

The GMO Biotech Lobby's Emotional Blackmail and Bogus Claims: Monsanto's Genetically Modified Crops Will Not Feed The World

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Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#)

"There are 7.2 billion people on the planet. There will be 9.6 billion by 2050. The demand for food will double... [Using GM food and data science is] the only thing that will enable us to feed the planet without encroaching on the forests and wetlands....This represents a business opportunity, but from a societal perspective, it's very important." Robert Fraley, CEO of Monsanto, Winner of the World Food Prize 2013 [1].

The claims made by Monsanto do not stack up. Issues pertaining to the weaponisation of food aside [2], GM food represents little more than a massive business opportunity, a way of enriching a handful of people, all carried out under the guise of altruism.

"It's difficult, in the short term, figuring out how I am going to make money dealing with people who don't have money. But in practice the development of agriculture at a village level is something that could make an enormous amount of business sense over time." - Robert Shapiro, former CEO of Monsanto (quoted in the CBAN report 'Will GM Crops Feed The World').

By 'development', what Shapiro really meant was allowing Monsanto to take control of agriculture and strategic policy decisions and destroying traditional methods, knowledge and practices in order to recast them in its corporate image [3].

The following quote is indicative of the pro-GMO lobby's use of emotional blackmail when forwarding its cause and the smearing of anyone who rejects GM crops as being an enemy of the poor and a hypocrite. Such statements are based on spurious claims about the efficacy of GMO technology and divert attention away from the true nature and causes of hunger and food poverty.

"It is shameful to me that the leaders of some South African countries who are apparently well-fed, would rather see their populations go hungry than eat the same food we consume daily in the United States." - US Republican Senator Charles Grassley, 2003 (quoted in the CBAN report 'Will GM Crops Feed The World').

Proponents of GM crops claim that we need such technology to address hunger and to feed a growing global population. We are told by the GM biotech sector that GM crops are essential, are better for the environment and will provide the tools that farmers need in a time of climate chaos. It claims that GM crops provide higher yields and higher incomes for

farmers around the world.

The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) has just released a fully referenced report [4] that dissects each of these claims and dismisses them one by one. Readers are urged to consult the full report, but its main findings are presented below.

- Hunger is caused by poverty and inequality. People are generally hungry not because of insufficient agricultural production but because they do not have money to buy food, access to land to grow food or because of complex problems like food spoilage, poor food distribution systems and a lack of reliable water and infrastructure for irrigation, storage, transport and financing.
- If these deeper problems are not addressed and as long as food is not reaching those who are hungry and poor, increased agricultural production will not help reduce food insecurity.
- We already produce enough food to feed the world's population and did so even at the peak of the world food crisis in 2008. Current global food production provides enough to feed ten billion people.
- The world produces 17 percent more food per person than it did 30 years ago and yet the number of food insecure people is still very high.
- The recent food price crises of 2008 and 2011 both took place in years of record global harvests, clearly showing that these crises were not the result of scarcity.
- The GM crops that are on the market today are not designed to address hunger. Four GM crops account for almost 100 percent of worldwide GM crop acreage. All four have been developed for large-scale industrial farming systems and are used as cash crops for export, to produce fuel or for processed food and animal feed.
- GM crops have not increased yields and do not increase farmers' incomes.
- GM crops lead to an increase in pesticide use and cause further harm to the environment. Pesticide reduction was the primary selling point for Bt cotton adoption in India, but overall pesticide use has not decreased in any state that grows Bt cotton, with the exception of Andhra Pradesh.
- GM crops are patented and owned by large corporations. These companies profit
- From the sale of GM crops and royalties on GM traits, while small-scale farmers round the world bear the increased cost of buying seeds and the risks that come with using GM crops. GM crops reduce choice but increase risk for farmers, while the likes of Monsanto dominant the agritech sector and rake in enormous profits.

The main message is that hunger, food security and 'feeding the world' is a political, social and economic problem and no amount of gene splicing is capable of surmounting obstacles like poor roads, inadequate rural credit systems and insufficient irrigation [5].

The answer to food security, food democracy and local/national food sovereignty does not lie with making farmers dependent on a few large corporations whose bottom line is exploiting agriculture to maximise profit.

As with other reports [6,7], the CBAN report concludes that we need to support diverse, vibrant and sustainable agroecological methods of farming and develop locally-based food economies. After all, it is small farms and peasant farmers (more often than not serving local communities) that are more productive than giant industrial (export-oriented) farms and which produce most of the world's food on much less land [8]. And in line with previous

findings, not least those of Helena Paul [9], it also states that experience with GM crops shows that the application of GM technology is more likely to enhance and entrench the social, economic and environmental problems created by industrial agriculture and corporate control.

Notes

- 1] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/weaponization-of-the-food-system-genetically-engineered-maize-threatens-nepal-and-the-himalayan-region/30512>
- 2] <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/consumer/article4069203.ece>
- 3] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/independent-india-selling-out-to-monsanto-gmos-and-the-bigger-picture/5395187>
- 4] <http://www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/Feeding-the-World>
- 5] Glover, Dominic. 2010. Exploring the Resilience of Bt Cotton 's "Pro-Poor Success Story". Development and Change, 41(6), pp.955-981.
- 6] http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2013_en.pdf
- 7] [http://www.unep.org/dewa/agassessment/reports/IAASTD/EN/Agriculture%20at%20a%20Crossroads_Global%20Report%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.unep.org/dewa/agassessment/reports/IAASTD/EN/Agriculture%20at%20a%20Crossroads_Global%20Report%20(English).pdf)
- 8] <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4929-hungry-for-land-small-farmers-feed-the-world-with-less-than-a-quarter-of-all-farmland>
- 9] http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2267255/gm_crops_are_driving_genocide_and_ecocide_keep_them_out_of_the_eu.html

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