

The FBI Is Now Working for Monsanto

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Monsanto corporate executives probably thought they had a decent amount of influence with the federal government, but they may never have thought that their genetically modified food products would become protectorates of the FBI, all under the guise of “national security.”

As reported by the *Des Moines Register* in recent days, “protecting America’s lucrative [GMO] seed corn industry” now rises to the level of fighting terrorists and government spies, according to the FBI, which has invoked broader powers authorized by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, in a case against two Chinese siblings who allegedly plotted to steal patented GMO seeds from cornfields in Iowa.

The paper further reported:

Stealing hybrid seeds enhanced with traits such as drought resistance doesn’t pose the same immediate threat as a suicide bomber, but the FBI treats economic espionage and similar trade secret theft as dangerous threats to national security.

Monsanto gets the power of the intelligence community to do its bidding

“It’s people’s lives,” Christopher Burgess, CEO of security consulting firm Prevendra and a former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency, told the paper. “It’s our livelihood. It’s why we feed so much of the world is because we invest in research and development.”

The “feeding the whole world” argument is controversial in and of itself, based on scientific findings that, among other things, [GMO corn lacks nutrients](#) but is full of chemicals, according a 2012 paper entitled, “2012 Nutritional Analysis: Comparison of GMO Corn versus Non-GMO Corn.” An earlier study found that [rats fed a steady diet of GMO corn developed major tumors](#), with 70 percent of female rats dying early.

Nevertheless, GMO maize is now a protected state secret, even though defense attorneys for the two Chinese siblings have argued the government’s protection under national security auspices is unprecedented and represent a dangerous overreach.

Defendants Mo Hailong and Mo Yun have been charged with planning to steal patented GMO seeds from agri-business giants DuPont Pioneer and [Monsanto](#), the paper said. The idea, according to court records, was to steal the seeds and bring them back to China where they would allegedly be copied, then counterfeited by a large Chinese agri-corporation, Beijing Dabeinong Technology Group. If convicted, the suspects could face a maximum of 10 years in prison.

The *Des Moines Register* reported further:

In 2013, Nicholas Klinefeldt, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, indicted the siblings and five other Chinese citizens on charges of theft of trade secrets.

In a move that defense attorneys call “breathtaking,” prosecutors plan to introduce evidence at trial gathered under FISA, which allows the [FBI](#) to bypass a traditional search warrant. Agents seeking evidence instead need only get approval from a secret Washington, D.C.-based court designed to hear complex national security cases.

Gathering and presenting secret evidence before a secret court

That court is called the FISA court, and it is staffed by regular federal judges who serve [non-renewable seven-year terms](#). It should be noted that the court’s proceedings are carried out in secret, and that because these federal judges are not fluent in intelligence community/national security jurisprudence, the court [rarely turns down a warrant request](#).

That alone helps explain how the FBI could inject itself into a case involving the theft of Monsanto and DuPont GMO seeds under the mantle of national security; that would give the agency additional authorities it may not normally possess, such as the power to present secret evidence without divulging how the agency obtained it.

“This case involves a breathtaking and unprecedented expansion of the government’s use of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act,” Des Moines attorney Mark Weinhardt wrote in court papers. “... For the first time in the statute’s history (as far as our research reveals), the government used FISA to investigate a trade secret dispute between two privately owned companies.”

Sources:

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