

GMO Lobby Plots to Corrupt EU Court Ruling on Gene Editing

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The GMO lobby, led by Bayer/Monsanto, Syngenta and others have begun to develop a counter-attack to try to neutralize the unexpected and, for them, devastating EU Court of Justice ruling in July requiring that plants modified through so-called gene-editing DNA techniques must submit to the same licensing risk-assessment procedures as all other GMO plants. The ruling caught the GMO industry off-guard. Now they prepare a counter-attack as we might expect from the developers of Agent Orange, neonicotinoids or similar toxins.

On July 25, in a rare ruling in opposition to the recommendation of the European Union Advocate General, judges of the European Court of Justice held that products from new gene editing (GE) techniques are to be considered genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and as such are covered by existing EU GMO regulation. Contrary to the United States where the US Government, since the time of President G.H.W. Bush, has refused to regulate GMO plants arguing the phony claim they are “substantially equivalent” to conventional corn, soybeans or other plants, the EU has strict requirements before licensing and to date only one GMO crop, a patented corn variety is grown legally, that only in Spain.

The EU court ruling dealt a stunning blow to the GMO “biotech” industry which had been arguing their gene editing technologies were not GMO and needed no special regulatory oversight. They planned to sneak new and highly dangerous forms of genetic modification of plants in through the back door. DowDuPont had filed around 50 international patent applications for gene editing and plants, followed by Bayer-Monsanto with around 30 applications. Now under the ruling all gene edited products in the EU must first be fully tested [and its products labelled](#).

The European Court ruling drew a sharp attack from US Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Purdue issued an official statement declaring,

“Government policies should encourage scientific innovation without creating unnecessary barriers or unjustifiably stigmatizing new technologies. Unfortunately, this week’s ECJ ruling is a setback in this regard in that it narrowly considers newer genome editing methods to be within the scope of the European Union’s regressive and outdated regulations governing [genetically modified organisms](#).”

In the UK a group of 33 industry and research centers as well as pro-GMO farmers have delivered a letter to the British Government Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs. The letter protests the July EU Court ruling requiring gene-edited plant varieties to undergo the same risk testing and licensing as other GMO plants. They declare,

“We feel there are significant questions that must be addressed urgently by government if the UK is to retain its strength in plant genetics, to use innovation to boost productivity and competitiveness, and to meet the challenges [of nutritional health and environmental protection](#).”

Behind the progressive-sounding words lie the interests of the major GMO industry firms. Among the 33 signers are Bayer/Monsanto—today the world’s largest holder of GMO patents and related agri-chemicals; Syngenta of Basle, now owned by a Chinese state chemicals company; German GMO and agrichemicals giant BASF; and the UK Agricultural Biotechnology Council, a front for the GMO companies and founded by Monsanto, Bayer et al. The appeal to the UK government misleadingly argues that costs associated with conducting field trials under GMO regulations are extremely restrictive to research institutes and also to small biotech companies, conveniently omitting the leading role of Bayer and other GMO agribusiness giants. They also argue that they desire to “explore the potential to deliver innovative solutions to tackle world hunger...” To date no GMO plant nor gene-edited one has created a solution to world hunger. That’s not what it’s all about.

Change EU GMO Law?

While the European Court decision mandating gene-edited species be treated with the same regulatory regime as GMO varieties before they can be sold in the EU hits the burgeoning gene-editing industry, there are already indications that pro-gene-editing forces are consulting with their allies within the EU Commission about how to rewrite the EU GMO legislation to exempt gene-editing.

Lawyers with a Holland law firm hired by the pro-gene-editing group, New Breeding Techniques (NBT) Platform—NBT is a euphemism for gene editing—commenting on what industry options are, stated, “What could happen at a later stage is that (EU-w.e.) policy makers realize the severe consequences of the ruling or its subsequent developments and thus decide to facilitate the risk assessment for new techniques, enabling a modification of Directive 2001/18 in favor of the NBTs.” The industry lawyers conclude,

“After the ECJ ruling, it is now up to the industry to provide sound evidence that certain new techniques of muta-genesis are as safe or even [safer than traditional ones](#).”

Safe?

This court ruling will prove increasingly challenging even for Bayer and such multinationals accustomed to get their way in Brussels. More reports are being published detailing serious dangers and risks of so-called safe gene-editing techniques and results. A study just released by Dr. Janet Cotter of Logos Environmental UK consultancy and Friends of the Earth US, notes alarming defects in the applications of gene-editing techniques including “large deletions and rearrangements of DNA near the target site that were not intended by researchers.” Another study found that cells genetically engineered with CRISPR, the most-prominent gene-editing technique at present, “have the potential to seed tumors” or may initiate tumorigenic mutations. Another study found that gene-editing with certain soybeans had “off-target effects, in which gene editing occurred at unintended locations [with DNA sequences](#).”

Gene-editing, which is being widely hyped in recent months by such Monsanto friends as Bill Gates and global agribusiness, involves new techniques to alter the genetic material of plants, animals and even bacteria, using “molecular scissors” aimed at a specific part of the organism’s DNA and used to cut that DNA. Gene Drive gene editing, which is being heavily funded by the Pentagon’s DARPA, aims to force a genetic modification to spread through an entire population, whether of mosquitoes or potentially humans, in just a few generations. The scientist who first suggested developing gene drives in gene editing, Harvard biologist Kevin Esvelt, has publicly warned that development of gene editing in conjunction with gene drive technologies have alarming potential to go awry. He notes how often CRISPR messes up and the likelihood of protective mutations arising, making even benign gene drives aggressive. He stresses,

“Just a few engineered organisms [could irrevocably alter an ecosystem.](#)”

Some 170 civil society organizations from around the globe are urging a moratorium on a form of gene-editing known as gene-drives, warning they could “foster far-reaching, harmful impacts if any unintended effects were to occur.” The Cotter report further stresses, “if the chemistry of a gene-edited plant or animal were changed by the misreading of DNA, it could produce a compound that is toxic to the wildlife that feeds on it.” That is no minor issue. The point is that the gene-editing companies are doing their experiments in especially the USA, completely without government oversight or regulation.

If there is a sunray of sanity in the ruling of the EU Court on regulating gene-edited species, across the Atlantic the approach of the US Government is hardly safe, and totally ignores the Precautionary Principle applied in the EU. The Precautionary Principle states that,

“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.”

The US Department of Agriculture recently ruled that gene-edited plants or even animals were the same as conventional plants or animals and needed no special safety tests, a mad decision to put it mildly. The new wave of GMO called gene-editing is anything but a step forward for mankind based on evidence to date. The technology, in use since 2012 is simply untested and far too experimental to be let loose on mankind. Why is there such a rush by the US authorities or folks like Bill Gates to spread this? Could it have something to do with eugenics?

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See below: Engdahl’s outstanding analysis in his book on Genetic Manipulation published by Global Research.



Seeds of Destruction: Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation

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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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