

Farmers' Declaration on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture

Genetic engineering in agriculture has significantly increased the economic uncertainty of family farmers throughout the U.S. and the world. American farmers have lost critical markets that are closed to genetically engineered products. Corporate control of the seed supply threatens farmers' independence. The risk of genetic drift has made it difficult and expensive for farmers to market a pure product. Genetic engineering has created social and economic disruption that threatens traditional agricultural practices for farmers around the world. Farmers, who have maintained the consumer's trust by producing safe, reasonably priced and nutritious food, now fear losing that trust as a result of consumer rejection of genetically engineered foods. Many scientists believe genetically engineered organisms have been released into the environment and the food supply without adequate testing. Farmers who have used this new technology may be facing massive liability from damage caused by genetic drift, increased weed and pest resistance, and the destruction of wildlife and beneficial insects.

Because of all the unknowns, we, as farmers, therefore:

1. Demand a suspension of all further environmental releases and government approvals of genetically engineered seeds and agriculture products.
2. Demand an immediate, independent and comprehensive assessment of the social, environmental, health and economic impacts of genetically engineered seeds and agricultural products.
3. Demand a ban on the ownership of all forms of life including a ban on the patenting of seeds, plants, animals, genes and cell lines.
4. Demand that agrarian people who have cultivated and nurtured crops for thousands of years retain control of natural resources and maintain the right to use or reuse any genetic resource.
5. Demand that corporate agribusiness be held liable for any and all damages that result from the use of genetically engineered crops and livestock that were approved for use without an adequate assessment of the risks posed to farmers, human health and the environment.
6. Demand that the corporations and institutions that have intervened in the genetic integrity of life bear the burden of proof that their actions will not harm human health, the environment or damage the social and economic health of rural communities. Those corporations must bear the cost of an

independent review guided by the precautionary principle and conducted prior to the introduction of any new intervention.

7. Demand that consumers in the U.S. and around the globe have the right to know whether their food is genetically engineered and have a right to access naturally produced food.

8. Demand that farmers who reject genetic engineering should not bear the cost of establishing that their product is free of genetic engineering.

9. Demand the protection of family farmers, farmworkers, consumers, and the environment by ending monopoly practices of corporate agribusiness through enforcement of all state and federal anti-trust, market concentration and corporate farming laws; by a renewed commitment to public interest agricultural research led by the land grant colleges; by an immediate shift of funding from genetic engineering to sustainable agriculture; and by expanding the availability of traditional varieties of crops and livestock.

10. Demand an end to mandatory check off programs that use farmers' money to support and promote genetic engineering research and corporate control of agriculture.

Endorsers of the Farmers' Declaration on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture:

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (MT)
American Corn Growers Association
California Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Citizen's Action Coalition of Indiana (CAC)
Dakota Resource Council (ND)
Empire State Family Farm Alliance
Family Farm Defenders
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Hawaii Organic Farming Association
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Indiana Citizen Action Coalition
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Land Loss Prevention Project (NC)
Land Stewardship Project (MN)
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance
Minnesota COACT
The Minnesota Project
Missouri Rural Crisis Center

National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Family Farm Coalition
Northeast Organic Farming Association (VT)
North American Farm Alliance (OH)
Northern Plains Resource Council (MT)
Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association
Ohio Family Farm Coalition
Organic Growers of Michigan
Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA
Rural Coalition
Rural Vermont
Sustainable Cotton Project
Western Colorado Congress
Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Women, Food and Agriculture

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