Declaration of Action

In light of the compelling threats to ecological food systems, human health, and the environment, the Ecological Farming Association recommends a halt to the approval, commercialization, or release of any GE crops until the following measures are put into place:

- **Long-term and thorough safety testing** of GE crops is conducted by independent, non-GE industry funded, natural and social scientists with the expertise to study and report on all aspects of health and environmental safety
- **Prohibition of GE drug and industrial material production** in food crops and in open fields
- **Strict containment requirements and protocols** for all fields and laboratories where GE plants are grown and tested and full public disclosure of test plant types and locations
- **Liability legislation to protect organic and conventional farmers and gardeners from contamination by GE organisms**
- **Withdrawal of corporations' and individuals' legal rights** to patent GE life forms and the **reestablishment of farmers' rights** to save and replant seeds
- **Labeling of GE food** currently approved and on the market and **labeling of GE seeds and root-stock**
- Protection of **the rights of counties and states to make decisions to protect human and environmental health** in their jurisdiction, including the regulation of GE crops

Visit www.eco-farm.org

The complete text of Eco-Farm's position on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture, including references

Press releases and recent developments in GE legislation

Call the Eco-Farm GE Info and Action Hotline (831) 763-2111 x.15

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Ecological Farming Association

Position Statement on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture

The Ecological Farming Association is a 26 year-old Watsonville-based non-profit that is dedicated to educating farmers, policy makers and the public about practical and economically-viable techniques of ecological agriculture. EFA supports a vision for our food system where strengthening soils, protecting air and water, and encouraging diverse ecosystems and economies are all part of producing healthful food.

Summary

The Ecological Farming Association has serious concerns that the development and release of Genetically Engineered (GE) crops around the world has rapidly progressed with inadequate government oversight, scant independent health and environmental safety testing, and minimal public debate. The decisions that we make now about genetic engineering in food crops will have permanent consequences on our food production capacity, putting us at a crossroads in terms of the agricultural legacy that we will leave behind for our children and grandchildren. Extensive public participation in government deliberations about

the future direction of our food systems and a transparent decision-making process are essential in making policy decisions about food and agriculture. The Ecological Farming Association intends this Position Statement on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture to be used as a platform for education and debate about this important issue.

Genetic Engineering is not ecological (or sustainable) farming

As currently practiced, genetic engineering contravenes ecological farming practices by relying upon costly and toxic farm chemicals, sold under a regime of seed patents and contracts that prevent the age-old practice of saving seeds.

Genetic Engeneering threatens health

Currently, GE drugs unapproved for human use are inserted into food crops and grown in open fields with little government oversight. Producing GE drugs in food crops threaten the contamination of our food supply and our health. GE also has the potential to create new and unpredictable food allergens and toxins. Market approval of GE varieties is based upon studies conducted by the GE industry that have not been fully evaluated by the FDA or peer reviewed by independent scientists. Since GE foods are not labeled, there is no way to test the exposed population even if scientists choose to do so.

Genetic Engineering is not traditional plant breeding

GE represents an unprecedented departure from traditional plant breeding by creating novel organisms through the insertion of genetic material (DNA) of one species into the living cells of a totally unrelated species. The resultant plant, tree, animal, or insect is altered in a way that could not have happened in nature or through traditional plant breeding. These genetically altered organisms will pass on the genetic changes to offspring with unstudied consequences on human and ecological systems. Food that has been genetically engineered includes pigs with human growth genes, tomatoes with flounder genes, and corn with toxic pesticide bacteria.

The decisions that we make now about genetic engineering in food crops will have permanent consequences on our local food production systems and the legacy we leave behind for our children and grandchildren. Eco-Farm believes such important steps should be subject to fully informed public debate, not decided in corporate boardrooms.

Genetically Engineered crops are inadequately regulated

Gaps in GE regulation and monitoring exist at every stage of production. A USDA internal audit, released in December 2005, concluded that the USDA does not know the locations of field test plots it permits, methods used by experimenters to prevent GE pollen and seeds from migrating offsite and persisting in the environment, or the harmful ecosystem effects that may have been discovered during field experiments. Auditors found GE test crop residues, including crops containing unapproved GE drugs, growing in fields with the next season's commercial crops. Farmers have no recourse if their crop is contaminated with GE pollen. No monitoring, testing or labeling requirements exist for GE food and there is no system for tracking or reporting health problems that may result from exposure to GE organisms in food.

Conflicts of interest abound between the GE industry, government, and universities

A revolving door of personnel exists between government and the GE industry. This allows GE industry employees to leave their corporate posts and immediately join the FDA and USDA to develop policies and procedures that govern their former employer. FDA and USDA employees often return to those same corporate employers following government service. Conflicts of interest also pervade universities where individual scientists, research laboratories, and whole departments have become some of the GE industry's biggest benefactors. As corporate interests increasingly permeate government and universities, fewer and fewer independent, non-industry funded scientists have the financial capability to conduct research in the public interest that ensures the safety of technologies used in our food system.

Genetic Engineering contamination is widespread and threatens certified organic farming

Wide agreement exists among scientists that GE organisms inevitably move beyond their intended destination on the farm and cannot be retracted once they escape. To date, 113 incidents on contamination have been publicly reported internationally. Nineteen of these incidents took place in the US. Food labeled "organic" cannot include GE ingredients and contamination of organic crops by GE pollen can result in the loss of markets for organic growers and loss of consumer confidence in GE foods.

Genetic Engineering will not end world hunger

Government and industry often claim that GE crops are needed to feed an expanding global population. The world currently produces more than enough food for every person on earth to consume a healthy diet, yet over 830 million people worldwide go hungry everyday. Hunger does not result from a shortage of food but rather from the inability of poor people to buy food and to access the land and resources needed to grow their own food. GE does nothing to address these root causes of hunger and poverty.