

Agrochemicals and Institutional Corruption: Pleading with the Slave Master Will Not Set You Free

By [Colin Todhunter](#)

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Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#), [Law and Justice](#)

Environmental campaigner Dr Rosemary Mason has just written to the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans and Health Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis. As set out below, she asks these top officials some very pertinent questions about the EU's collusion with the agrochemical corporations.

- 1) In authorising glyphosate on behalf of the Glyphosate Task Force led by Monsanto, why did President Juncker fail to state the European Chemicals Agency' (ECHA) risk assessment in full?
- 2) Why did the EU collude with corporations that made nerve gases in WW2 for chemical warfare and for use in the Nazi concentration camps? These firms continued to use similar chemicals in agriculture to poison 'pests', beneficial insects, birds and people.
- 3) Could it be that it is because biocides regulations in the EU are merely designed to make corporations money and are ultimately controlled by the agrochemical industry?
- 4) Why did Monsanto, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the ECHA and the industry-funded UK Science Media Centre suppress the paper by Gilles-Eric Seralini of the two-year rat feeding study of GM crops and Roundup that produced organ damage and tumours at four months?
- 5) Do the commissioners know that Cancer Research UK was hijacked by the Agrochemical Industry in 2010 with the full knowledge of the UK government? Michael Pragnell, former Chairman of Cancer Research UK (CRUK), was founder of Syngenta and former chairman of industry lobby group CropLife International. The CRUK website says that there is no convincing evidence that pesticides cause cancer. Instead, CRUK links cancer to life style choices and individual behaviour and blames alcohol use, obesity and smoking.
- 6) Why did the EU regulators and David Cameron, on behalf of the British government, ignore the [Letter from America](#) in 2014 from nearly 60 million citizens, warning you not to authorise GM crops and Roundup because of their toxicity to human health and the environment?
- 7) Where have all the insects and birds gone as a result of intensive chemical agriculture? The UK, Germany, France, Denmark and Canada are rapidly losing biodiversity. US farmland growing GM Roundup Ready crops has become a biological desert.

8) Did Monsanto and President Juncker conceal the ECHA harmonised classification of glyphosate as “toxic to aquatic life with long-lasting effects” because it would explain the accelerating deterioration of coral in the Great Barrier Reef?

Mason concludes her letter by reiterating the [damning advisory opinion](#) of the International Monsanto Tribunal delivered in 2017. She also sent the commissioners a recent [letter signed by 23 prominent organisations](#) criticising the EU’s decision to renew the license for glyphosate and outlining Monsanto’s undue influence over decision making.

Along with her letter, Mason also sent a [22-page document](#) containing detailed information on:

- The European Commission’s flawed renewal of the license for glyphosate
- The causes of decline in coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef
- European legislation existing for the benefit of the agrochemical industry
- Contamination by glyphosate and neonicotinoid insecticides causing dramatic declines in insects and birds
- Glyphosate being present everywhere
- The International Monsanto Tribunal and various alarming reports on pesticides, their use and impacts

To date, there has been no response from the commissioners to Mason.

In 2003, the World Wide Fund for Nature (UK) concluded that every person it tested across the UK was contaminated by a cocktail of highly toxic chemicals, which were banned from use during the 1970s. Over the years, Mason has cited a range of sources to show the harmful impact of pesticides and that the amount and range of pesticide residues on British food is increasing annually. She also notes a massive rise in the use of glyphosate between 2012 and 2014 alone.

In her [many](#) detailed documents and letters (which contains her own views on all the questions she poses above to the commissioners) she has sent to officials over the years, Mason offers sufficient evidence to show that the financial and political clout of a group of powerful agrochemical/agribusiness corporations ensure that its interests are privileged ahead of public health and the environment to the detriment of both. Mason has gone to great lengths to describe the political links between industry and various government departments, regulatory agencies and key committees that have effectively ensured that ‘business as usual’ prevails.

The corporations which promote industrial agriculture and the agrochemicals Mason campaigns against have embedded themselves deeply within the policy-making machinery at both national and international levels. From the flawed narrative that industrial agriculture is necessary to feed the world to providing lavish research grants and the capture of important policy-making institutions, global agribusiness has secured a bogus ‘[thick legitimacy](#)’ within policymakers’ mindsets and mainstream discourse.

By referring to the Monsanto Tribunal, Mason implies that governments, individuals and civil groups that collude with corporations to facilitate ecocide and human rights abuses resulting from the actions of global agribusiness corporations should be hauled into court. Perhaps it is only when officials and company executives are given lengthy jail sentences for destroying health and the environment that some change will begin to happen.

From Rachel Carson onward, the attempt to roll back the power of these corporations and their massively funded lobby groups has had limited success. Some 34,000 agrochemicals remain on the market in the US, many of which are there due to weak regulatory standards or outright fraud, and from Argentina to Indonesia, the devastating impact of the industrial chemical-dependent model of food and agriculture on health and the environment has been documented by various reports and writers at length.

What is worrying is that these corporations are being facilitated by the World Bank's 'enabling the business of agriculture', duplicitous trade deals like the US-India Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture, the Gates Foundation's 'opening up' of African agriculture and the bypassing of democratic procedures at sovereign state levels to impose seed monopolies and proprietary inputs on farmers and to incorporate them into a global supply chain dominated by these powerful companies.

For the reasons set out in my [previous piece](#), pleading with public officials to roll back the actions and influence of agrochemical/agribusiness corporations may have no more impact than appealing to a slave master to set you free.

Ultimately, the solution relies on people coming together to challenge a system of neoliberal capitalism that [by design](#) facilitates the institutionalised corruption that we see along with the destruction of self-sufficiency and traditional food systems. At the same time, alternatives must be promoted based on localisation, the principles of a politically-oriented model of agroecology (outlined [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) and a food system that serves the public good not private greed.

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Seeds of Destruction: Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation

Author Name: F. William Engdahl

ISBN Number: 978-0-937147-2-2

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Pages: 341 pages with complete index

List Price: ~~\$25.95~~

Special Price: \$18.00

This skilfully researched book focuses on how a small socio-political American elite seeks to establish control over the very basis of human survival: the provision of our daily bread. "Control the food and you control the people."

This is no ordinary book about the perils of GMO. Engdahl takes the reader inside the corridors of power, into the backrooms of the science labs, behind closed doors in the corporate boardrooms.

The author cogently reveals a diabolical world of profit-driven political intrigue, government corruption and coercion, where genetic manipulation and the patenting of life forms are used to gain worldwide control over food production. If the book often reads as a crime story, that should come as no surprise. For that is what it is.

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