



Californians
For GE-Free
Agriculture

DONATE NOW
SECURE DONATIONS
BY GROUNDSRING.org

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture is a coalition committed to ecologically responsible and economically viable agriculture. We provide education, training and resources in support of the rights of farmers and communities to protect themselves from the environmental, human health and economic risks of genetic engineering in agriculture.

Coalition Members

California Certified Organic Farmers

The Center for Environmental Health

Center for Food Safety

Community Alliance with Family Farms

Ecological Farming Association

Genetic Engineering Action Network

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 15, September 2005

NEWS:

Preemption held off for the 2005 legislative session!

Venezuela declared GE-Free!

Canadian Organic farmers granted leave to appeal class certification decision

Japan discovers tenth shipment contaminated with Bt10

RESEARCH:

Herbicide-resistant horseweed discovered in CA signals a failure of GE technology.

Roundup kills frogs as well as tadpoles and causes increases in pregnancy problems in farming families

TAKE ACTION:

Help build the California GE-Free Network.

NEWS

Preemption held off for the 2005 legislative session!

Congratulations are due to the Cal GE-Free coalition, staff, and collaborating organizations for vigilance and fast response throughout the 2005 legislative session. We have managed to hold off pre-emption for this year, and are well placed to hold our ground going into 2006, when the bill is certain to be heard again, probably first in January. Thanks to all to those of you who responded promptly to our calls to action by contacting your legislators and letting them know that you oppose this assault on local democracy.

Venezuela declared GE-Free!

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez Frias has declared that the cultivation of genetically engineered crops on Venezuelan soil will be banned, citing food sovereignty and the well-being of the nations farmers as the basis for his decision. A project with Monsanto that involved the planting of 500,000 acres with GE soy has been terminated and the land will be instead be used to plant yucca (an indigenous crop).

Canadian Organic farmers granted leave to appeal class certification decision

In May 2005 organic farmers in Saskatchewan, Canada launched a class-action lawsuit against Monsanto and Bayer CropScience seeking compensation for loss of markets due to the companies' GE canola contamination of their organic crops. The farmers' first attempt to have the case certified as a class action suit was rejected, but on Tuesday August 30th, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal permitted them to appeal the decision.

"This is great", says plaintiff Dale Beaudoin. "On behalf of 1000 plus organic farmers we can continue to fight for our right to remain stewards for sustainable agriculture. This is no minor issue. It is a matter of independence and survival for all farmers world-wide." On a related note, Cal GE-Free is supporting a two-year bill (AB984) that would place liability for GE contamination on the shoulders of the patent holders of GE technology. This bill would make it easier for organic and conventional farmers to accomplish what the Saskatchewan farmers are attempting. Stay tuned for ways you can take action to support this bill during the 2006 legislative session starting in January.

For more information: <http://www.saskorganic.com/oapf/>

Japan discovers tenth shipment contaminated with Bt10

Unwanted contamination of non-GE crops by GE seed is a serious economic threat facing both organic and conventional farmers. In early June, a genetically engineered variety of corn that has not been approved for human consumption was found in shipments to Japan, confirming suspicions that GE contamination is inevitable and forecasting serious market losses unless the US

takes steps to guarantee GE-Free exports. Many US corn exporters have started voluntarily testing all of their shipments out of fear that their goods will be turned back if they are contaminated with GE-seed, but this is costly and jeopardizes their competitiveness. Since May, there have been ten discoveries of tainted U.S. cargoes. To avoid the risk of receiving tainted corn cargoes, some Japanese importers have turned to Argentine and South African corn suppliers for GE-free corn as alternatives to the U.S. supply.

For more information and tracking of contamination incidents: see the [GM Contamination Register](#) launched by Greenpeace and GeneWatch UK.

RESEARCH

Herbicide-resistant horseweed discovered in CA signals a failure of GE technology.

Roundup-resistant horseweed has recently been discovered in California for the first time, foreshadowing a potential crisis for farmers and highlighting another significant failure of genetic engineering. Researchers say that the development of resistance to Roundup® is an inevitable consequence of relying exclusively on one chemical – rendering Roundup Ready GE technology not only dangerous, but obsolete.

Monsanto promised that its Roundup Ready herbicide-tolerant seeds would reduce tillage and the use of toxic herbicides, but now are advising farmers to “mix other chemicals in” even before the horseweed appears. As long predicted by opponents of GE, growers are being forced to use ever-greater applications of pesticides along with erosion-causing tilling to control the resistant horseweed, the first of what will likely be several Roundup-resistant weeds.

For the complete Associated Press story, see <http://www.calgefree.org/news/horseweed.shtml>.

Roundup kills frogs as well as tadpoles and causes increases in pregnancy problems in farming families

Evidence linking Monsanto's herbicide Roundup with severe ecological and health impacts is mounting, raising more serious concerns about the 'Roundup Ready' GE technology that relies upon it. A University of Pittsburgh researcher has discovered that Roundup®, the most commonly used herbicide in the world, is deadly to tadpoles at lower concentrations than previously tested, and that the product kills frogs in addition to tadpoles.

In another study in Ontario, Canada, exposure of male farmers to glyphosate-based herbicides (note: Roundup® is glyphosate-based) was associated with an increase in miscarriage and premature birth in farm families. The herbicide has also been found to kill human placental cells at concentrations far below those used in agricultural practice.

For more information:

- [Monsanto's Round-up is toxic](#). Roundup Revelation, Weed Killer Adjuvants May Boost Toxicity (Environmental Health Perspectives Volume 113, Number 6, June 2005)
- [Roundup® Kills Frogs As Well As Tadpoles](#), Pitt Biologist Finds.

TAKE ACTION

Help build the California GE-Free Network

As one of the largest agricultural economies in the world, California has the opportunity to become a leader in safeguarding our public and private lands, fisheries, forests, schools, gardens, and nurseries, from GE contamination. If GE is an issue that you are concerned about and you want to get involved in local action, here are some steps to take:

- If you are not already a member, sign-on to the Cal GE-Free list serve www.calgefree.org to receive this newsletter and action alerts.
- Contact Becky Tarbotton at (415) 826-2770 to find out whether there is an active GE-Free group in your area. If there is no GE-Free group in your area, consider asking local community groups (church groups, environmental groups etc.) to see if you could make a presentation to them about the issue. Cal GE-Free can help by providing information and talking points and offering suggestions.
- Organize a screening or house party of the new 'The Future of Food' and use this as an opportunity to collect names of people who would be interested in starting a group.
- Finally, please consider a donation to Californians for GE-Free Agriculture.

You can make a secure, tax-deductible donation on line at:
<https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=2709>

OR

Send a check payable to Cal GE-Free at: 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465

=====
PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO INTERESTED FRIENDS AND FAMILY!
=====

**Californians for GE-Free Agriculture,
15290 Coleman Valley Rd, Occidental, CA 95465 415-561-
2523.
<http://calgefree.org/>**

Thanks for your support!

Becky Tarbotton

becky@calgefree.org

=====