



Monthly Bulletin on Genetic Engineering

South Against Genetic Engineering (SAGE)

Contents in this edition

1. The Cattle Death Saga of Warangal
2. Boll Worm Developing Resistance to Bt. Cotton
3. PAU Should not Promote Bt Cotton: KVM
4. Do Genetically Engineered Crops Give Higher Yields? The Creation of A Myth
5. Confession of A Qualified Genetic Engineer – He Bows Before the Pope for Punishing him for His Sins
6. From Bollworms to Mealy Bugs
7. Cotton insect Pressure has shifted
8. “India Needs to Ban GM Crops – Round Table Meeting Speakers Demand”
9. Protests Seeking Stoppage of GE field Trails
10. ICELAND: Resistance Resistance Rises Against GM Imports
11. GMO-FREE MARKETS
12. Genetically Modified Organisms – Setting the Stage for a trade fight
13. Women Meet on World Women’s Day and Resolve ‘We will not Grow GM Crops, We will not EAT GM FOOD and We will not FEED our CHILDREN GM FOOD’
14. Plan by TNCs to Control Seeds Bound to Fail
15. Bt 176 Sheep Feeding Study – Another Case of Scientific Fraud?
16. French Council Upholds Decision on GMO Crop Ban
17. France Proposes tougher EU Rules for Modified Crops
18. Who Drank The Milk From Hallmark / Westland Cows

1. The Cattle Death Saga of Warangal

There seems to be no stop to livestock deaths in Warangal. In a fresh bout of incidents, one milch animal from Cheeturu village of Lingala Ghanpur Mandal succumbed to death in the second week of March 2008 after grazing on Bt stalks.

In another incident, four sheep died in Narlapur village of Parakala mandal after feeding on Bt cotton stalks. These four sheep were continuously feeding on the Bt cotton stalks as part of an ongoing study carried out together by DDS and Anthra. Interestingly, the animals that were fed on Non Bt cotton stalks did not suffer from any sickness nor did they die, in the same experiment.

Source: Community Researchers of Seed & Crops in Warangal.

2. Boll Worm Developing Resistance to Bt. Cotton

Even as life science companies in seed business and vocal lobbyists for pro-genetically modified (GM) crops combine to make propagandist noises about the goodness of the technology, and rapid spread of area under GM crops worldwide, comes the news that pests are slowly developing resistance to transgenic crops.

The latest is that reports, based on extensive research, emanating from the US suggest that pests may be in the process of evolving resistance to modified crops. A study of the Bt Cotton crop by researchers in the US has revealed that the bollworm – which is widely known to attack cotton boll and inflict losses – were slowly developing immunity.

.Full report can be downloaded from

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2008/02/21/stories/2008022150991300.htm>

3. PAU Should not Promote Bt Cotton: KVM

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Chandigarh/PAU_should_not_promote_BT_cotton_KVM/articleshow/2838194.cms

BATHINDA: A day after Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) approved two new Bt cotton varieties, Kheti Virasat Mission (KVM) among many other voluntary organizations working in the field of natural and sustainable agriculture strongly raised objections to the new varieties.

“It is quite unfortunate that Indian public sector agriculture research centres are falling prey to market agenda of multinational seed corporations,” said Umendra Dutt, executive director, KVM.

According to Kavitha Kuruganti from Centre For Sustainable Agriculture, Secunderabad, “while some companies, which prepare genetically-modified (GM) seeds, have decided to stop the sales of their Bt cotton in the US by 2009, some agriculture universities in India are still churning out products using these outdated imprecise technology.”

“So far genetic engineering has not lived up to its promises and has led to an increase in agrochemical usage,” said Kuruganti, adding, that PAU should promote sustainable agricultural methods in order to pull the Punjabi farmer out of the vicious cycle of input intensive agriculture. KVM has also sent a cautionary note to PAU, the state agriculture department and farmers, elaborating on the adverse impacts of Bt cotton on human and animals health.

"The Department of Animal husbandry of Andhra Pradesh has issued an official circular to farmers warning them against grazing of cattle in Bt cotton fields after confirmed deaths of sheep in various parts of the state.

Moreover, there had also been a drop in exports of their organically-grown cotton due to genetic contamination caused by Bt cotton. Despite knowing these facts PAU is pushing farmers into the trap of Bt cotton. PAU should desist from promoting Bt cotton crops that are not only resulting in heavy losses to farmers, but are also destroying the sustainability of the farming systems," claimed KVM.

The latest is that reports, based on extensive research, emanating from the US suggest that pests may be in the process of evolving resistance to modified crops.

A study of the Bt Cotton crop by US researchers has revealed that bollworm, which is widely-known to attack the crop, were slowly developing immunity. While agronomic evaluation might have been done on these cotton hybrids, what about other issues like impact on soils, on livestock and on human health?

4. Do Genetically Engineered Crops Give Higher Yields? The Creation of A Myth

By Aruna Rodrigues

On the 13th February 2008, during the hearing of the PIL on GM crops, the Chief Justice of India stated that Genetically Modified crops give higher yields.. The Prime Minister and his cabinet believe it, as is evident from the Central Government's policy to promote GM crops in India. **This is an astonishing notion, with no factual basis.** It would therefore be well to separate FACT from FICTION with regard to Genetic Engineering (GE) and its products GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms). The first casualty is the myth about their improved YIELDS against conventional agriculture.. None of these GM crops are engineered for higher yields. They are straightforwardly, 'pesticidal' (Bt) or herbicide tolerant (to kill weeds). This is the science and the fact. On the other hand, higher yields are conferred by traits in the parental lines that make up the GM crop; these parental lines are the result of farmer inputs over 10,000 years of agriculture. The Intellectual property is rightfully theirs. It must be remembered that billions of dollars have been spent by the GE companies experimenting on 'traits', unsuccessfully. This represents a huge investment of resources that could be better utilised elsewhere because dozens of traits have been successfully launched using conventional and high-tech conventional breeding techniques. Genetic engineering has conspicuously failed to match these successes.

Myth No.2: Less pesticide, herbicide use, better economics with GM crops

What can be said straight off is that scientists' warnings of 'resistance' (a response of nature) to both Bt and Ht crops, with super bugs, super weeds and also insect shifts filling an ecological gap, are very much in existence globally, and are growing with each passing year. Quite contrary to what GM companies are saying therefore, worldwide, herbicide and insecticide use have not gone down with the adoption of GM crops. The experience of the US, Canada and Argentina are amply documented and are clear pointers to the dangers for India if we go down this path. It can only end up with our farmers getting trapped on an herbicide treadmill. GM crops are a hard-nosed business for biotech corporations, based on patents and profits, which farmers must pay for. Without patents, this business would die.

Myth No. 3: GM Crops are safe

GM crops are not safe; there is growing proof of their hazardous impacts on human and animal health and on the environment with each passing year. You simply cannot feed people toxic food. The accepted science with regard to genetic engineering is expressed clearly by David Schubert, Professor, Cellular Neurobiology

Laboratory at the prestigious Salk Institute, in his affidavit for the Supreme Court:

"THE GM PROCESS ITSELF IS HIGHLY MUTAGENIC AND CAN CAUSE PLANTS TO MAKE CHEMICALS THAT THEY NORMALLY DO NOT MAKE with completely unpredictable consequences -- Many of these are known to be HIGHLY TOXIC, CAUSE CANCER, AND CAUSE DISEASES LIKE PARKINSON'S. THE CLAIMS MADE ABOUT THE PRECISION, SPECIFICITY AND SAFETY OF PLANT GENETIC ENGINEERING HAVE NO SCIENTIFIC BASIS. -----IT IS EXTREMELY UNWISE TO ALLOW THE INTRODUCTION OF GM CROPS INTO INDIA WHERE THERE IS GREAT BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND NEED FOR STABLE FOOD PRODUCTION."

Myth No 4: GM crops have been tested as safe for human consumption

At a time when other countries are getting tougher about GM crops, India is relaxing norms; pushing ahead with reckless haste. India generally follows the US regulation on GM and borrows wholesale from it. **It will come as a surprise to the reading public that the US FDA does not approve any GM crop as safe for human consumption.** Members of the European Parliament have called for a Community response to the threat posed by the introduction of "invasive alien species and alien genotype;" "--- to ban the introduction of genetically modified organisms and evaluate the potential threat to biodiversity posed by their introduction." Yet India is trail-blazing with this hazardous technology, with a staggering range of every conceivable GM vegetable, grain and oilseed, in effect, all our food, such as no government anywhere has contemplated. The Government also astoundingly accepts Industry demands of confidentiality or CBI (Confidential Business Information), overriding PUBLIC SAFETY. This is of course unconscionable; it flouts every ethical norm and yardstick of objectivity. It works only to sanction fraud. Where does this leave India as a supposedly functioning democracy and the health and future quality of life of its people? **On the other hand, a German court, in a decision involving a Bt corn, which had passed the approval process in the EU 10 years ago, forced Monsanto to publish its dossier on a 90-day rat feeding study. When leading independent scientists subjected the study to hard scrutiny, Monsanto's own data showed the GM corn variety to be toxic.** This February, the new French President, Sarkozy banned another variety of Bt corn (also for animal feed), the ONLY GM CROP grown on French soil. The provisional High Authority on GMOs found "a certain number of new negative scientific facts which notably impact fauna and flora". The UK does not grow any GM crops; Poland and Scotland have moratoriums. Ireland, Wales, and Cyprus are moving toward declaring themselves GM-free. In the US, four district courts have ruled that the USDA has acted illegally, for not conducting proper environmental impact assessments, even calling the "USDA'S REGULATORY HEEDLESSNESS ARBITRARY AND CAPRICIOUS" and "an unequivocal violation of a clear congressional mandate." As a result of this landmark judgement commercial sales of GM alfalfa are banned nationwide.

Monsanto and our Government

It is very relevant to cite Monsanto's 100 year-old track record of how it serves society:

- This is the company that said Agent Orange and PCBs were safe (of Bhopal infamy).
- This is the agri-business giant that now makes GMOs. It owns Terminator technology in partnership with the US government, fudges, bribes and falsifies data to show its GMOs are safe.
- It bribed 140 Indonesian officials to get Bt cotton approved without an environment impact assessment and tried to bribe Canadian government officials to get its GM Bovine Growth Hormone approved without further study.

We must be judged by the company we keep. The RTI data provided to GreenPeace proves just how cosy the relationship between the Regulators (the GEAC & RCGM) and the GM Biotech industry is; the Regulator's approvals mortgage India's farming livelihoods and systems, her biosafety and the health of her citizens. The Indian Government has gone one further with the enactment of an agreement with the USA, called the KIA, (Knowledge Initiative in Agriculture) which will give Monsanto access to India's genetic resources. **Our Food and Biodiversity will be Contaminated Irreversibly without Hope of Restoration**

Today, in India, we stand 'on the brink' like no other nation. The crisis we face requires a profound reassessment of just who we are as a people and what we stand for. Grappling with the honest issues of the debate and making decisions based on such an assessment is one thing. Committing our country to the disastrous and irreversible consequences of this technology based on scientific facts being covered-up and the fiction being promoted as the truth is completely unacceptable. In my book, given the magnitude of the sell-out of India's national interest, this is treasonable.

Aruna Rodrigues is the main Petitioner to the SC in a PIL filed in 2005. This article is based on the evidence submitted in Court, which includes statements of leading world scientists prepared for the Court.

5. Confession of A Qualified Genetic Engineer - He Bows Before the Pope for Punishing him for His Sins

Confession of A Qualified Genetic Engineer

'I bow before His Holiness Pope Benedict for my scientific sins. I have definitely done harm to mother earth and have earned sins, and I pray to The Pope to prescribe me the punishment for this. Though I never involved myself directly in the research of genetic engineering, many of the reagents, enzymes, chemicals and products we use in the laboratory or in our kitchens are made through genetic engineering that many of us may not even suspect.' Dr Sudhir Kumar Kaura, Scientist in Genetic Engineering Discipline It is never late too mend.

I also appeal to all people who value Nature for the survival of all of us to sell off their shares of big / small companies who are dealing in genetic engineering. In this way, this will lead to slow but sure decline of these companies and their sinful, proven illegitimate, disastrous, and corrupt practices, technologies and products.

Confession and Appeal filed by : Dr Sudhir Kumar Kaura (geneticist and biotechnologist)

The below 2 articles report resurgence of secondary pest emergence of mealy bug on Bt cotton

6. From Bollworms to Mealy Bugs

By Surinder Sud (Farm View) Business Standard, March 11 2008

Another pest is threatening to become as menacing as the bollworm. This is the mealy bug, a plant sap-sucking insect having various species, some of which have multiplied to assume perilous proportions chiefly because of the reduction of pesticide use after the spread of Bt-cotton.

A significant presence of these white-coated insects, viewed earlier as merely minor pests, was observed on the cotton crop in Gujarat in 2006 and, subsequently, in Punjab and the adjoining northern cotton-growing tracts in 2007. There have been reports of its growing populations from most other cotton-growing states as well. In 2005, the mealy bugs had destroyed almost the entire cotton crop in several parts of Pakistan, notably in Multan, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas and Tandu Allahyar areas.

The full details can be downloaded from www.business-standard.com/common/news_article.php?leftnm=lmnu5&subLeft=&autono=316325&tab=r

7. Cotton insect Pressure has shifted

By Roy Roberson, Farm Press, Mar 10, 2008 [extracts]

<http://southeastfarmpress.com/cotton/cotton-insects-0310/>

Stink bugs in the Southeast and plant bugs in the Mid-South have created problems for cotton growers who once thought these little critters were gone for good.

In the Southeast the major problem is with stink bugs, though other plant bugs are sporadic pests of cotton. In the Mid-South, plant bugs, including lygus, tarnished plant bugs and cotton fleahoppers are the primary problems, with little pressure from stink bugs.

Since 1996 the use of Bt-containing cotton varieties has steadily increased. Along with the increased use of Bt cotton came a further reduction in the use of broad spectrum insecticides.

Virtual elimination of broad spectrum insecticides provided an ideal environment for stink bugs and plant bugs to flourish. In general, states where boll weevil eradication was the most successful early in the program, now have the heaviest pressure from plant and stink bugs., Entomologists warn that as more areas are declared boll weevil free and as the use of Bt cotton continues to grow, there is a threat that this could flip-flop.

8. "India Needs to Ban GM Crops - Round Table Meeting Speakers Demand"

Press Release from Navya Seema Development Society, 45/24-K-32-1, Ashoka Nagar, Kurnool

Kurnool, February 20th, 2008: Speaking at a round table discussion on GM crops and their role in Indian farming, speaker after speaker demanded that these crops be banned from India. The round table, in which around 75 representatives of political parties, women's groups, farmers' unions, district doctors' associations, legal fraternity, organic farmers, researchers and students participated, discussed in detail various issues pertaining to GM crops, including the situation worldwide,, and the evidences available on such crops.

Mr K Jagannadham, from Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangam (CPI-M) pointed out that big MNCs and their profit ambitions were behind this technology and that we need to protect Indian farming from such MNCs. Lok Satta leader Mr K Omkar said that GM crops will become humankind's greatest disaster. Ms P Nirmala, state leader of AIDWA (All India Democratic Women's Association, affiliated to Communist Party of India-Marxist) in Andhra Pradesh felt that the entry of GM crops is an indication of the nexus between the rulers and the agri-business corporations and that the government is becoming a puppet in the hands of such corporations. She gave a call for women's groups and other people's organisations to come forward to struggle against GM crops.

Mr P Gokari, leader of CPI-ML New Democracy party demanded that GM crops should be banned not just in Andhra Pradesh but all over India. City President of Bharatiya Janata Party, Mr Nagaraju, urged farmers to go back to traditional farming as a way of improving their environment, health and livelihoods.

Ms Nagalakshmi Devi, former Public Prosecutor presented the details of how the bitter side of GM crops took only a few years to come to the fore in the case of Bt Cotton cultivation. She pointed out that yields were

coming down and demanded that it is the responsibility of the government to create awareness amongst farmers against GM crops, in the same manner in which they are running awareness campaigns about HIV-AIDS at present.

Representing Vyavasaya Karmika Sangham (Agricultural Labour Union), Mr Nageswara Rao said that his association will take the struggle against GM crops forward.

This round table meeting, one of the first in Andhra Pradesh at the district level, was chaired by Mr Siva Nagi Reddy of Navya Seema Development Society and other participants included Mr Rama Krishna Reddy, District Committee member of AP Rythu Sangam, Dr Ramgopal Rao of District Doctors' Association, Dr Chakravarti, Secretary of Jana Vignana Vedika Mr Chenna Kesava Reddy, Mr Ayyappa Reddy of Telugu Rythu (affiliated to Telugu Desam Party), Mahila Samakhya (CPI) leader Ms Dastagiramma and Mr Vijay of BWRDS (an NGO) among others

9. Protests Seeking Stoppage of GE field Trails

Friday, February 22, 2008

Coimbatore (PTI): Accusing Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) of 'carrying on research upon the diktats of US-based Monsanto', farmers and environmental organisations on Friday staged protests at the field trial sites of Genetically Engineered brinjal within the campus.

More than 100 activists of Greenpeace, 'Pasumai Thaayagam', the green wing of PMK, and Tamil Nadu Agriculture Protection Committee, along with a several farmers marched to the site, holding placards and banners and raised slogans demanding stoppage of all GE field trials. They alleged that the University was being "converted into a property of Monsanto". The protestors alleged that BT brinjal field trial held in association with Monsanto Mahyco, the Indian arm of the American company, was done to fulfill the mandatory trials required to allow commercial release of GE food crops.

If the trials were completed successfully, it would pave the way for the first GE food crop to be sold in the market, which would have an adverse impact on the health of human beings and livestock, Selvam, secretary, Erode Organic Farmers' Collectives, told reporters at the site. Groups across the globe, protesting the introduction of GE food crops, apprehend that the plants made resistant to pests could also seriously affect human health. According to them, proper researches were not being done to allay this fear.

"The farmers do not want this technology. TNAU, which is funded by the taxpayers' money must go by its primary mandate of serving the farmers and not a corporation", he said adding "encouraging GE is only helping the companies gain profit". Satahriya Sekar of Pasumai Thaayagam claimed that brinjal trials could also 'contaminate' other crops around the area.

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/015200802221940.htm>

10. ICELAND: Resistance Resistance Rises Against GM Imports

By Lowana Veal

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=40882>

REYKJAVIK, Jan 23 (IPS) - Icelanders are beginning to protest more forcefully against import of genetically modified food, leading the government to tighten regulations.

Iceland passed a law on marketing and general release of genetically modified organisms in 1996, and since then several regulations have been introduced on that basis. The measures followed a European Directive in 1990. But no steps were then taken in line with the more recent 2001 Directive.

Sigrídur Audur Arnardóttir, lawyer for the Environment Minister, says new regulations based on the new Directive have finally been written. "This is being sent out for comments and should be ready for implementation in February," she said.

"The new regulation will update the previous ones but will be based on the Cartagena Protocol on biological safety," Sigurður Thrafnisson from the ministry said. "It will thus correspond to the 2001 Directive."

Early last year, European consumers voiced concern that food produced from animals fed with GM foodstuffs was not so labelled. Two European regulations have been written on this. But Helga Pálsdóttir from the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority, who wrote the regulation that is currently being reviewed, says that regulations on traceability and labelling have not been translated into Icelandic.

11. GMO-FREE MARKETS

http://www.panna.org/resources/panups/panup_20080110

A global GMO-free network: International stakeholders meeting in Brussels, Belgium, have announced plans to create "a reliable, global supply of non-GM soy" to counter the spread of genetically engineered crops. Fifty-four percent of Brazil's 2006-7 soy production was from patented GM seeds and parcels of the Amazon rainforest are now being cleared for GM soy. [Environmental News Network](#) reports that 361 delegates attended a two-day meeting, representing the continent's 43 GMO-free regions (including Brittany in France, Tuscany in Italy and Upper Austria), Brazil, Canada, China, India and the US. Renaud Layadi, Sustainable Development Project Manager for the Regional Council of Brittany, explained that the goal was "to create a non-GM commodity market." Nearly all European pork, red meat and dairy products are derived from GMO-fed animals. A 2006 Eurobarometer [survey found](#) that most Europeans oppose GM food. As a result, Cargill, Bunge and ADM were forced to accept a two-year moratorium on soybeans grown on deforested lands. "There's an enormous effort by the biotech industry to make people think there is no alternative," Layadi said, while noting that Indian farmers alone are prepared to provide 10,000 tons of non-GM soy "if the market demanded."

12. Genetically Modified Organisms - Setting the Stage for a trade fight

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/content.asp?ContentID=4180>

Despite pressure from the WTO and the US, European supermarkets are unlikely to reintroduce genetically modified products. After more than two years of deliberation, the World Trade Organisation's dispute panel has finally produced its interim report into an unofficial moratorium introduced by the EU on genetically modified organisms between 1998 and 2003.

Though the 1,045-page report has been kept confidential, officials within the WTO have leaked some details to the press. It is clear that the WTO has ruled in favour of the US stance that the EU's ban on GMOs was illegal.

The US, Argentina and Canada took the matter to the WTO in 2003, alleging the EU moratorium on GMOs was not based on scientific evidence and posed an illegal barrier to trade. The US also claimed that individual bans imposed by Austria, France, Greece, Germany, Italy and Luxembourg were illegal.

In response, the EU started approving GMOs in 2004 under strict labelling and traceability conditions.

13. Women Meet on World Women's Day and Resolve 'We will not Grow GM Crops, We will not EAT GM FOOD and We will not FEED our CHILDREN GM FOOD'

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=8880>

More than 400 women from various women's organisations, farm workers, and consumer organisations came together on World Womens Day at Mettupalayam to discuss one of the most critical issues affecting food and women's rights -- the introduction of Genetically Modified Crops and Food into the farmlands and markets. The Workshop was jointly organised by the Save our Rice Campaign (Thanal), CREATE, FEDCOT and the Youth and Child Service Society (YCSS), Mettupalayam.

The meeting was addressed by Ms Bala Barathi, MLA from Gindigul and Dr Nammalvar, Organic Farmer Scientist. Other speakers included Mr M S Mohammed Bathushah, Director YCSS, Prof Durai Singam, Chairman, FEDCOT, Sri Ponnambalam, Managing Trustee, CREATE and Sridhar R, Coordinator, Thanal. Ms K Mahabunisha, District Coordinator of FEDCOT and Ms C Packialakshmi, General Secretary of FEDCOT were the main organisers behind this large event, and spoke about the need to organise to resist the forces that are destroying the control of women on their resources and knowledge.

Speakers spoke about the GM Crops impact on the Environment, Farmers, Food and Public Health. Later in the afternoon, at the end of the meeting, the women took a standing oath that they WILL NOT GROW, EAT NOR WILL THEY FEED THEIR CHILDREN WITH POISONS (PESTICIDE) AND GM FOOD. They also resolved to grow and consume more organic and nutritious food grown and cooked traditionally.

The event was part of a series of regional workshops being organised across the State of Tamilnadu by the Save our Rice Campaign to alert the public, especially consumers, on GM Food.

14 . Plan by TNCs to Control Seeds Bound to Fail

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=41435>

Interview with Tewolde Berhan Egziabher
Inter Press Service, March 3 2008

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=41435>

NEW DELHI, Mar 3 (IPS) - An attempt by a handful of developed countries and trans-national corporations (TNCs) to monopolise and control the world's seeds is doomed to failure, says Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, director-general of Ethiopia's Environment Protection Agency, and a formidable negotiator at biodiversity-related fora.

Tewolde, who won the Right Livelihood Award in 2000 for "exemplary work to safeguard biodiversity and the traditional rights of farmers and communities to their genetic resources", explained to IPS correspondent Ranjit Devraj why "the attempt to reduce the world's farmers to serfs of a different kind" is doomed.

IPS: What gives you grounds for such optimism? After all in major agricultural countries like India we have been seeing steady inroads made into the farming sector by such TNCs as Monsanto.

Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher: First of all the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which made the control over seeds by TNCs possible through its Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) mechanism is slowly getting paralysed -- especially after Doha. As WTO weakens, the controls that have been creeping in will automatically disappear.

IPS: What about the bilateral agreements outside the WTO?

TBGE: These bilateral agreements favoured by the United States and the European Union, and also other countries, have only served to create greater uncertainty. They have certainly undermined the hope that the MNCs once harboured, that the WTO would become an instrument with which to subjugate the world.

IPS: What are the worst results of TRIPS impinging on agriculture?

TBGE: Without doubt the idea that the patenting of mechanical inventions -- that began in the city-state of Venice -- can be transferred to plants, animals and microorganisms is misconceived. Most farmers are illiterate and living in countries that are not developed but are vulnerable to pressure with WTO members creating conditions ideal for TNCs to patent seeds. This is an unbelievable distortion of justice. And it becomes truly absurd when the onus falls on farmers to prove that they have not been using seeds without a license from the TNC that claims to own them. What can farmers do in the event of natural pollination? Call in the birds and the wind as witnesses?

IPS: What about genetically modified organisms and genetically engineered crops especially those that are claimed to help increase the production of biofuels?

TBGE: Firstly the deployment of genetically engineered organisms or crops must be resorted to only after they have been rigorously tested for safety. Many developed countries, especially those in the EU, are already wary of genetic engineering products. As for production of biofuels, they can be useful in reclaiming land that is unsuitable for agriculture, but if they are dependent on fertilisers that go back to fossil fuels what is the benefit to the environment? What I say is that there should be no hasty action when it comes to adopting genetically engineered crops.

Detailed interview can be down loaded from the above link.

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=8882>

15. Bt 176 Sheep Feeding Study – Another Case of Scientific Fraud?

An Italian feeding trial, in which some sheep were fed the controversial maize line Bt176 over a period of 3 years, appears to have been specifically designed and conducted in order to confirm the 'no health risk' hypothesis.

In 2002-2005 scientists at the University of Perugia, with funding from the Italian Ministry of Health, conducted a 'longitudinal' study involving 106 breeding ewes, of which one group was fed on a diet containing Bt176 maize. The full article has crucial information missing, and appears to be systematically biased.

Full details can be downloaded from

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=8882>

16. French Council Upholds Decision on GMO Crop Ban

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUKL1775647420080319>

PARIS (Reuters) - France's highest legal authority upheld on Wednesday a government decision to ban the commercial use of the only genetically modified (GMO) crop grown in the country, legal sources said on Wednesday.

'Our case has been rejected, we are studying the conclusions (of the State Council),' one source close to the case said.

French seedmakers, including Monsanto, attacked the government's earlier decision to ban the use of maize seeds using Monsanto's MON 810 technology.

17. France Proposes tougher EU Rules for Modified Crops

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5ip8VQIX2Sruz2yuzPgPUeZ6UQZQQ>

BRUSSELS (AFP) — France on Monday proposed scrapping the EU's present system for authorising genetically modified crops and urged for tougher standards which take into account a wide range of environmental and safety factors.

A European Commission spokeswoman said that **no member state spoke against the French proposals, while French Environment Minister Jean-Louis Borloo said about six of them spoke in favour, including Spain, Italy and Poland.**

Under the French proposals, which Borloo said also had German support, a multi-discipline and independent assessment would be used to consider proposals for authorising GMOs, the subject of strong debate in France and elsewhere.

At the moment, the European Food Safety Agency gives a scientific opinion about GMOs under consideration for coming on the market before it goes to member states to decide whether to allow the new product.

However, because member states are usually split on authorising GMOs, the decision reverts to the European Commission, which in turn usually follows EFSA's opinion.

Under the French plan food safety concerns would be considered alongside issues such as the farming economy, soil deterioration and effects on other crops.

France has banned the growing of a GMO maize variety produced by the US group Monsanto, the only genetically modified crop grown within the EU, mainly in Spain.

18. Who Drank The Milk From Hallmark / Westland Cows

The Humane Society's recent slaughterhouse expose www.hsus.org which led to the biggest beef recall in US history was an ethical and hygienic shock to the public.

We're eating **WHAT**, people asked.

Full details of this article can be downloaded from

<http://newsblaze.com/story/20080226124858rose.nb/topstory.html>