

Fine Print of the Food Wars: Monsanto and Biotech Industry Pushing for World Food Monopoly Through Seed Supply

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Creating 'ownership' of seed through patents and intellectual property rights and imposing it globally through the WTO, the biotech industry has established a monopoly empire over seed and food.

Monsanto and friends, the biotech industry, its lobbyists and its paid media representation continue to push for monopoly control over the world's food through its seed supply. This "empire" is being built on false foundations: that Monsanto is a creator/inventor of life and hence can own the seed through patents and that life can be engineered and machined like an iPhone.

Through ecology and the new biology we know that life is self-organised complexity — life makes itself; it cannot be "manufactured". This also applies to food production through the new science of agroecology. Agroecology gives us a deeper scientific understanding of how ecological processes work at the level of soils, living seeds and living food. The promises made by the biotech industry — of increased yields, reduction of chemical use and control of weeds and pests — have not been kept. Last month an investment fund sued DuPont for \$1 billion for pushing herbicide-resistant crops knowing fully well they would fail to control weeds and instead contribute to the emergence of "superweeds".

Creating "ownership" of seed through patents and intellectual property rights and imposing it globally through the World Trade Organisation, the biotech industry has established a monopoly empire over seed and food. While they claim ownership of the seeds they sell and collect royalties, when it comes to checks and balances on safety, the biotech industry is systematically destroying international and national laws on biosafety claiming their products are "as nature made them". It's ontological schizophrenia!

Biosafety is the multi-disciplinary assessment of the impact of genetic engineering on the environment, on public health and on socio-economic conditions. At the international level, biosafety is international law enshrined in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. I was appointed to an expert group to evolve the framework by the United Nations environment programme to implement Article 19.3 of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Monsanto and friends have been attempting to deny citizens the right to safe food by opposing Article 19.3 since the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. Currently they are attempting to dismantle national laws on biosafety in India, Pakistan, the European Union, across Africa and Latin America. In the United States, they are distorting the Constitution by suing state governments that have passed labelling laws for GMO (genetically modified) foods by

claiming that the citizens' right to know what they eat is superseded by the biotech industry's right to impose hazardous foods on uninformed consumers as the freedom of speech of a corporation, as if it were a natural person.

Their PR machine is deployed to unscientifically attack scientists working on biosafety, such as Árpád Pusztai, Ignacio Chapela, Irina Ermakova, Éric Séralini and myself. Many journalists, having no scientific background themselves, have become soldiers in this PR assault. Privileged white men like Mark Lynas, Jon Entine and Michael Specter, with no practical experience in agriculture, armed only with BA degrees and ties to corporate-controlled media, are being used to undermine real scientific findings about the impact of GMOs on our health and ecosystems.

Biotech industry uses its PR puppets to falsely claim that GMOs are a solution to world hunger. This denialism of real scientific debate about how living systems evolve and adapt, is backed by an aggressive and massive PR assault, including the use of intelligence agencies such as Blackwater.

In 2010, Forbes named me one of the seven most powerful women in the world for "putting women front and centre to solve the issue of food security in the developing world". In 2014, Jon Entine, a journalist, wrote an "opinion" piece on the Forbes website, falsely claiming that I have not studied physics. While I have studied physics at a post-graduate level and done my doctorate on the foundations of quantum theory, I have spent 40 years studying ecology in India's farms and forests, with nature and wise peasants as my teachers. This is the basis of my expertise in agroecology and biosafety.

Good science and proven technologies do not need PRs, intelligence agencies or corrupt governments to prove the facts.

If unfounded attacks on a scientist from a developing country by a non-scientist is one of their tools in shaping the future, they have got it all wrong. They don't see the growing citizens' outrage against Monsanto's monopoly.

In sovereign countries, where the might of Monsanto and friends is limited, the people and their governments are rejecting their monopoly and failed technology. But this news is suppressed by the PR machine.

Russia has completely banned GMOs with deputy prime minister Dmitry Medvedev saying, "If the Americans like to eat GMO products, let them eat it then. We don't need to do that; we have enough space and opportunities to produce organic food".

China has banned GMOs in military food supplies. Italy has just passed a law, Campo libre, making planting GMO crops punishable with a prison sentence of one to three years and a fine of 10,000-30,000 euros. Italian minister of agriculture Nunzia De Girolamo said in a statement: "Our agriculture is based on biodiversity, on quality, and we must continue to aim for these without ventures that, even from the economic point of view, wouldn't make us competitive."

PR pieces in Forbes and the New Yorker cannot stop the awakening of millions of farmers and consumers to the very real dangers of genetically-modified organisms in our food and the shortcomings and failures of the industrial food system which is destroying the planet and our health.

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