



Californians  
For GE-Free  
Agriculture

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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.

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#### **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

Occidental Arts and Ecology Center

# Californians for GE-Free Agriculture

## NEWSLETTER NUMBER 16, October 2005

**NEW! 'Proud to be GE-Free' display signs available for GE-Free producers or vendors! [Click here](#) or [Contact Cal GE-Free](#) for more information.**

In this issue:

### NEWS

- Sonoma Campaign heats up - Farming community shows vote of support
- Lake County Board of Supervisors votes against GE Alfalfa moratorium
- US not responding to customer demand for GE-Free soy
- Market rejection: Zambia to test all Maize imports for GE contamination
- Canadian farmers call for a halt in approvals of Glyphosate-resistant plant varieties in light of new scientific study

### RESEARCH

- Study shows that GE Crops persist in fields for fifteen years, coexistence impossible.

### TAKE ACTION

- Help build the California GE-Free Network.

## NEWS

### **Sonoma Campaign heats up – Farming community shows vote of support**

With only a few weeks remaining until the November 8th vote on Sonoma County's Measure M - a ballot initiative that will place a ten-year moratorium on genetically engineered crops in Sonoma County - some 50 farmers from throughout Sonoma County gathered on October 15th at the Santa Rosa Farmers Market to declare their support for the initiative. The event was hosted by Measure M endorsers, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) and the Santa Rosa Farmer's Market Association. "Farmers have rejected GE wheat and rice in North Dakota, Missouri, California and in many countries across the world. We don't need or want these new, untested technologies in our fields or jeopardizing our ability to market the food we produce." Said Julian Kayne, President of the North Coast Chapter of CAFF.

*For more information* about the Sonoma campaign and to find out how you can help, visit their website at: [www.gefreesonoma.org](http://www.gefreesonoma.org).

### **Lake County Board of Supervisors votes against GE Alfalfa moratorium**

A proposed ordinance to place a moratorium on the planting of GE alfalfa (just deregulated this summer) was defeated by a narrow 3-2 vote by the Board of Supervisors in Lake County on Tuesday October 11th. There was a lot of support for the moratorium including dozens of endorsers, but in the end the swing vote that had been expected to vote in favor of a moratorium returned to a 'no' position after hearing the heavy opposition of the Farm Bureau and Monsanto representatives. Lake County organizers were disappointed by the outcome, but their enthusiasm for continuing to act to make Lake County GE-Free has not been dampened.

### **US not responding to customer demand for GE-Free soy**

US farmers are facing serious market losses due to the government and agribusinesses dismissive attitude towards other countries' GE concerns, said the president of Soyatech, Peter Golbitz at the Midwest Specialty Grains Conference held in Minneapolis. Since introduction of GE Roundup Ready soybeans in 1996, the US share of world soybean exports has dropped from 65% to 45% while nations committed to growing GE-free soybeans have seen their share rise. Golbitz warned that if US production of GM soybeans, which now accounts for about 86% of total US production, continues to increase, US farmers may be eliminated from the lucrative market for non-GM specialty and identity preserved (IP) soybeans. "I don't think the American farmers' interests are being looked out for," he said.

*For the complete story:*

<http://www.calgefree.org/news/15years1005.shtml>

### **Market rejection: Zambia to test all Maize imports for GE contamination**

Zambia is the latest in a growing list of countries to declare its rejection of genetic engineering by making GE-testing of imported crops mandatory. On October 17th, the Millers Association of Zambia president Caleb Mulenga stated "All crops to be exported (editors note: this means exported TO Zambia) must therefore be tested and if it is condemned at the border, it will be seized, destroyed and the exporter has to bear all the costs." Mr. Mulenga went on to say that the millers were also re-testing the imported maize at Mount Makulu Agricultural Research Station in Chilanga to ensure that it was really GMO free.

*For the complete*

*article:* <http://allafrica.com/stories/200510170094.html>

### **Canadian farmers call for a halt in approvals of Glyphosate-resistant plant varieties in light of new scientific study**

Canada's National Farmers Union (NFU) is calling for an "immediately stop" to approvals of glyphosate-resistant crops, and a re-evaluation of those approvals of glyphosate-resistant varieties

already on the market, in the light of research showing that glyphosate-resistant crops are contributing to the spread of a major fungal disease (fusarium head blight) which is costing western Canadian farmers hundreds of millions of dollars in lost yields and markets.

This study adds more evidence to mounting case against Monsanto's Roundup ready crops. In our September newsletter, we reported that glyphosate-resistant horseweed had been discovered in California. Researchers now confirm that already glyphosate-resistant horseweed has now also been discovered in Tennessee (1). Eight species of glyphosate-resistant weeds have been classified globally - five in the US - since 1996 (2).

*For more information:*

(1) [http://bjournal.com/2005/content/article\\_views.php?ID=756&Author=56](http://bjournal.com/2005/content/article_views.php?ID=756&Author=56)

(2) <http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=5815>

## RESEARCH

### **Study shows GE Crops persist in fields for fifteen years, coexistence impossible.**

Royal Society researchers in Britain, financed by the government and biotech companies, found that nine years after a GE crop was planted in a farmers field for just one growing season, an average of two GM rape plants would grow in every square meter of an affected field. After 15 years, this came down to one plant per square meter - still enough to break the EC limits on permissible GE contamination.

The findings show that the 'coexistence' of GE and non-GE crops – a concept being pushed by the biotech industry in both Europe and the US – is virtually impossible given that the inevitability of contamination and the persistence of GE varieties once they have spread.

Commenting for the UK coalition GM Freeze, Pete Riley said: "These research findings show that it will be impossible to grow GM oilseed rape without long term contamination problems - the concept of coexistence is looking like dream land. Farmers would not be able to predict what level of GM they could find in their non-GM crops. Their land would be blighted for 15 years or more by a GM crop grown by a previous owner. The Government should announce the end all GM oilseed rape experiments in the UK immediately so that farmers can get on with providing UK supermarkets and food and animal feed manufacturers with the GM-free products they are demanding".

*For the complete report:* <http://www.journals.royalsoc.ac.uk>, and further information visit <http://defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/epg-cpec28.htm>.

# 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:

- NEW! If you are, or you know of a producer, vendor, store or farmers market that is committed to growing and sourcing GE-Free - support and broadcast this commitment to healthy food and farming with a "Proud to be GE-Free" display sign from Cal GE-Free. Contact our office for more information, or take a look at it on our website.
- If you are not already a member, sign-on to the Cal GE-Free list serve [www.calgefree.org](http://www.calgefree.org) to receive this newsletter and action alerts.
- Contact Becky Tarbotton at (415) 695-1301 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>

o OR –

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

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PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO INTERESTED FRIENDS  
AND FAMILY!

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

Thanks for your support!

Becky Tarbotton

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