

GENETIX UPDATE

newsletter of the genetic engineering network; INFORMATION FOR ACTION

better late than never

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Proclamations of *'the beginning of the end for GM food in Britain'* greeted the announcements from Tesco and Asda that they will be sourcing all own-brand animal products from farm animals fed a non-GM diet. These supermarket giants control 42% of the UK grocery market.

The announcement was made one day after Marks and Spencer made a similar claim on 25th January and by the time you read this hopefully other retailers will have followed suit.

The announcements will have a profound impact on the international soya and maize markets. The BioTech companies will be gutted as the moves will severely limit sales of GM crops in the UK. This will upset Cargill, who supply the bulk of the GM soya and maize. The news may even effect decisions about GM plantings in the USA this year.

Although most retailers dropped GM ingredients from their brands in '99, GM crops have continued to flood the UK through animal feed. Over 80% of soya and maize imports are fed to animals for meat and dairy products.

Animal feed is the biotech industry's hidden lifeline. 50% of GM crops are grown for it, and because there's no mandatory labelling for animal products fed on GM feed, there's limited public awareness of its existence. Until now the only guaranteed way of avoiding it has been by going organic or vegan.

The majority of British GM feed is made from soya imported from the USA. European reservations about its safety have already dented the market. UK imports have dropped from 500 thousand tonnes in '98 to a mere 150 thousand in 2000.

All GM soya entering the country comes through Cargill's feed-processing mill in Liverpool, which has allowed the company to resist segregation of GM and conventional beans and charge a premium for GM-free products.

The international marketer, processor, transporter and distributor of food, agricultural and industrial products has over 1,000 sites in 60 countries and operations in 130 others.

Definitely...
the largest
private company
in the world

Cargill

5th - 10th MARCH 2001

GM COMES TO TOWN

a week of action
and events in Liverpool
exposing the GM industry

0161 226 6814

information - public meetings
convergence centre - club nights
info shop - skill sharing
organic food - gigs

Although their insidious presence effects all our lives, Cargill is not exactly a household name. They would far rather people knew nothing about them, so tell your friends and read all about them in the Corporate Watch briefing *"Cargill, arrogance incorporated"* (see resources).



Photo: Hugh Warwick

"The message from customers is loud and clear"

Asda Trading Director Mike Coupe

GM FOWL ARE REVOLTING

Six days before Xmas, 20 people dressed as turkeys and equipped with D'locks and arm tubes, halted two lorries in the entrance of one of Asda's UK distribution centres.

With their 'just in time' restocking and one truck arriving every few minutes, the two-hour blockade at Darford was deemed to have been pretty costly to Asda. Clearing the backlog would have taken some time.

A banner told Asda to stuff it's GM turkeys and head office was informed that there would be more blockades of their distribution centres around the country if they ignored public opinion.

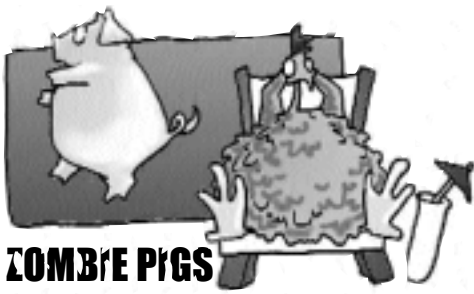
Asda was chosen because of its connection with the giant US buyer, Walmart, to whom American farmers would be looking to sell their crops in 2001.

Similar actions occurred in New Zealand two days later. Ten people dressed as chickens blockaded a feedmill, and a few days later others chained themselves to a boat bringing in animal feed.

In Britain, concerned chickens roosted on Cargill's Liverpool plant and blocked the weighstation with a truck. Two weeks before, dischuffed persons locked onto lorries and climbed silos at an Exeter animal feed mill owned by *BOMC Pauls*, the main producer of GM animal feed in the UK.

"If we were to lose a debate on GM animal feed.. it could be very damaging."

Dr Harry Swann, Monsanto



ZOMBIE PIGS & CHILLED OUT CHICKS

Purdue University in the US is working on GM animals devoid of aggression and stress. Work is already under way on 'zombie' pigs that won't bite and gore others in their herds. Chickens and quail free of aggression are also being developed, others may follow.

FLOUNDERING FISH

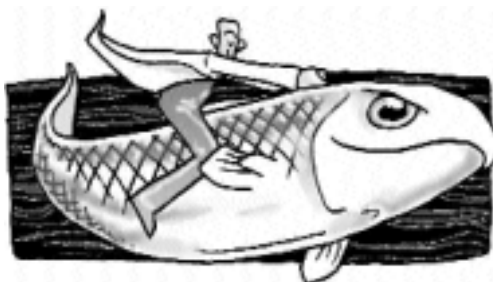
A.F Protein of Massachusetts have filed for approval of its Aqua Advantage breed salmon in the US and expect approval for human consumption within the year.

The salmon carry a 'promoter gene' from a flounder that enables their hormones to function all year round. They can grow 10 times faster than normal fish and reach the insane size of up to **12 feet long**.

The salmon was being tested in Scotland but the experiment was stopped in 1996 when the Department of the Environment became concerned about escapes into the wild, which would decimate native populations, not least because they'd eat almost everything in the river.

The final insult is that, because of their size, farmed and mutant salmon are more attractive to the hen fish who reject the wild males. A.F claim the fish are sterilised, but the technique is far from perfect.

Swimming, sexy, ocean-going genetic pollution could be off our coasts soon by default, as escapes of farmed fish are well documented and have already seriously damaged wild stocks. Scottish salmon farmers have pledged to avoid frankenfish but they're hardly saints themselves. Their fish farms are blamed for introducing parasites and infectious diseases into wild populations. Large salmon farms produce sewage waste equivalent to a town. They spawn toxic algae blooms, so maybe stick to hummous for supper...



BEES KNEES

Bees are getting a pretty grim time of it too. Since the verroa mite invaded in '92 wild bee populations have plummeted. Without the treatment that kept hives receive, colonies die out after 2 or 3 years. This is not only a disaster for insect lovers but could have massive ramifications for fruit farms and all flora that depend on bees for pollination.

If bees gather pollen in areas growing GM crops, their honey becomes contaminated. Because honey is perceived as a 'health product' GM material could make it unsaleable. This could force beekeepers out of business and potentially leave a gaping hole in the ecosystem.



Finally provoked by the threat of GM commercialisation, and the mass contamination it would represent, the mild-mannered beekeepers of Britain have finally committed to an anti-GM stance. The five national beekeeping associations supported the opposition to *Chardon LL* maize last year.

DRASTIC PLASTIC

While *Monsanto* and *Aventis* have been the brunt of anti-GM campaigns, *DuPont* has started production of plastics from GM crops. Launched in Oct 2000 they plan to produce 50,000 tons per year.

Ages ago *Cargill Dow* managed to produce a biodegradable substitute for nylon, polypropylene, polythene, polystyrene and cellophane made from non-GM maize. However, *DuPont's* plastic is a non-biodegradable polymer produced by "inserting four genes taken from various species of bacteria and yeast into industrial strains of *E Coli*".

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Controversy over the activities of *Huntington Life Sciences* has scared off previous customers including *Monsanto*. HLS has been involved in the xenotransplantation of transgenic pig organs. HLS was saved from financial collapse by *Stephens Group Inc.*, one of the biggest private investment firms in the US. *Stephens* has extensive investments in manufacturing, drugs, oil & gas, media, agribusiness, biotech and retailing. They have powerful friends and many skeletons in their closet. More info contact SHAC 0121 632 6460 info@shac.u-net.com www.welcome.to/shac

TRAGIC TREES

While public attention has been focused on GM foods, the biotech boys have been quietly engineering trees in collaborative ventures between biotech companies and the paper, timber, food, pharmaceutical, oil and car industries.

Genetic engineering is being employed to create trees with new traits, including: faster growth, resistance to pests and disease, and herbicide tolerance. Most worrying perhaps are attempts to lower the lignin content, which provides strength and rigidity to trees. The industry is quick to point out the advantages of eliminating the energy-intensive and polluting processes required to remove lignin from pulp during paper making, but remain quiet about the devastating results should the traits spread to natural trees.



It's not just the paper, pulp and timber industries that are interested in GM trees. The car and petroleum industries are very excited about the idea of fast growing 'carbon sinks', which will enable them to continue business as usual while claiming to be doing their bit to 'reduce' CO₂ emissions and curb global warming.

While petroleum companies have been destroying ecosystems, encroaching on native people's lands, and using mercenaries to threaten those who oppose them - they have at the same time been creating a 'green image' by setting up tree plantations in the South. Shell has been involved in forestry for over 15 years and owns 200,000 ha. Its UK Forestry Research Unit (at West Malling in Kent) is involved in GM and is working with Brazilian forestry giant *Aracruz Cellulose*.

Monsanto has joined forces with *ForBio* (AUZ) creating an Indonesian biotech company called *Monfori Nusantara*. In 1999 *International Paper*, *Westvaco* and *Fletcher Challenger* signed a \$60 million deal with *Monsanto* to develop GM trees.

The only GM trees in this country were the *AstraZeneca* trial of reduced-lignin poplar trees destroyed by activists in 1999. *AstraZeneca* (now *Syngenta*) went on to form an exclusive partnership with *Nippon Paper* and do their research elsewhere. Since there are currently no GM tree trials in the UK, the paper industry itself is the obvious target for campaigners.

More info available from WEN (see resources).



FARMERS STORM MONSANTO

As the West tries to bully Third World governments into using GM crops, peasant farmers around the world are denouncing products that would increase economic dependency, destroy the livelihoods of all but a privileged few farmers, and replace locally controlled food production with corporate-controlled monoculture for export.

On 29th November Filipino farmers held massive demonstrations at Monsanto's offices in Mindanao at the end of the Continental Caravan 2000 - a series of protests across India and Bangladesh. They were joined by farmers from Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and Korea. Habibur Rahman, a farmer representing Nayakrishi Andolon (New Agriculture Movement), stated: *"the Bangladeshi farmers reject genetically engineered rice and I am pleased to learn about the strong resistance here in the Philippines."*

On 3rd January Indian farmers relaunched their 'Cremate Monsanto' campaign as 300 volunteers of the newly formed 'Hasiru Sene' (Green Brigade), part of the Karnataka State Farmers Association, pulled up and burned Monsanto's trial of GM cotton.

On 26th January over 1200 Brazilian farmers stormed a Monsanto research station and pulled up GM corn and soya trials. The occupation was timed to coincide with the international protests against globalisation at the meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"We're staying here indefinitely," said Solet Campolete from the Landless Workers Movement, *"these seeds trick farmers and create dependency on seeds produced by a big multinational."* They scrawled on the walls, *"Monsanto is the end of farmers!"* but perhaps they got that the wrong way round!

RICE CRACKED

Syngenta and Myriad Genetics claim to have mapped the rice genome. Rice, the staple food of half the world's population, is the first food crop to have its DNA sequence unravelled.

GM 'FOOD AID' DENOUNCED

As groups from cyclone-devastated Orissa, famine-struck Ethiopia, Burundi, th Philippines and Equador, complain about the high levels of GM products (around 30%) in food aid - suspicion grows that the US Government is subsidising its agbiotech industry by buying up unselected GM crops from Cargill and ADM to dump as 'food aid'.

The USDA has admitted that its 'Food for Peace' programme is a *'concessional sales program to promote exports of US agricultural commodities'*. Dan Glickman, USDA Secretary, encourages multinational agribusinesses to donate transgenic food through food aid programmes *"not just as a gesture of corporate citizenship, but because such an investment will ultimately pay dividends as developing countries mature into reliable customers"*. Bosnia has just rejected, on health grounds, \$40M of GM animal feed sent from the US as aid.

Rafael Mariano, chair of the KMP Farmers Union (Philippines), condemned these deals saying, *"the agricultural monopolies are very cruel, knowing that starving people have little choice but to accept the food and be grateful even if our biological future is being slowly corrupted with dangerous technologies."*

India's Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, which is carrying out relief work in Orissa, stated in a press release that *"Emergency situations should not be used for dumping untested and unethical foods on vulnerable sectors"*.

Dr Egziabher Ethiopian agriculture spokesman, said *"Countries in the grip of a crisis are unlikely to have the leverage to say, 'This crop is contaminated, we're not taking it.'"*

GM OUT - ORGANIC IN ?

Sri Lanka, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have joined the growing group of nations rejecting GM. Even western governments have been rejecting GM. Spain is turning to imports of Brazilian soya and not renewing GM orders from Argentina.

On 24th January the German government indefinitely postponed a three-year plan to test crops of GM corn, citing the need to reassure consumers already worried by their BSE crisis, which in January forced the resignation of the health and agriculture ministers. A member of the Green Party is the new agriculture minister. The farm lobby was told that their influence would diminish and that there would be a *"massive increase"* in organic farming in Germany.



PATENTING LIFE

There are now more patent applications awaiting approval than ever before. Patents are increasingly likely to influence people's lives as the decade goes on.

For the first time since 1790, 700 years ago, biotech companies are queuing up to patent the building blocks of life itself.

Traditionally patents were only granted on inventions that fulfilled three criteria: they must be useful (utility), new to the public (novel), and they must represent an intellectual or inventive step, not just an obvious use of existing knowledge (non-obviousness). Patents prevent anyone else from making, using or selling the 'product' for 20 years. Recently these criteria have been bent and blurred for the benefit of powerful biopirates.

Most people have given the patenting system scant thought, but Indian farmers are being forced to, as black pepper, basmati rice and neem have found their way into the patent office via US, Japanese and German companies. Nestle applied for a parboiled rice despite it being an Indian staple for centuries. After massive effort a few patents have been successfully overturned, but there have been some alarming patents granted and thousands more are pending.

Now it is time for people to sit up and take note of exactly who is being given the rights over what and why. The patenting of life is posed to become the economic life-force of genetic engineering and a major commodity in the global economy.

More in future Updates, further info from WEN.

GOVERNMENTS NOT THAT GOOD - SHOCKER

The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food has indicated that the UK is intending to allow contamination of ordinary seeds by up to 0.5% with GM varieties. On the same day biotech's friends at the US Food and Drug Administration refused to call for mandatory labelling or safety-testing when it issued new regulations, despite numerous polls showing that 80-95% of Americans want compulsory labelling, or better still, no GM food at all.

PROSECUTION SORRY

...in stunning trial in which defendants are found to be honest with positive motives and the judge said they should have trashed more, sooner !

Last November Hugh Baker, Lorraine and Zoey Exley (mother and daughter), Emma Henry and Stephen Gordon went on trial at Darlington Magistrate's Court.

In October '99 the defendants had spent hours in torrential rain openly uprooting an entire crop of GM oilseed rape in County Durham. They were charged with criminal damage and produced signed statements to explain their actions.

The Prosecution, who was pregnant with twins, called Farmer Richardson (who stayed for the rest of the trial), Paul Rylott of AgrEvo (now Aventis), and a police sergeant (who gave a glowing report of the peaceful behaviour of the five).

The defence was based on the morality of the defendants and also had a sound legal basis: belief in the necessity of the action in the public interest. The defendants presented a spectacular quantity of hard scientific information showing the dangers of GM crops. They also came across as sincere, with great integrity and moral fortitude. The magistrate, Judge Paul Firth, seemed to be taking all this on board.

Expert witnesses Peter Beaumont, Dr Vyvian Howard, Angela Ryan and Dr Sue Mayer, spoke for the first time in a genetics trial. The Prosecution claimed that the action was nothing more than a publicity stunt. But Hugh responded that there are easier ways to gain publicity in a campaign, with the delightful illustration of himself and others in a previous action "*baring our buttocks on which a political message was inscribed*".

Emma and Zoey both did marathon stints in the witness box maintaining their composure throughout some tricky and relentless cross-questioning. Lorraine delivered her statement about our responsibility for future generations with unwavering conviction.

Finally, during Stephen's closing speech his emotions took over, and we hung on each word as he struggled on courageously, leading us all to look upon the GM nightmare before us. It was one of those rare moments when you feel justice has been invoked, and we were all moved beyond the petty laws and empty rituals of the court into a space beyond the words, thoughts and deeds of those present.

This was a profound ending to an awesome and inspirational experience. Evidently Judge Paul Firth was moved and he had the grace to respond to the gravity of the situation with great sensitivity.

At this point it felt like everybody in the court must have been deeply changed by the experience - and that's the greatest kind of victory. We were left wondering: do we really need a verdict ?

The Judgement: The verdict given on Dec 4th at Liverpool Magistrate's was "*guilty*" but Judge Firth was satisfied that "*the defendants genuinely believed these crops were likely to damage land... and wildlife*". However he decided that they "*did not believe that the means they adopted were reasonable having regard to all the circumstances*"; and that a reasonable person "*would have acted more quickly and would have made efforts to undo the same perceived harm at other sites*"!

Sentencing: In his sentencing Judge Firth clearly recognises the spirit in which the action was done: "*I accept the honesty of motives insofar as they believed they were doing this for a positive purpose*." So saying he ordered no compensation should be paid to Aventis or to the farmer and gave a 12-month conditional discharge to the defendants, who were ordered to pay court costs amounting to £300 each. The judge's recognition of the defendants' positive motives would surely have translated into an acquittal by a jury.

Response of defendants:

After sentencing, defendant Stephen Gordon stood up and said: "*Whether we like it or not we must exercise responsibility for our action (or inaction) towards our environment ... for the actions we do (or do not take), affect everybody, both now and in the future*".

Response of the prosecution:

The prosecution apologised to the defendants and said that she would be avoiding GM food both for herself and her unborn twins. She wished them all the very best for the future.

For further info contact Stephen 0161 881 2368
email: sfgordon@hotmail.com

Everybody who takes risks for our future as these five have done should have the choice about whether they want to pay their court costs. Let's give them that choice. Messages of support and donations towards costs can be sent to ..

Flat 3, 1 Silverdale Road,
Chorton, Manchester, M21 0SH.
(cheques made out to "Stephen Gordon")



SUPPORT DEFENDANTS

Over Compton, Dorset (See Issue 16)

Mike Zair, Simon Fairlie, Judie Holme, Chris Black, Jack Hooker, David Cooper and Rowan Tilly are defending charges of aggravated trespass. Trial postponed pending an Abuse of Process Tribunal on 16 February at Weymouth Magistrates Court.

Hereford Farm-scale Trial

Dr. Barbara Charve and Jim Ridout were charged with criminal damage during the decontamination of a farm-scale site of Aventis GM maize. A date for their trial by jury at Hereford Crown Court will be fixed on 19 Feb at a pre-trial hearing. Contact Jim 01981 580592 or hayhosilver@hotmail.com

Wivenhoe, Essex (See Issue 16)

Andy Abbott, Ken & Edie Butcher, Andrew Curtis, Dean Scott, Julie Moore, Tracy Osben, Lynn & Sarah Priest, Dave Isaacson and Nikki Shilaker are defending a charge of criminal damage. They have successfully obtained a Judicial Review in an attempt to overturn the decision to assign the case to a magistrate's court on the 23rd Feb. Contact 01206 826321 chub_man@hotmail.com

Cambridgeshire: Jo Hamilton, Martin Shaw and Rowan Tilly were found guilty of aggravated trespass and fined. After losing her appeal last November Rowan has now been granted the right to appeal to the High Court. Martin and Jo have warrants out for non-payment of fines and are expecting a spell in prison soon.

GenetiX snowball Monsanto Injunctions: After the failure of a petition to the House of Lords against the injunctions taken against Zoe Elford, Jo Hamilton, Melanie Jarman, Rowan Tilly, Kathryn Tulip & Andrew Wood, the case is now being taken to the European Commission of Human Rights.

Information and workshops on supporting defendants or to order genetiX snowball's *Handbook for Action* and supplement, contact Rowan Tilly

Tel. 01273 628441 Email. rowantilly@gn.apc.org
Box 13, Peace & Environment Centre,
43 Gardner Street, Brighton, BN1 1UN
www.gn.apc.org/pmhp/gs



TRIAL TERMINATIONS 2000

The year 2000 brought with it 148 GM crop trial sites in the UK. Not happy with this genetic pollution of the countryside, threat to wildlife and contamination of the food chain, people from all over the UK decided to take action. And this is what happened..... Guerrilla gardening...letter writing...legal challenges...mass rallies...marches... crop decontaminations...organic picnics...petitions...planning permission disputes...public meetings...court cases...local group building...and much more!

A LIST OF DECONTAMINATIONS IN 2000

Farm-scale Trials

Daviot, Scotland, SOSR, damaged
Tadcaster, Yorkshire, F. Maize, 60% damaged
Hutton Magna, Yorkshire, SOSR, damaged
Sealand, Wales, F. Maize, 60% damaged
Preston Wynne, Herefordshire, 15% damaged
Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire, SOSR, 75% damaged
Kempley, Gloucestershire, SOSR, 50%+ damaged
Little Shelford, Cambridgeshire, SOSR, 85% damaged
Piccotts End, Hertfordshire, WOSR, damaged
Piccotts End, Hertfordshire, SOSR, 75% damaged
Harpenden, Hertfordshire, F. Maize, 100% destroyed
Wivenhoe, Essex, F. Maize, damaged
Over Compton, Dorset, F. Maize, 15% damaged

Other Trials:

Hutton Magna, Yorkshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Meden Vale, Nottinghamshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Screveton, Nottinghamshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Edlington, Lincolnshire, S. Beet, 100% destroyed
Long Sutton, Lincolnshire, S. Beet, 100% destroyed
Brigsley, Lincolnshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Albury, Hertfordshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Great Chisil, Hertfordshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Morley, Norfolk, S. Beet, not one but SIX trials 100% destroyed!
West Raynham, Norfolk, S. Beet, 100% destroyed
Stoke Ash, Suffolk, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Kenny Hill, Suffolk, S. Beet, 100% destroyed
Piccotts End, Hertfordshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed,
NIAB, Cambridgeshire, WOSR, damaged
NIAB, Cambridgeshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Abington, Cambridgeshire, S. Beet, 100% destroyed
Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed
Thornhaugh, Cambridgeshire, Wheat, 100% destroyed
Whittsford, Cambridgeshire, WOSR, 100% destroyed

KEY TO CROPS

SOSR = Spring oil seed rape
WOSR = Winter oil seed rape
S. Beet = Sugar Beet
F. Maize = Forage Maize

COURT VERDICTS IN 2000

Greenpeace campaigners found Not Guilty, Norwich, 20 September 2000: 28 campaigners were found not guilty of criminal damage at Norwich crown court in a landmark case. They had argued that their actions were reasonable given the risk to the environment from GM crops in Lyng, Norfolk, in July 1999. There was initially a hung jury who acquitted them of theft. At the second trial they were unanimously found not guilty.

GM crop campaigners found Guilty, Scotland, 15 January 2001: Four campaigners were convicted of vandalising a field containing GM crops in Midlothian. They had denied deliberately destroying the oilseed rape plants being grown at Boghall Farm near Dalkeith in March 1999. They argued that what they did was reasonable, given the potentially grave dangers to the environment. Three were fined £125, one was fined £250. The four later pledged that their campaign would continue, and are considering an appeal.

GenetiX snowball appeal Lost, Cambridge, Nov 2000: An appeal against the conviction of three genetiX snowballers for aggravated trespass in June 2000, was lost in Ely crown court. However, the right to appeal this decision to the high court has been granted.

Hopefully this is a full list...sorry if we've missed any out, and please get in touch with GEN if you know of any more! The list is available at www.primalseeds.org. Well, that's last year's list of achievements, so all you have to do now is find your nearest test site, get campaigning, and remember to have fun!!!

COMMERCIALISATION POSTPONED AND SECRET TRIALS EXPOSED

When protestors destroyed a trial crop of Aventis's *Chardon LL* at Dartington in Devon in 1998, and were charged with £615,000 worth of damage to the research programme, they were delighted. The National Seed Listing would be delayed, genetic engineering would go on trial and their actions vindicated. Mysteriously, just days before the trial, all charges against them were dropped!

The hearing in November 2000 (which could have made *Chardon LL* the first GM seeds approved for commercial growth in the UK) was indefinitely postponed after it was discovered that tests had only been conducted for one year by the French authorities rather than the two required under EU law.

During the hearing 67 groups and individuals voiced their concerns about commercialisation, including the failure to test the GM maize on cows, and 'suspicious' higher death rates among chickens eating the maize.

Ken Beagley, a concerned Devon bee-keeper, was giving evidence at the hearing. To his surprise, data from the Dartington site destroyed in 1998 was presented in support of Aventis's application for the crop. According to MAFF this data came from a second plot at the same site. It was agreed not to mention its existence to avoid further damage by protestors!

Some people wonder whether the trial took place at all. Others wonder how many other 'secret' trials are going on, and why the public should be expected to believe data taken from trials previously denied by those running them.

Despite government claims of transparency, there is no legal obligation to inform the public or to obtain further consent. Other known examples of secret trials include Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, S. Yorkshire, Somerset and Shropshire.

In time the truth will emerge, as surely as herbicide-tolerant weeds. Meanwhile the public can be reassured that Aventis, NIAB and MAFF have only corporate interests at heart and, despite at least four other past infringements, will continue to play fast and loose with the regulations.

Further info: *Corporate Watch*, especially their *Aventis briefing*.

TRIAL SITES 2001

Local campaigning and direct action has been hugely successful in the past, so don't despair!! Here's a full list of the trials that have been planted this winter.

Farm-scale Trials (FSTs)

* Daviot, Aberdeenshire	NZ 744 300
* Daviot, Aberdeenshire	NJ 768 279
* Rothienorman, Aberdeenshire	NJ 753
* Munloch, Highlands	NH 662 563
* East Newton, N. Yorkshire	TA 265 378
* Hutton Magna, N. Yorkshire	NZ 135 103
* Meden Vale, Nottinghamshire	SK 589 706
* Thorganby, Lincolnshire	TF 207 968
* Spital in the Street, Lincolnshire	SK 964 910
* Castle Bytham, Lincolnshire	SK 984 193
* Thorganby, Lincolnshire	TF 205 988
* North Kelsey, Lincolnshire	TA 013 006
* Little Cawthorpe, Lincolnshire	TF 353 840
* Aston Somerville, Worcs.	SP 051 370
* Preston Wynne, Herefordshire	SO 566 485
* Harbury, Warwickshire (damaged)	SP 378 597
* Long Marston, Warwickshire	SP 147 490
* Aldminster, Warwickshire	SP 245 488
* Laverton, Gloucestershire	SP 060 355
* Lymm, Cheshire	SJ 697 859
* Boxworth, Cambridgeshire	TL 349 619
* Horningtoft, Norfolk	TF 945 249
* Banham, Norfolk	TM 078 877
* Piccotts End, Hertfordshire	TL 055 103
* Woodhouse, Leicestershire	SK 546 156

National Seed List Trials (NSLs)

* Udney Green, Aberdeenshire	NJ 909 232
* Bramham, West Yorkshire	SE 44 41
* Brigsley, Lincolnshire	TA 261 022
* Stanton, Gloucestershire	SP 060 351
* Girton, Cambridgeshire	TL 434 622
* Histon, Cambridgeshire	TL 435 623
* Morley, Norfolk	TM 051 977
* Piccotts End, Hertfordshire	TL 054 104

Research and Development Sites (R+D)

* Tillycorrhie, Aberdeenshire	NJ 90 23
* Woodhouselee, Midlothian	NT 24 65
* Meden Vale, Nottinghamshire	SK 58 70
* Croxby, Lincolnshire	TF 19 97
* Wormington, Gloucestershire	SP 03 36
* Melbourn, Cambridgeshire	TL 39 42

This information was the best available at the time of going to press. More information about these trials can be seen at www.geneticsaction.org.uk/testsites. If you hear of any decontaminations, please let the GEN office know and they will be posted onto the website. Any new trials will also be put onto this site.

A brief bit about the types of trials:

The three different trials are being conducted for different reasons, and therefore are very different in layout, size and importance. However, all of the trials listed are winter oil seed rape, all have been genetically modified to be herbicide resistant (to Liberty) and all are an environmental hazard. Here's a summary of the different trials:

Farm-Scale Trials (FSTs) are each about the size of 24 football pitches, with one half of the trial planted with the GM crop and the other half with a non-GM variety. The trials are run by the Government and SCIMAC (Supply Chain Initiative on Modified Agricultural Crops - an industry body) and claim to investigate what impact GM crops will have on the surrounding environment and wildlife.

What to do if there's a test site near you: **DON'T PANIC!!!**

Local opposition last year was hugely successful, with protest ranging from mass letter writing and petitions, public meetings and marches, to decontaminations, GM-free zones and organic picnics!

See if there is a local group near you (see contacts list), as a campaign may already be running. If there is no local group, advice on setting one up is available from GEN. Also available is a night time guide to gardening. A briefing on campaigning against local test sites is available from ToGG (see contacts list).

Resources and Contacts:

To find out your nearest test site, visit www.gm-info.org.uk

For the full list: www.geneticsaction.org.uk/testsites

For government information regarding the trials, visit

www.environment.detr.gov.uk/acre/index.htm

Genewatch have produced a series of fact sheets on the farm-scale trials, available at www.genewatch.org/uktrials.htm



ONE DOWN . . . HAPPY NEW YEAR AVENTIS

On Sunday 7th January part of a farm-scale trial site at Harbury in Herefordshire was destroyed by 'Two Peasants, a Pixie and a Pair of Marigolds'. The five entered the field shortly before midnight and during four hours pulled up about 200sq metres of oilseed rape.

In a statement, the group explained they had taken action after an earlier demonstration and public meeting had failed to prevent the trial from going ahead. "As local people we formed an affinity group with both collective and well-reasoned personal motivation for our actions. We feel that the strength of our arguments will vindicate our action and keep the issue in the public domain," they stated. "We want to remind the government, Aventis and the farmer, who have brushed aside the strong arguments and genuine concerns of the public, bio-scientists and environmentalists, that people aren't content to see this continue and feel their only avenue to protect the environment is to take direct action themselves."

"We completely cleared the area of all the oilseed. We were literally on our knees pulling them out at the roots. It was to highlight the issue to the local and national government that we don't feel the public is being listened to. And because we feel they have acted illegally, we feel we have done nothing wrong," a protester explained, vowing the campaign would continue as long as the trials and the use of the technology continued.

National Seed List Trials (NSLs) are normally smaller than the farm-scale trials and the tests are to enable the crop to be put on to the National Seed List - a step necessary for commercial growing. They test for whether or not the crop grows properly, is stable, and is distinctive for the market...environmental concerns play no role in them. They are run by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) for Aventis.

Research and Development Trials (R+Ds) are normally smaller again and are the next stage on from indoor testing of a crop...they aim to show that the crop will be commercially viable. They are run entirely by industry (Aventis in this case).

Useful Contacts & Resources - Spring 2001

LOCAL GROUPS

ABERYSTWYTH ACTION AGAINST GMOs
ecollective@hotmail.com

AYLESBURY SHOPPERS CONCERNED ABOUT FOOD (SCOF) 01296 484535

BRIGHTON GENETIX RESISTANCE
01273 628441
rowantilly@gn.apc.org

BRISTOL GE GROUP
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mwestby@swinternet.co.uk

COLCHESTER GM CAMPAIGN
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Ken & Edie 01206 826321
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COVENTRY GE GROUP
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covpeace@gn.apc.org

DEVIZES & MARLBOROUGH FoE
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DORSET GENETICS NETWORK
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RADSTOCK AGAINST GE
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READING GE GROUP
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COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING 01730 264208
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CORPORATE WATCH
01865 791391
mail@corporatewatch.org
www.gm-info.org.uk

EARTHFIRST! ACTION UPDATE
PO Box 487 Norwich NR2 3AL
01603 219811
efactionupdate@bigfoot.com

FIVE-YEAR FREEZE
0207 837 0642
enquiry@fiveyearfreeze.org
www.fiveyearfreeze.org

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
0207 490 1555
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THE GAIA FOUNDATION
0207 435 5000 gaia@gaiainet.org

GE-FREE FORESTRY (GEFF)
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Also contact WEN

GENEWATCH UK
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GENETICS FORUM
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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGY AND CULTURE
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NATIONWIDE FOOD SURVEY
www.wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/
pbrown/index.htm

NATURAL LAW PARTY
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SOIL ASSOCIATION
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www.soilassociation.org

TROLLEY THEATRE
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UNCAGED (INCL. XENO-TRANSPLANTATION CONCERN)
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www.uncaged.co.uk

WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK 0207 481 9004.
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www.gn.apc.org/wen/genetics

THE BAD GUYS

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Tel 01322 443000

Aventis: Fyfield Road, Ongar, Essex, CM5 0HW
Tel: 01277 301301

BOCM Pauls: 47 Key Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 1BX
Tel 01473 232222
Fax 01473 230509

Monsanto: PO Box 33, Lane End Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 4HL
Tel 01494 47491
Tel 0207 495 8455

Syngenta: Whittlesford, Cambridge CB2 4QT
Tel. 01223 833621
Fax 01223 493700

DuPont: Stevenage, Kent
Tel 01438 73-4000
Fax 01438 73-4836

RESOURCES

CORNERHOUSE 01258 473795

CORPORATE WATCH Briefings 01865 791391
• Control freaks - companies importing GMOs includes Cargill supplement and ADM supplement
• Apocalypse later? - who's winning the biotech battle?
• From test tube to tummy - the GMO supply chain
• The industry strikes back - Functional foods
• Aventis - favorite target of the year
• Animal feed & GE - including BOCM Pauls, ABN
• Cash cows & bull markets? - the finance behind GM
• The www.gm-info.org.uk poster (get one, stick it up)

GENETICS NEWS

0181 809 5153.
geneticsnews@compuserve.com

GM FREE MAGAZINE

01695 50504 gmfree@cableinet.co.uk

GENETICS FORUM 0171 837 9229

SPLICE magazine

GENEWATCH Briefings : 01298 871898

• Gene Therapy - available in February
• Review of 2000 - available end of March
• Biobank - available end of March

ASEED Briefing

• GE Forests and Global Agriculture as Carbon Sinks

• www.groundup.org their anti-GM website for Europe

Actionaid Briefings. Contact Zoe Elford 0207 5617611

• Syngenta - a 26 page report

• GM and world hunger myths - available end of March.

ToGG tape 01803 840098

• Genetic Engineering and the patenting of life

a talk by Luke Anderson, available on cassette.

GEN 0207 6900626

• Patents pack and Resource list available soon.

DIARY DATES

5th-10th March - Week of anti-GM action in Liverpool.

14th March - Biotech conference at Barbican Centre, London. Contact GEN.

16th March - Life Cycle GenetiX Bicycle Roadshow starts from Totnes to Tour around SW to inspire, subvert and activate the masses. Get involved! Contact ToGG.

20th March - Talk on Human Genome Project with David Heath at Rudolf Steiner House, London. £4 entry. Contact 0207 723 4400.

Mid-April - Global Agriculture 2020. Pro-biotech conference at John Innes Centre. Counter-conference and events planned. Contact GEN.

1st May - Autonomous Guerilla Gardening in your area!

5th May - Deadline for next GenetiX Update. Your reports, articles, pics, info (and veganic scoobie snacks), etc., very much wanted. Tell us about events and actions you've been up to.

18th May - One-day conference on Biological Weapons at SOAS, London. Contact Genewatch.

20th Sept WTO T.R.I.P.s meeting in Geneva. Counter events planned. Contact Actionaid.



CONTACTS for help establishing new groups BIRMINGHAM 0121 632 6909 - CALSTOCK kim@hettie.clara.net - CLEVELAND fibrobinson@netscapeonline.co.uk - CUMBRIA Nentshead 01434 382115 - DONCASTER 07932 817156 - DORSET Weymouth 01305 783621 helen@elleries.freeseve.co.uk - IPSWICH/SUFFOLK AREA Ipswich 01473 828351, 01449 774566 - KENT Ramsgate 07775 560309 puff_in@yahoo.co.uk - LANCASTER 12 New Street, Halton, Lancaster, LA2 6PR - SCOTLAND Westerton, Mains of Balfour, By Fettercairn, Kincardenshire AB30 1DT - SURREY East Horsley 01483 282868 info@body-and-soul.demon.co.uk

Contact ToGG to correct or add details. If there isn't a group listed in your area - Earth First!, FOE or Greenpeace may have a local group working on GE. If they don't, set one up yourself. GEN, ToGG or your nearest local contact can give you tips and support. If you want info for stalls ToGG can send you info and flyers from a range of organisations. Stalls are a great way of reaching people.

GEN PO BOX 9656, London, N4 4JY Tel. (+44) 020 7690 0626 www.genetics-action.org Subscribe to the email list: genetics@gn.apc.org

BIOTECH BOYZ SHOOT SELVES IN FOOT

The GM issue has finally become major news in the USA as Aventis's *StarLink* corn, which is officially deemed unfit for human consumption, somehow found its way into taco shells and over 300 brand-name products last autumn.

StarLink could mark the beginning of the end for genetically engineered crops if the food companies decide the costs outweigh the 'benefits'. An internal industry study, conducted for Kellogg, ConAgra, Unilever and Aventis, flatly predicted up to "billions" of dollars in food industry losses.

ConAgra, America's second largest food processor, announced a recall of 1.5 million pounds of baking products. In a letter to farmers, giant corn processor A.E. Staley stated, "*The only truly safe seed selection will be seed corn free of any genetic modification.*"



The Wall Street Journal reported on 20 Nov. that Archer-Daniels-Midland Co. "is beginning to air ads on 24 Iowa and Illinois radio stations warning farmers that ADM mills will buy only crops 'that have full feed and food approval worldwide.'" "We don't want another StarLink," said Larry Cunningham, for ADM.

In a further blow to the industry, Aventis announced in late November that it had found the same Cry9C protein (the key component of StarLink corn) in another variety of 1998 corn seed produced by Garst Seed Co. of Iowa. USDA officials admitted that they "didn't understand" how this could have occurred.

Starlink contaminated products have found their way around the world. Japan's Health Ministry was not amused when traces were found in one in five samples of corn that were supposed to have already tested negative in the US!

Two tons of contaminated corn were dumped at the US *Environmental Protection Agency* by protesters demanding that the agency deny Startlink approval for human consumption.

In November, the EPA heard from a Scientific Advisory Panel that StarLink may already have triggered food allergies. Last October a group of consumers filed a lawsuit in Chicago, alleging they were poisoned by StarLink-tainted Taco shells, while recently 44 people filed complaints claiming StarLink products caused them to suffer rashes, diarrhea, vomiting, itching and life-threatening anaphylactic shock.

In January Aventis reached a deal with 17 states to compensate farmers and grain handlers for the massive recall of the product. The deal could mean a payout of between \$100 million and \$1 billion to farmers who suffered severe financial losses after Japan halved its US corn purchases and South Korea, the second largest U.S. corn export market, banned the importation of U.S. corn altogether.

BIO WARFARE CANCELLED ?

Colombia has abandoned plans to use biological agents to eradicate coca and opium plants after they were declared illegal on 25th January under the *Bioweapons Convention*. This is a major blow to US threats to unleash a torrent of *Fusarium EN-4*, a lethal genetically modified mycoherbicide, across great swathes of Colombia as part of a new 'aid' package (echoing the infamous defoliation of Vietnam with Monsanto's Agent Orange).

AND FINALLY...

For the first time in five years the global acreage devoted to biotech crops has levelled off and appears to be headed for significant decreases in 2001. RAHhh!

"The only farmers making any money off GMOs have been those who are growing non-GMO stuff and can prove it."

Linda Edwards, Canadian farmer, Nov 27 2000

For Subscriptions to the GenetiX Update contact: **ToGG (Totnes Genetics Group)**

PO Box 77, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5ZJ. 01803-840098 or email info@togg.co.uk

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