

KEY QUOTES

**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL
00.01 GMT ON NOVEMBER 12, 2014**



ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

Organic Consumers Association

“In its 2013 report, ‘Wake Up Before It’s Too Late,’ the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development warns of the urgent need for a ‘paradigm shift’ away from chemical-intensive agriculture to an organic, regenerative agriculture model. Unfortunately, under pressure from corporations, the U.S. has failed as of yet to heed this warning. The UK and other European countries have so far succeeded in preserving the integrity of their organic and non-GMO food and farming systems. As we here in the US continue to campaign against a GMO-centric, mono-culture-based farming system and its toxic impact on public and environmental health, we urge your countries not to bow to corporate pressure on what is clearly one of the most critical health and environmental issues of our times.”

Farm Aid

“Genetic engineering (GE) poses serious threats to farmer livelihoods, biodiversity and food democracy. Farmers have a right to access and save non-GE seeds and to be able to grow their crops without fear of contamination. At the other end of the food chain, food consumers have the right to know what’s in their food, how it’s produced and to make informed purchasing decisions. The current regulatory framework overseeing GE in the U.S. violates these basic rights for farmers and eaters.”

HEALTH

American Academy of Environmental Medicine

“Several animal studies indicate serious health risks associated with GM food consumption including infertility, immune dysregulation, accelerated aging, dysregulation of genes associated with cholesterol synthesis, insulin regulation, cell signaling, and protein formation, and changes in the liver, kidney, spleen and gastrointestinal system. The AAEM asks Physicians to consider the possible role of GM foods in the disease processes of the patients they treat and to document any changes in patient health when changing from GM food to non-GM food.”

BUSINESSES

Dr Bronner’s Magic Soaps

“Dr. Bronner’s is motivated by concern that the same chemical companies that made the herbicide Agent Orange and insecticide DDT are engineering food to resist high doses of the pesticides they sell. Overuse of pesticide is rapidly creating resistant superweeds and superbugs, meaning more

pesticide is sold and sprayed, contaminating our food and water, while destroying non-target pollinators and other wildlife.

NYR Organic

“We have all the tools to hand right now to feed everyone, to ensure that our farms and fields are healthy and productive and to ensure that our food and our lives remain free from adulterants like GMOs and their potential unintended consequences. We simply require the presence of mind, and perhaps the courage, to let go of an old and inadequate technology that interferes with rather than enhances Nature.”

INDIVIDUALS

Robert Kennedy Jr, Activist

An informed and engaged public is one of our greatest weapons against widespread threats to health and environmental justice. An uninformed public, on the other hand, is the bane of democracy, providing easy pickings for tyrants, religious fanatics, corporate shills and polluters who seek to privatize the public commons. Initiatives like this highlight clearly the problems we have faced in the US in the 17 years we have been planting and eating GMOs. They help tip the balance away from a media that acquiesces to corporate science and corporate power – and therefore encourages lack of public engagement - and bring crucial information out into the light of the public domain.”

Susan Sarandon, Actress

We've had GMOs in the US for nearly 20 years. Instead of bringing certainty and security they have raised more and more worrying questions about their effectiveness, their necessity, and even their safety. Polls show that the majority of US citizens - and in fact citizens everywhere - either want them labelled or taken out of the food system altogether. It's important to keep pressing our elected representatives to act in accordance with this strong public mandate.”

Daryl Hannah, Actress

“Humanity is at a critical fork in the road regarding our global food supply. Now is the time for all of us to seriously evaluate the dangers of genetically modified crops and invest in healthier agricultural practices . . . not just for the sake of human health but for the wellbeing of all nations & the planetary ecosystem as a whole!”

Raj Patel, Research Professor, University of Texas at Austin, Author of Stuffed and Starved

"Europe would do well to learn from the US's mistakes. We have superweeds, and farmers are suffering. The public health cost is unknowable, not least because scientists themselves are afraid to criticise the industry - a GMO-manufacturing pesticide company has recently been exposed for hunting down a researcher who dared raise questions about a pesticide. If you value science and the public interest, the US offers abundant reason why the EU should stick to the precautionary principle. Far too little is known about about GMOs, and what little we've been able to glean demonstrates it has little to offer, beyond profits for chemical companies."

Paul Hawken, Environmentalist and Author

The toxic herbicides like Roundup that GMO crops are resistant to destroy the wildlife of the soil, the intricate webs of mycelia and organisms that create healthy, resilient farmlands. As we kill off soil life, it causes carbon to be released into the atmosphere which in turn requires increased application of synthetic fertilizers to make up for the loss of fertility. The proponents of GMOs are multinational companies with powerful economic interests, and what they are saying in essence is that we they can produce more life from the soil in the form of food if we allow these companies to employ a technology that destroys the life of the soil. This Alice in Wonderland logic is borne out in the recent requests by companies to approve new GMOS varieties that require ever more toxic herbicides. Why? Because weeds are becoming resistant to the current herbicides. This is a spiraling process of destruction that does nothing for hunger, climate, the land, wildlife or quality of life."

Robyn O'Brien, Mom campaigner and founder of Allergy Kids Foundation

The landscape of childhood has changed. Today, 1 in 3 American children has allergies, asthma, ADHD or autism. Cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in US children under the age of 15. Diet can be a first line of defense and knowing if our food has been genetically engineered to withstand record doses of toxic weedkillers is information that anyone anywhere should have access to. We know if our milk is pasteurized and if our orange juice comes from concentrate. Knowing if our food has been genetically engineered gives us information into how it is produced. Information about what we eat is a fundamental human right."

For the full version of the Letter from America please visit: www.theletterfromamerica.org

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