

Hawai'i: Monsanto and Dow Chemicals' Genetically Engineered (GE) Crops Banned in Maui

Ballot Initiative Requires Pesticide Companies to Suspend GE Crop Operations Pending Safety Review

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Maui voters made history late in the evening as the polls reported a slight advantage in favor of the Maui County ballot initiative, reporting 23,082 to 22,005 in support of the voter initiative to prohibit the growth, testing or cultivation of genetically engineered (GE) crops in Maui until an environmental and public health study can show that they are safe. The opposition, almost exclusively backed by Monsanto and Dow Chemical, raised \$7,970,686.12 on the race, \$362.22 per vote earned, or \$174.43 per total vote cast.

"Our victory today sends a strong message to the agrochemical industry in Hawai'i. Community members will not sit idly by and watch these companies threaten the health and safety of our people and our planet," said Ashley Lukens, program director at Hawai'i Center for Food Safety. "Voters saw past the misleading claims of pesticide companies like Monsanto and Dow Chemical and demanded accountability to the community."

Presently, Hawai'i is used as an outdoor laboratory for companies like Monsanto to test genetically engineered crops and their related pesticides. In [2013 alone](#) there were 1124 field test sites; California only hosted 184 sites. Most of these crops are engineered to resist herbicides and pesticides. Testing these crops means repeated spraying of dangerous chemicals near neighborhoods, schools, and waterways. The initiative passed today suspends all GE operations in the county pending a safety impact review.

"The moratorium will impact only 1 percent of the county's agricultural operations, but Monsanto and Dow Chemical spent millions trying to keep residents from understanding the impacts their activities have on the community," said Lukens.

Citizen's Against the Maui County Farming Ban – the corporate funded campaign to defeat the initiative – reported raising nearly [\\$8 million](#) to oppose the initiative. Dubbed the most expensive local initiative in the country by [Center for Public Integrity](#), this amounts to more than \$290 for every "yes" vote, according to the third round of results.

"This is not a farming ban. This is a demand for assurance of safety in our daily lives," said Lukens. "Maui is not the private laboratory of Monsanto. We will not sacrifice our health and safety to protect the profits of mainland corporations."

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