dying. Other scientists disputed these claims, saying that the cells did not amount to human embryos. An authority on stem cells, resigned in protest from the editorial board of the online journal that published the study.



Your food

I don't know about you but I have yet to see a label either on a product or on a supermarket shelf that declares the product to contain GE . The problem being it will be phased in until December 7th, when it will become mandatory.

Or will it? A look at the recent discussion paper written by the US asking CODEX (the world food standards body) to consider banning misleading labels shows they are not keen to play the labelling game.

Neither apparently were representatives of an initial GE Free labelling meeting held by the Min. of Consumer Affairs.

Amendments are now before government on the ANZFA treaty on food standards between Australian and New Zealand. This new Bill threatens sovereignty, and safety and environmental concerns (grounds for review are *exceptional* health, safety, environmental or cultural factors, but exceptional is not defined). NZ's voting rights are similar to Australian states. Previously Ministers of Health made decisions about Food Standards, the council may soon be comprised of ministers of trade, agriculture, or economic affairs.

Corporate interests may also have voting rights, a board due to be nominated soon by organizations representing business, agriculture, biotech and mainstream science plus nutritional, consumer and public health groups. Decisions will be made ahead of setting up in July of a food safety authority under the Ministry of Agriculture - MAF.

2 new GE applications are before ANZFA, one is GE canola resistant to bromoxynil, which according to Pesticide Action Network-PAN has caused developmental abnormalities in mammals & is highly toxic to fish a carcinogenic and can cause birth defects in humans.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs was recently directed to "scope" how they might "facilitate" Ge-Free labelling as the RCI recommended. The first round-table meeting 27.2.02 included Fonterra, Life Sciences Business Network and Grocery Manufacturers lobbyists, as well as consumer and organics groups. The conflict of interest was blatant. The meeting revealed unfortunately that some powerful vested interests in industry are content to see delay in labelling of "Ge-Free " products for up to 3-4 years - probably to allow further contamination of the food supply to make such labelling more difficult.

A faster solution is to pressure **ANY** company that says it has a GE-Free policy (ie agree to avoid Ge-derived oils etc) to label it as such or label **“OUR POLICY IS TO BE GE-FREE”**

The REAL hurdle in their response, may well be that the Commerce Commission will come down hard on any company found to be " a little bit " contaminated, after saying they were following a GE-Free policy.... (this is despite the fact that ANZFA allow up to 1% GE to be "accidentally" used in food without labelling it). The answer must be in the companies declaring a publicly stated and registered **GE-Free policy** and listing that on their packaging.

If necessary they can also say “they make all efforts, but cannot guarantee as contamination is spreading”. That would cover the threat to the company from Commerce Commission watchdogs and wake up the majority of people wanting GE-Free food to the serious threat to our basic right to choose. Please call the "good" brands and demand "GE-Free policy" labelling **NOW**.

The Greenpeace food guide will be reissued in May, and will help people identify the companies they can and cannot trust.

What's the difference between organic and non-organic food?

So far there has been little scientific evidence to suggest that organic food is any healthier than conventional produce. Now John Paterson, a biochemist at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary has found that organic vegetable soups contain up to six times as much salicylic acid as non-organic brands. Salicylic acid is responsible for the anti-inflammatory action of aspirin, and helps combat hardening of the arteries and bowel cancer. "Eating organic may be good for you," says Paterson. The finding will reignite debate over the health benefits of organic food and may force regulatory agencies to reconsider their position www.newscientist.com/news.jsp?id=ns99992033



Your cup of coffee

At present your coffee is still GE Free and that's the way that all of us who enjoy the occasional cappuccino would like to think it will stay. Coffee berries ripen at different time and as a result need hand-picking giving local people essential jobs.

US company Integrated Coffee Technologies Inc. are trying to control the ripening process using GE by switching it off, coffee will then only ripen if sprayed with ethylene.

Buy Fair Trade coffee and pressure Nestles, Greggs and others to label their coffee GE Free NOW.

ing Becomes Minister Of Food - PM Helen Clark announced 1.2.02 that Annette King has been appointed Minister designate for Food Safety, in addition to her existing health and racing portfolios.

Global Safety Rules Agreed Japan, 12.3.2002 (ENS) - All foods made using biotechnology should be subject to pre-marketing safety assessments, and nations should be free to use tracing systems as their risk management procedures for such products, a UN task force on foods derived from biotechnology concluded. Applause from the 226 participants greeted the agreement reached by the Codex on Foods Derived from Biotechnology.

Draft biotech food principles call for all foods to be safety assessed for "both intended and unintended effects" and "New or altered hazards" identified, plus changes in key nutrients "relevant to human health."

U.S. Regulation of Transgenic Plants 'Inadequate' Cat Lazaroff WASHINGTON, DC, 22.2.2002 (ENS) - Regulations now in place to protect the public & environment from potential harmful effects of GE crops are inadequate, concludes a new review by the National Research Council. The report, says the government must do a better job of screening GE crops - before and after they are planted. U.S. Dept of Agriculture-USDA should more rigorously review the potential environmental effects of new GE, or transgenic, plants before approving them for commercial use, argues the report from the National Research Council, which helps advise the federal government on scientific issues.

Accident raises GMO-research flag Modified piglets turned into chicken feed could force scientists to alter their methods-19.2.2002- Toronto Globe & Mail The accidental rendering of GE piglets, with mouse and bacteria genes, into chicken feed may bring a change in the way Canadian scientists are allowed to conduct research on GE animals. Meat from the modified pigs was not approved for human or animal consumption. Unused feed was recalled as its release violated safety procedures.

Monsanto aiming for GM wheat introduction in 2005 US 22/2/2002 Reuters News Service KANSAS CITY, Monsanto Co.'s effort to gain regulatory approval for GE wheat seed in the U.S. whilst taking longer than expected, may be on the market in 2005. Monsanto is conducting field trials in Western Canada They will file for regulatory approval in Canada, Japan and the EU in 2002. GE wheat is contentious, many international wheat importers warning they will shun it and demand GM crops be stored, shipped and processed separately. Growers are concerned that commercialisation of GE wheat would hurt their ability to sell wheat. The real challenge will come from consumers. European and Asian governments are seeking more tests on how GM grains affect human health and the environment.

Seed case judge was former Monsanto attorney 10.12.01 Biotech companies' patenting of not only GE seed but also conventional varieties was legitimated by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling. This decision favours corporate monopoly and bioserfdom, and was made by Justice Clarence Thomas, Bush Snr appointee and former attorney for biotech giant Monsanto.

Jury finds Monsanto liable for releasing tons of PCBs on all six counts it considered: negligence, wantonness, suppression of the truth, nuisance, trespass and outrage. 23.2.02 Washington Post

Market rejects gene-altered rice.

<http://www.cropchoice.com>

Aventis may not commercialise rice engineered to resist the Liberty herbicide (glufosinate) because of warnings from millers and domestic and foreign producers, particularly the EU that they'll reject it.

Rice again... Wildrice, Manoomin is an aquatic grain, cultivated for thousands of years and revered by Native Americans, Anishinaabeg in the Lake States, New England, and Canada. The only cereal grain native to the United States, it is at threat from researchers who want to patent it and release trials in the open.

www.iatp.org/global

Gene pool – global commons

1.2.2002 –NY. Biotech activists from 250 organizations and more than 50 nations announced support for a treaty, aiming to prohibit all patents on plant, microorganism, animal, and human life, which would establish the earth's gene pool as a global commons.

Non-Governmental Organizations' NGO leaders say they will challenge government and corporate claims on patents on life in every country.



Jeremy Rifkin, President of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington, DC, says, "The gene pool should not be allowed to be claimed as commercially negotiable genetic information or intellectual property by governments, commercial enterprises, other institutions or individuals.

The global gene pool is a shared legacy and, therefore, a collective responsibility." Mr Rifkin added, "A global treaty to share the gene pool is the most important task ahead of us as we make the transition into the Age of Biology." The Treaty Initiative to Share the Genetic Commons

WHO to Examine Safety of GM

Foods 25-1-02 - Times of India NEW DELHI - The World Health Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation will start evaluating the safety and nutritional aspects of food derived from genetically modified plants, micro-organisms and animals. A WHO statement on food safety said it had already initiated work to establish a knowledge base focusing on a "broader evaluation of risks, benefits and other considerations related to the production and consumption of foods derived from biotechnology."

The WHO said such an assessment would consider health benefits as well as possible negative health implications.

Seed shipments contaminated.

Since the protocol governing sweet corn seeds came into force on 1 August 2001, 56,335 kg of seed have been imported for sowing in 25 consignments. All seed has been imported from Australia and the USA, with approximately two-thirds coming from the USA. Two further consignments (4 kg in total) arrived at the border but were destroyed because the importers were not prepared to pay for the cost of testing for GE organisms. There are 19 outstanding permits for the importation of a further 2,163 kg of sweetcorn seed.

The majority of seed has been tested offshore (17 consignments, 54,492 kg). Eight consignments (1,846 kg) were tested at the border and seven of these were found to be free from genetically modified organisms. In January 2002, one consignment of 2.7 kg of seed from the USA was found to contain GE material and was refused biosecurity clearance. The seeds were incinerated.



How to protect clean green New Zealand?

Its up to us all!

NZ Quotes

"Government owns most of our biotechnology research capacity and should be looking for investors to help us get more out of it." 22.2.02

Bill English, National Party Leader.

"We have found a compromise between the 'ban forever' disciples and the 'release regardless' brigade"

Matt Robson 11.01 Labour MP.

'We are too small a country to work in silos.' *Dr John Hay, President of the Association of Crown Research Institutes.*

"If we don't put legislation in place we become a target country for people to do things they're not allowed to do in their own countries," *IBAC chairwoman Anne Dickinson.*

An appeal for the government to develop a vision for ethical biotechnology in New Zealand, has been made by a coalition of producer-groups, scientists and medical professionals, business, consumer- groups and environmentalists.

In a joint declaration, the government was asked to develop a biotech strategy that would allow ethical applications in containment, but protect conventional and organic food from 1% GE contamination...allowing government investment to be redirected towards projects that would suit our clean, green image, sustainability, culture, international marketing opportunities in tourism and exports of organic and conventionally produced foods.

The declaration was supported by Bio-Gro, Soil and Health, Physicians & Scientists for Responsible Genetics, GE-Free NZ (in Food and Environment), Groundswell, NZ Bio Dynamic Farming and Gardening Assoc. Inc, Safe Food Campaign, Pacific Ecologist. **As yet there has not been a time offered in response to the request to meet with Ministers.**

Groundswell blasts eugenics nightmare in HSNO Bill 20.2.02 The GE free activist organisation Groundswell gave a verbal submission to the select committee considering the HSNO Amendment Bill on Wednesday night and blasted the government for allowing the potential of the genetic engineering of human beings. Groundswell spokesperson Tremane Barr said, "The supplementary Order Paper that the government sneaked into the HSNO Bill in late December allows for the Minister of Health to approve the germline genetic engineering of human beings. The genetic engineering of a master race even with permission from the Minister of Health is completely unacceptable to us – germline genetic engineering must be banned outright."

Hot potatoes On January 10th someone broke into a PC2 greenhouse at the Lincoln Science and Agriculture Centre and destroyed 1334 potato plants? A PC2 is an approved contained lab area, a greenhouse certified for GE plants. This PC2 also held four other types of plants. The centre was peculiarly reluctant to identify them. At 9.20 am the break-in was discovered by technical staff, the police were called minutes later. The media were not called until late in the day. Was Lincoln using the time to cover up GE experiments it didn't have permission for? Or was it a giant publicity stunt carried out by pro-GE activists to discredit the anti, adding weight to the argument that GE trials should be carried out in secret. After the break-in Lincoln got permission to remove PC2 signage to aid security. No group has yet claimed responsibility.

'**The destruction of genetically modified crops in this country is not only ethically bankrupt but invites further illegal action in retaliation,**' wrote Richard Randerson, Royal Commission board member, stoking the fires of 'eye for an eye' recriminations. Detailing rules of engagement for every 'good' dissenter, he went on to state "the case for GM sabotage comes seriously unstuck, for the damage from this action far exceeds any potential for good. The sabotage has a serious personal dimension insofar as it destroys three years of committed research by Dr Margy Gilpin in a fully contained facility and under strict regulation. We do well to reflect on our reaction to the destruction of three years of our own endeavour."

So, one paid researcher loses a seasons crop, what about those unpaid individuals who have put their lives on hold, fighting for their rights to eat GE Free food and grow organic crops without the fear of contamination from government funded research institutes, who are in turn supported by so called independent perspectives from a so obviously biased Royal Commission.

NEW EU FOOD SAFETY LAW DEFINES PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

A new European regulation in force on 21/2/02 defines the controversial precautionary principle in EU food legislation. The directive (178/2002) lays down principles governing food / feed safety in particular.

It states that in cases where the possibility of harmful effects on health have been identified "but scientific uncertainty persists, risk management measures ... may be adopted, pending further scientific information for a more comprehensive risk assessment."

The EU has long been advocating the use of the precautionary principle. The US, opposes explicit references to the principle, which it regards as unscientific and arbitrary, in particular when used about approvals of GE products. According to analysts, the new regulation reflects growing awareness within the EU of the need for coordinated action to ensure adequate safety standards.

Farmers Told GM Crops Are 'Too Dangerous to Insure'

Scotland. The Sunday Herald – 10.3.2002 Insurance companies brand genetically engineered plants as risky as war and nuclear accidents. Genetically modified crops, like war and nuclear accidents, have been deemed too dangerous to insure against.

Insurance companies have decided not to provide farmers, their neighbours or anyone else with cover against the risks of GM contamination.

This means that there will be no payouts for anyone whose health is harmed by GM food, and organic farmers put out of business by genetic pollution will get no compensation. As a result, leading land agents are advising their clients not to get involved with GM crops.

Monitoring effects of GM foods difficult: doctors

CBC.- Canadian Broadcasting Co., Science News, 12 Feb 2002 OTTAWA - Health Canada will be monitoring Canadians to see if they get sick from eating GM foods, but the research will be difficult because no one knows who's eating what.

"A basic prerequisite for any kind of analysis of the effects of GM foods on the population over time is that we know if people are consuming the items or not, at this point, we simply don't have this information," said epidemiologist Bryan Embree of the Ontario Public Health Assoc.

Long-term monitoring of the health effects of GM foods is important because allergies to the new modified proteins could take years to show up, said Ottawa allergist Ham Pong. Environment Canada will also be monitoring long-term environmental effects of GEOS.

GM foods "still not proved to be safe"

Environment Daily, 31/01/02 Long-term potential health risks posed by genetically modified (GM) material in food require further investigation before GM technology is commercialised, says French food safety authority Afssa. A paper shows continued resistance from French public authorities to any move towards an early end to the EU's moratorium on new GM crop authorisations.

Afssa argues that current safety testing for foods containing GMOs is insufficient. Research into the impacts of prolonged exposure with particular emphasis placed on identifying risks of gradual development of allergic reactions is needed. It asks for existing testing procedures to identify acute toxicity as well tests for "subchronic" toxicity. These may offer an opportunity to assess long-term impacts on immune, hormonal and reproductive systems. Follow-up: <http://www.afssa.fr/>.

ENVIRONMENT DAILY ISSUE 1151 - 5.2.2002 **Testing regime for GM foods "must improve"**

Existing tests designed to ensure that new foods are safe for human consumption are not sufficient and should be strengthened before more foods containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are approved, says a report by the UK's leading science academy, the Royal Society.

It calls for testing to be stepped up on all novel foods, with a specific focus on products containing GM material. The goal should be to determine whether individual products containing GMOs increase the risk of allergic reactions or reductions in the nutritional content of baby food.

*England's nature conservation agency has warned that current guidelines on separation distances between conventional and GM crops do not offer enough protection against the development of so-called "superweeds", resistant to multiple pesticides. It calls on the government to show commitment to biodiversity by revising the rules.

www.environmentdaily.com/articles/index.cfm?article&ref=11484

BOTTLE-FED babies could be undernourished if given GE infant formula milk

due to inadequate regulations and testing regimes. Dr. Eric Brunner, an epidemiologist at University College, London, a Royal Society report's authors, said babies dependent only on formula milk were particularly vulnerable to any nutritional changes. **UK Daily Telegraph 5.2.02**

Trial halted after gene shows up in semen

NATURE 2001 VOL 414, 677 Nell Boyce, Washington. A patient in a gene-therapy trial has had the virus used to transfer the gene show up in his semen. Gene therapy often uses viruses to transport therapeutic genes into cells.

Around the country

GE Free Kapiti

The Kapiti branch began the year by planning street stalls / coffee mornings. Our present focus is gathering registrations for the GE Free register, mapping them, and selling Proud to be GE Free signs.

We contacted local supermarkets about labelling GE goods. They are in the process of requiring all suppliers to identify GE ingredients and to access alternative non-GE ingredients. Because derivatives of GE crops, such as oils, sugars, starches, additives and processing aids are exempted from labelling, it is not possible to rely on the current labelling protocol for accurate information.

It is interesting to note that they quote testing for the presence of DNA as the criterion for labelling when not long ago we were told that such testing was far too expensive to be used! Our biggest supermarket expects to have only 10 products labelled "GM" or "May contain GE ingredients." Consumers need either clear information on food ingredients derived from GE crops, or alternative sources of food.

A workshop on GE, arranged jointly with the District Council, was agreed to this late last year, and is to be on March 21st, involving council, Community Board members, iwi, businessmen and the public.

We have 3 speakers, an environmental technologist who is an educator, an organic producer and retailer and a soil scientist. The kaumatua of the local marae will give a Maori viewpoint. The council is to provide a Ministry for the Environment official, an environmental lawyer and a pro-GE speaker.

GE Aware Nelson too, is looking to involve the wider region and are at present looking at possible initiatives with council.

We will have a meeting with **Luke Anderson** speaking in Nelson on 3rd April (ph.546 7966 for info) and are continuing with our weekly stall and

GE FREE NORTHLAND won 1st prize for the "Best Float" at Kerikeri Christmas parade- thanks to Kate Moss for designing /producing 25 "butterfly" costumes for the kids and Living Nature (Suzanne Hall) for donating the orange "Didn't your mother tell you not to play with your food" t-shirt !!

We got lots of press coverage from ACT MP Gerry Eckhoff's ill-advised attack on our \$4,000 COGS grant for an educational information packet on the critical GE issue for Northland schools. Thanks to the free publicity about our high quality info pack requests from the public, environment centres and District Council staff keep coming!

Regional Forum on GE. We have worked closely with Northland iwi, Northland Conservation Board, organic producers and others to challenge a biased proGE "Regional Forum on GE" in Northland. They and concerned local iwi, were blocked from making presentations to their elected representatives on the critical GE issue- being told there would be a "Regional Forum" instead (to which many groups were denied speaking rights). The Far North District Council coordinating the Regional Forum has now agreed to alter the list of invited panelists to include local iwi, Northland Conservation Board and organic producers. We requested an independent scientist be invited to speak – Prof. Peter Wills of Physicians & Scientists for Responsible Genetics.

Luke Anderson "Why we need to be GE free in Food/Environment"

Northland tour confirmed dates are

11 April WARKWORTH (Green Party - Warkworth for more info)

12 April WHANGAREI (Forum North, Cafler Room, 7:30pm)

13 April KERIKERI Luke will be joined by local businesswoman

Suzanne Hall of Living Nature and lawyer Rick Palmer talking about liability issues more info from Marty Robinson 09 407 8650

14 April KAITAIA info from Rob Uberfeldt 09 407 688running the office.

NEWSFLASH* Northland hui to mobilise Maori opposition to GE-5th May: Te Rapunga marae. Info-Percy Tipene 09 401 4837 (Tai Tokerau Organic Primary Producers Inc)

GE FREE HAWKES BAY :Series of lectures on genetic engineering

Tues April 9th 7.30 pm GE : A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Luke Anderson, UK researcher- GE Free activist – intl speaker

Hosted by **Tim Gilbertson**, Central Hawke's Bay District Mayor EIT, Lecture Theatre 1, Taradale

Tues April 30th 7.30 pm GE: MAORI CULTURAL/ETHICAL ISSUES

Annette Sykes, Lawyer and political activist **Mereana Pitman**

, Treaty worker and educator

Hosted by **Jo Te Rito**, Dean Faculty of Maori Studies, EIT, EIT Marae, Taradale

Tuesday May 21st 7.30 pm GE: IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT

Peter Maddison Biosecurity Chairperson, Royal Forest and Bird Soc. **Dr. Neil McGregor** Massey University.

Hosted by **Dave Pipe**, Napier City Councillor, EIT,

Lecture Theatre 1, Taradale

Friday June 28th 7.30 pm GE AND GUMBOOTS. **Ian Ewen-Street**

Green MP **Dr. Peter Wills** University of Auckland

Hosted by **Perry Spiller**, Founding Chief Executive of Bio-Gro NZ

Angus Inn, Railway Road, Hastings

Tuesday July 30th 7.30 pm GE: WHERE TO FROM HERE ?

Jeanette Fitzsimons, Green Party Co-leader. Hosted by **John Bostock**,

organic grower Havelock North Community Centre

More info : Odile 835 0141, Liz 875 1234, Warwick : 06 857 8080

GROUNDSWELL, Christchurch

Thurs 4th of April - 7.30 pm at WEA- public talk by

internationally renowned GE Free activist and researcher with the UK based Genetic Engineering Network Luke Anderson.

Local Government Councils

Lobbying of the Regional and City Councils will be a priority in the coming months and Groundswells GE Free certification service -see P8

GE Free Contacts and more

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Groundswell-GE Food Labelling

The systems and processes of the Groundswell GE Free certification service for food producers, cafes, bakeries and restaurants is being finalised and will be put to the test in the coming weeks. The Royal Commission pointed out that under NZ law any consumer can request information on the GE status of food prepared for immediate consumption, such as restaurant or take-away food.

The prohibitions against misleading or deceptive conduct in the Fair Trading Act 1986 ensure that businesses must provide accurate information about the status of the food they provide.

Contact Tremane Barr (see above).

Mothers against GE-MadGE

GE Free NZ welcomes Madge
Madge is a rapidly growing network of politically non-aligned women from Auckland who intend to actively resist the use of GE organisms in food and on our land.

Madge intends to network nationally and create an infrastructure designed to collect correlate and distribute information on genetic engineering.

**Contact Madge 09 309 3838 or
email :madge@paradise.net.nz**



**GE Free T shirts 4 sizes unbleached
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gefree@ts.co.nz

Or write to PO Box 693 Nelson

GE & MEDICINE

Diabetics demand insulin safety probe The Globe and Mail, Canada, Wednesday, February 6, 2002 reports on more incidents of problems with GE insulin. a significant minority suffer from adverse reactions. John Hunt, an endocrinologist and former head of the Canadian Diabetes Association, said the most common problem is hypoglycemia unawareness."

QUOTES

"We can't afford to lose one dollar of business," one internal Monsanto memo declared.

"A small company can be wiped out by litigation if it's not indemnified by the government," said Stephan A. Lawton, vice-president of the US Biotechnology Industry Org.

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jmuller@xtra.co.nz

Advertisement

US GE seed to Afghan Farmers

28.1.02 "The Us Agency for International Development has begun funding farming projects to help rebuild Afghanistan, a US official said, reports Agence France Presse. Natsios defended the use of genetically modified material in Afghanistan. "One of the only ways we are going to be able to feed the developing world and upgrade the agricultural system in the third world is through genetically modified material." Most health ministers in the developing world, he added, supported this position.

13 firms own 80% of GM crop patents.

14.1.02 Nearly 80 per cent of GE crops worldwide are created by 4 companies. There is also an increase in control over genetically modified products through patents – 13 companies own 80 per cent of the patents in GM crops. Such statistics raise questions of security of a very small group in the world, holding technology and power born of it in their hands.

Join the GE free Register and encourage all your friends and family. Call 09-438 8659.

Online: www.gefreeregister.co.nz.