No to Monsanto in Pima County
11-22-16 sent to: cob_mail@pima.gov

To the Honorable Pima County Board of Supervisors,

As a resident of Tucson, Arizona and Pima County, this letter is to inform the Pima County Board of Supervisors that I oppose Monsanto opening a Green House in Pima County, outside the city of Tucson, AZ, and any tax incentives that may be granted to this multi-national corporation.

For the following reasons I urge you to reconsider allowing this corporate agricultural giant access to opening operations in the immediate area and vote No to allowing Monsanto to establish a Green House in Pima County.

I collected data from many sources and quote them below and provide additional, separate documentation/ links showing the research in full form.

1.
We need to celebrate and maintain our local agricultural diversity
As referenced and excerpted from in Edible Magazine:

Tucson was designated a World City of Gastronomy by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), becoming the first city in the United States to receive such a designation, in 2015.

Tucson has the longest agricultural history of any city in North America, extending back more than 4,000 years. Local to Tucson, Pima County and the desert southwest are cacti, mesquite, beans and sunflowers, corn, squash, White Sonora wheat, pastures of rugged criollo cattle, and orchards heavy with Kino heritage fruit trees.

Think about the seeds planted in soil by tiny fingers in the dozens of school gardens that have sprouted around the city—kids who are now eating food grown in southern Arizona, thanks to work done by the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona to connect local producers with institutional markets, offering not only increased economic stability for our region's farmers and ranchers, but also greater access to local, healthy food throughout our community.

More heritage foods listed on the Slow Food International Ark of Taste are grown within 100 miles of Tucson than any other city in North America.

Volunteers at Mission Garden are collecting many of those foods into a garden planted on a plot of land that's been producing food for 4,000 years.

Joining UNESCO's Creative Cities Network "presents an opportunity for Tucson's chefs, farmers, and ranchers, as well as our businesses, academic institutions, and nonprofits, to be represented on the world stage," says Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild. "I'd like our tourism bureau to be able to tout this designation as yet another great reason to visit Tucson."

The designation can help direct public and private funds to support innovation in the food system, from small business incubators to nonprofit foundations.

It can serve to focus and reframe efforts to alleviate poverty and food insecurity within our community. "Using our unique food culture as a means for economic development."

It can catalyze the development of a regional food brand to increase consumer awareness of locally produced foods.

Mayor Rothschild recently established a City Commission on Food Security, Heritage, and Economy to address issues relating to food security, food heritage, and the food economy.

"Like any other honor or designation, it's what we do with the City of Gastronomy award that matters," says Gary Nabhan. "If we want to use it to reduce food insecurity, obesity, and diabetes, let's do it. If we want to use it to jump-start new food micro-enterprises, let's go for it. What matters to me most about this designation is that it built a collaboration among the city and county governments, the University of Arizona, our grassroots alliance, nonprofits, and businesses—one that will now endure."

In other words: It's up us to decide how we will leverage our resources to fulfill our designation as a UNESCO World City of Gastronomy—one that will now endure.

Excerpts from
Megan Kimble is the managing editor of Edible Baja Arizona.
http://ediblebajaarizona.com/tucson-designated-unesco-world-city-of-gastronomy

2.
Tucson has all the seeds we need.
Heirloom seeds – Native Seed Search established Arizona's first seed lending library.
"This open-source community seed exchange is designed to facilitate the free distribution of locally adapted seeds and increase regional seed sovereignty. Seed libraries are an exciting new trend in the local food and seed movement where users can freely check out seeds, just like with books at a public library. After planting the seeds and enjoying the fruits of your labor, just leave a plant or two in the ground to go to seed. The resulting seed can then be harvested and returned, helping the library to grow abundant with seeds that are increasingly adapted to local conditions." Quote from: http://www.nativeseeds.org/get-seeds/seed-library

The seed bank houses approximately 1,900 different accessions of traditional crops utilized as food, fiber and dye by the Apache, Chemehuevi, Cocopah, Gila River Pima, Guarijio, Havasupai, Hopi, Maricopa, Mayo, Mojave, Mountain Pima, Navajo, Paiute, Puebloan, Tarahumara, Tohono O'odham, Yaqui, and other cultures.
http://www.nativeseeds.org/our-approach/seed-bank

Note:
If Monsanto sets up shop in Pima County these precious seeds, that are available no other place in the word would be at risk for cross contamination, wind pollination, etc.

Local Farmers would be at risk as well from cross-pollination and GMO seeds spreading to crops and ranches in the area.

3.
Neighboring Santa Cruz County, Sahurita Wine Country

Sahuarita is located south of the Tohono O'odham Nation and abuts the north end of Green Valley, 15 miles south of Tucson.

The Sonoita AVA (American Viticultural Area) is one of the first winegrowing regions in the United States to be granted AVA status, and the area is the first federally recognized wine-growing region in the state of Arizona. Currently home to the largest concentration of wineries and vineyards in the state, USA Today has recognized the Sonoita/Elgin winegrowing region as one of the top ten wine trails in the country.

Today in November 2016, Six Counties in California are Non-GMO; the Wine Country and Farmers spoke up.

We need to be extremely careful with this decision, as we do not want to risk contaminating the winegrowing region of Southern Arizona with GMO seed experiments and encouraging farming practices with GMO seeds. We do not yet know the long-term effects of GMOs on people, plants and animals.

4.
Millions Against Monsanto
Non-profit organizations such as the Organic Consumers Association in an educational project speak of Millions Against Monsanto. http://www.monsanto-tribunal.org/why-a-tribunal.
In October 2016, there were 750 participants in The Hague representing 30 nationalities from all over the world, thousands were following online on the livestream and social media, and the Tribunal received a lot of press attention. Both victims and experts were thankful for the opportunity to give them a voice on this important international platform; and a very well documented voice in this new process to hold corporations accountable for their acts.

5.
The New York Times 10-29-16 article "Doubts About the Promised Bounty of Genetically Modified Crops."
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/business/gmo-promise-falls-short.html?_r=3

6.
GMO Myths and Truths:
http://earthopensource.org/earth-open-source-reports/gmo-myths-and-truths-2nd-edition/
An evidence-based examination of the claims made for the safety and efficacy of genetically modified crops and foods, by EarthOpenSource, UK. *They would also like to thank the many scientists and experts who contributed to the GMO Myths and Truths report, as well as the scientists, policy- makers, campaigners, and members of the public who have read it and put the information to use.*

7.
GMO Facts
http://www.nongmoproject.org/gmo-facts/

What is a GMO? *A GMO, or genetically modified organism, is a plant, animal, microorganism or other organism whose genetic makeup has been modified using recombinant DNA methods (also called gene splicing), gene modification or transgenic technology. This relatively new science creates unstable combinations of plant, animal, bacterial and viral genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding methods. Visit the What is GMO page for more information and a list of high-risk crops.*

Are GMOs safe? *Most developed nations do not consider GMOs to be safe and have significant restrictions or outright bans on the production and sale of GMOs. The U.S. and Canadian governments, though, have approved GMOs based on studies conducted by the same corporations that created them and profit from their sale.*

Are GMOs labeled?
Sixty-four countries around the world, including Australia, Japan, and all of the countries in the European Union, require genetically modified foods to be labeled
1. While a 2015 ABC News survey found that 93% of Americans believe genetically modified foods should be labeled, GMOs are not required to be labeled in the U.S. and Canada

2. In the absence of mandatory labeling, the Non-GMO Project was created to give consumers the informed choice they deserve.

Which foods might contain GMOs? *Most packaged foods contain ingredients derived from corn, soy, canola, and sugar beet — and the vast majority of those crops grown in North America are genetically modified*

3. To see a list of high-risk crops, visit the What is GMO page.

How do GMOs affect farmers? *Because GMOs are novel life forms, biotechnology companies have been able to obtain patents with which to restrict their use. As a result, the companies that make GMOs now have the power to sue farmers whose fields are contaminated with GMOs, even when it is the result of inevitable drift from neighboring fields*

4. GMOs therefore pose a serious threat to farmer sovereignty and to the national food security of any country where they are grown, including the United States and Canada.

What are the impacts of GMOs on the environment? *More than 80% of all GMOs grown worldwide are engineered for herbicide tolerance 5. As a result, use of toxic herbicides like Roundup has increased 16 times since GMOs were introduced 6. GM crops are also responsible for the emergence of herbicide resistant "super weeds" and "super bugs," which can only be killed with more toxic poisons like 2,4-D (a major ingredient in Agent Orange) 7,8. GMOs are a direct extension of chemical agriculture and are developed and sold by the world's biggest chemical companies. The long-term impacts of GMOs are unknown, and once released into the environment, these novel organisms cannot be recalled.*
http://www.nongmoproject.org/gmo-facts/ - visit link for research and source info.

8.
Food Industry
What began as a consumer-driven movement in the natural food space has expanded to conventional brands and retailers. Increasingly, shoppers are concerned about the detrimental effects of GMOs on our health and our environment and are looking for the Non-GMO Project Butterfly seal.

With more than 1 million engaged Facebook followers, the Non-GMO Project Verified seal is the most widely recognized and trusted non-GMO label in the market.

The Non-GMO Project currently has enrolled more than 2,600 brands with more than 34,000 products that generate $16 billion in annual sales. Vendors are applying for Non-GMO Project verification and anxiously

awaiting certification. This info is from the Non-GMO Project website

U.S. organic sales post new record of $43.3 billion in 2015
The booming U.S. organic industry posted new records in 2015, with total organic product sales hitting a new benchmark of $43.3 billion, up a robust 11 percent from the previous year's record level and far outstripping the overall food market's growth rate of 3 percent, according to the Organic Trade Association's 2016 Organic Industry Survey.

The industry saw its largest annual dollar gain ever in 2015, adding $4.2 billion in sales, up from the $3.9 billion in new sales recorded in 2014. Of the $43.3 billion in total organic sales, $39.7 billion were organic food sales, up 11 percent from the previous year, and non-food organic products accounted for $3.6 billion, up 13 percent. Nearly 5 percent of all the food sold in the U.S. in 2015 was organic.

2015 was a year of significant growth for the industry despite the continued struggle to meet the seemingly unquenchable consumer demand for organic. Supply issues persisted to dominate the industry, as organic production in the U.S. lagged behind consumption. *In response, the organic industry came together in creative and proactive ways to address the supply challenge, to improve and develop infrastructure, and to advocate for policy to advance the sector.*

"The industry joined in collaborative ways to invest in infrastructure and education, and individual companies invested in their own supply chains to ensure a dependable stream of organic products for the consumer. Despite all the challenges, the organic industry saw its largest dollar growth ever. Organic will continue to be the most meaningful farm-to-fork—and fiber—system," said OTA's CEO and Executive Director Laura Batcha.

- See more at: https://www.ota.com/news/press-releases/19031#sthash.MSLiKT4S.dpuf

More and More Consumers do not want GMOs in their food.
I work as a sales manager for a natural food brokerage company selling to retail accounts including: Sprouts, Whole Foods, Kroger/Fry's, Safeway/ Albertsons, Bashas'. Mass market and natural food stores alike are waking up to the fact that Organics and clean products, Non-GMO are driving the grocery business in mainstream mass market and natural products industry.

Local, clean foods grown organically and/or without the use of GMO seeds and pesticides are sold at a premium and support farmers and people who bring food products to market.

Products with certifications such as Labeling USDA Organic, The Non-GMO Project - we see product sales are skyrocketing.

9.
In Closing,
Looking at a bigger picture and the long-term impact it would be in the best interest of Pima County to NOT to support or move forward with the Monsanto Green House Project.

It is up to us how we want to fuel our brains, bodies and desert land.

Let's stay the course with the vision of Tucson's rich agricultural heritage and vibrancy, reject the persuasion and deep corporate pockets that would dissolve our current eco-system and UNESCO designation of Tucson being the first World City of Gastronomy.
Looking at the food trends in the USA and around the world; consumers support organically grown foods and food grown WITHOUT the use of GMO seeds and toxic pesticides. Pima County is positioned in a unique environment and has limitless possibilities to tout our UNESCO designation and attract other food business, foodie loving tourists.

We need to hold onto the precious land we have and celebrate the food diversity of the area; consider additional revenue streams coming from Tucson as a destination marketplace for food and beauty in the Southwestern Sonoran desert.

Thank you for your time to review the third party information to make your decision/s, hear the community's concerns and make an educated choice that will benefit future generations to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Parker

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11/22/16

The New York Times http://nyti.ms/2dR9DRr

BUSINESS DAY | UNCERTAIN HARVEST

Doubts About the Promised Bounty of Genetically Modified Crops

By DANNY HAKIM OCT. 29, 2016

LONDON — The controversy over genetically modified crops has long focused on largely unsubstantiated fears that they are unsafe to eat.

But an extensive examination by The New York Times indicates that the debate has missed a more basic problem — genetic modification in the United States and Canada has not accelerated increases in crop yields or led to an overall reduction in the use of chemical pesticides.

The promise of genetic modification was twofold: By making crops immune to the effects of weedkillers and inherently resistant to many pests, they would grow so robustly that they would become indispensable to feeding the world's growing population, while also requiring fewer applications of sprayed pesticides.

Twenty years ago, Europe largely rejected genetic modification at the same time the United States and Canada were embracing it. Comparing results on the two continents, using independent data as well as academic and industry research, shows how the technology has fallen short of the promise.

An analysis by The Times using United Nations data showed that the United States and Canada have gained no discernible advantage in yields — food per acre — when measured against Western Europe, a region with comparably modernized

of Sciences report found that "there was little evidence" that the introduction of genetically modified crops in the United States had led to yield gains beyond those seen in conventional crops.

At the same time, herbicide use has increased in the United States, even as major crops like corn, soybeans and cotton have been converted to modified varieties. And the United States has fallen behind Europe's biggest producer, France, in reducing the overall use of pesticides, which includes both herbicides and insecticides.

One measure, contained in data from the United States Geological Survey, shows the stark difference in the use of pesticides. Since genetically modified crops were introduced in the United States two decades ago for crops like corn, cotton and soybeans, the use of toxins that kill insects and fungi has fallen by a third, but the spraying of herbicides, which are used in much higher volumes, has risen by 21 percent.

By contrast, in France, use of insecticides and fungicides has fallen by a far greater percentage — 65 percent — and herbicide use has decreased as well, by 36 percent.

Profound differences over genetic engineering have split Americans and Europeans for decades. Although American protesters as far back as 1987 pulled up prototype potato plants, European anger at the idea of fooling with nature has been far more sustained. In the last few years, the March Against Monsanto has drawn thousands of protesters in cities like Paris and Basel, Switzerland, and opposition to G.M. foods is a foundation of the Green political movement. Still, Europeans eat those foods when they buy imports from the United States and elsewhere.

Fears about the harmful effects of eating G.M. foods have proved to be largely without scientific basis. The potential harm from pesticides, however, has drawn researchers' attention. Pesticides are toxic by design — weaponized versions, like sarin, were developed in Nazi Germany — and have been linked to developmental delays and cancer.

the Harvard University School of Public Health, whose research has attributed the loss of nearly 17 million I.Q. points among American children 5 years old and under to one class of insecticides. "We do natural experiments on a population," he said, referring to exposure to chemicals in agriculture, "and wait until it shows up as bad."

The industry is winning on both ends — because the same companies make and sell both the genetically modified plants and the poisons. Driven by these sales, the combined market capitalizations of Monsanto, the largest seed company, and Syngenta, the Swiss pesticide giant, have grown more than sixfold in the last decade and a half. The two companies are separately involved in merger agreements that would lift their new combined values to more than $100 billion each.

When presented with the findings, Robert T. Fraley, the chief technology officer at Monsanto, said The Times had cherry-picked its data to reflect poorly on the industry. "Every farmer is a smart businessperson, and a farmer is not going to pay for a technology if they don't think it provides a major benefit," he said. "Biotech tools have clearly driven yield increases enormously."

Regarding the use of herbicides, in a statement, Monsanto said, "While overall herbicide use may be increasing in some areas where farmers are following best practices to manage emerging weed issues, farmers in other areas with different circumstances may have decreased or maintained their herbicide usage."

Genetically modified crops can sometimes be effective. Monsanto and others often cite the work of Matin Qaim, a researcher at Georg-August-University of Göttingen, Germany, including a meta-analysis of studies that he helped write finding significant yield gains from genetically modified crops. But in an interview and emails, Dr. Qaim said he saw significant effects mostly from insect-resistant varieties in the developing world, particularly in India.

"Currently available G.M. crops would not lead to major yield gains in Europe," he said. And regarding herbicide-resistant crops in general: "I don't consider this to be the miracle type of technology that we couldn't live without."

First came the Flavr Savr tomato in 1994, which was supposed to stay fresh longer. The next year it was a small number of bug-resistant russet potatoes. And by 1996, major genetically modified crops were being planted in the United States.

Monsanto, the most prominent champion of these new genetic traits, pitched them as a way to curb the use of its pesticides. "We're certainly not encouraging farmers to use more chemicals," a company executive told The Los Angeles Times in 1994. The next year, in a news release, the company said that its new gene for seeds, named Roundup Ready, "can reduce overall herbicide use."

Originally, the two main types of genetically modified crops were either resistant to herbicides, allowing crops to be sprayed with weedkillers, or resistant to some insects.

Figures from the United States Department of Agriculture show herbicide use skyrocketing in soybeans, a leading G.M. crop, growing by two and a half times in the last two decades, at a time when planted acreage of the crop grew by less than a third. Use in corn was trending downward even before the introduction of G.M. crops, but then nearly doubled from 2002 to 2010, before leveling off. Weed resistance problems in such crops have pushed overall usage up.

To some, this outcome was predictable. The whole point of engineering bug-resistant plants "was to reduce insecticide use, and it did," said Joseph Kovach, a retired Ohio State University researcher who studied the environmental risks of pesticides. But the goal of herbicide-resistant seeds was to "sell more product," he said — more herbicide.

Farmers with crops overcome by weeds, or a particular pest or disease, can understandably be G.M. evangelists. "It's silly bordering on ridiculous to turn our backs on a technology that has so much to offer," said Duane Grant, the chairman of the Amalgamated Sugar Company, a cooperative of more than 750 sugar beet farmers in the Northwest.

He says crops resistant to Roundup, Monsanto's most popular weedkiller, saved his cooperative.

opening for the industry to sell more seeds and more pesticides. The latest seeds have been engineered for resistance to two weedkillers, with resistance to as many as five planned. That will also make it easier for farmers battling resistant weeds to spray a widening array of poisons sold by the same companies.

Growing resistance to Roundup is also reviving old, and contentious, chemicals. One is 2,4-D, an ingredient in Agent Orange, the infamous Vietnam War defoliant. Its potential risks have long divided scientists and have alarmed advocacy groups.

Another is dicamba. In Louisiana, Monsanto is spending nearly $1 billion to begin production of the chemical there. And even though Monsanto's version is not yet approved for use, the company is already selling seeds that are resistant to it — leading to reports that some farmers are damaging neighbors' crops by illegally spraying older versions of the toxin.

High-Tech Kernels

Two farmers, 4,000 miles apart, recently showed a visitor their corn seeds. The farmers, Bo Stone and Arnaud Rousseau, are sixth-generation tillers of the land. Both use seeds made by DuPont, the giant chemical company that is merging with Dow Chemical.

To the naked eye, the seeds looked identical. Inside, the differences are profound.

In Rowland, N.C., near the South Carolina border, Mr. Stone's seeds brim with genetically modified traits. They contain Roundup Ready, a Monsanto-made trait resistant to Roundup, as well as a gene made by Bayer that makes crops impervious to a second herbicide. A trait called Herculex I was developed by Dow and Pioneer, now part of DuPont, and attacks the guts of insect larvae. So does YieldGard, made by Monsanto.

Another big difference: the price tag. Mr. Rousseau's seeds cost about $85 for a 50,000-seed bag. Mr. Stone spends roughly $153 for the same amount of biotech seeds.

Genetic traits are not sold à la carte.

Mr. Stone, 45, has a master's degree in agriculture and listens to Prime Country radio in his Ford pickup. He has a test field where he tries out new seeds, looking for characteristics that he particularly values — like plants that stand well, without support.

"I'm choosing on yield capabilities and plant characteristics more than I am on G.M.O. traits" like bug and poison resistance, he said, underscoring a crucial point: Yield is still driven by breeding plants to bring out desirable traits, as it has been for thousands of years.

That said, Mr. Stone values genetic modifications to reduce his insecticide use (though he would welcome help with stink bugs, a troublesome pest for many farmers). And Roundup resistance in pigweed has emerged as a problem.

"No G.M. trait for us is a silver bullet," he said.

By contrast, at Mr. Rousseau's farm in Trocy-en-Multien, a village outside Paris, his corn has none of this engineering because the European Union bans most crops like these.

"The door is closed," says Mr. Rousseau, 42, who is vice president of one of France's many agricultural unions. His 840-acre farm was a site of World War I carnage in the Battle of the Marne.

As with Mr. Stone, Mr. Rousseau's yields have been increasing, though they go up and down depending on the year. Farm technology has also been transformative. "My grandfather had horses and cattle for cropping," Mr. Rousseau said. "I've got tractors with motors."

He wants access to the same technologies as his competitors across the Atlantic, and thinks G.M. crops could save time and money.

"Seen from Europe, when you speak with American farmers or Canadian farmers, we've got the feeling that it's easier," Mr. Rousseau said. "Maybe it's not right. I don't know, but it's our feeling."

Feeding the World

With the world's population expected to reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, Monsanto has long held out its products as a way "to help meet the food demands of these added billions," as it said in a 1995 statement. That remains an industry mantra.

"It's absolutely key that we keep innovating," said Kurt Boudonck, who manages Bayer's sprawling North Carolina greenhouses. "With the current production practices, we are not going to be able to feed that amount of people."

But a broad yield advantage has not emerged. The Times looked at regional data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, comparing main genetically modified crops in the United States and Canada with varieties grown in Western Europe, a grouping used by the agency that comprises seven nations, including the two largest agricultural producers, France and Germany.

For rapeseed, a variant of which is used to produce canola oil, The Times compared Western Europe with Canada, the largest producer, over three decades, including a period well before the introduction of genetically modified crops.

Despite rejecting genetically modified crops, Western Europe maintained a lead over Canada in yields. While that is partly because different varieties are grown in the two regions, the trend lines in the relative yields have not shifted in Canada's favor since the introduction of G.M. crops, the data shows.

For corn, The Times compared the United States with Western Europe. Over three decades, the trend lines between the two barely deviate. And sugar beets, a major source of sugar, have shown stronger yield growth recently in Western Europe than the United States, despite the dominance of genetically modified varieties over the last decade.

Jack Heinemann, a professor at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, did a pioneering 2013 study comparing trans-Atlantic yield trends, using United Nations data. Western Europe, he said, "hasn't been penalized in any way for not making genetic engineering one of its biotechnology choices."

Biotech executives suggested making narrower comparisons. Dr. Fraley of

an official at Bayer suggested Ohio and France. These comparisons can be favorable to the industry, while comparing other individual American states can be unfavorable.

Michael Owen, a weed scientist at Iowa State University, said that while the industry had long said G.M.O.s would "save the world," they still "haven't found the mythical yield gene."

Few New Markets

Battered by falling crop prices and consumer resistance that has made it hard to win over new markets, the agrochemical industry has been swept by buyouts. Bayer recently announced a deal to acquire Monsanto. And the state-owned China National Chemical Corporation has received American regulatory approval to acquire Syngenta, though Syngenta later warned the takeover could be delayed by scrutiny from European authorities.

The deals are aimed at creating giants even more adept at selling both seeds and chemicals. Already, a new generation of seeds is coming to market or in development. And they have grand titles. There is the Bayer Balance GT Soybean Performance System. Monsanto's Genuity SmartStax RIB Complete corn. Dow's PhytoGen with Enlist and WideStrike 3 Insect Protection.

In industry jargon, they are "stacked" with many different genetically modified traits. And there are more to come. Monsanto has said that the corn seed of 2025 will have 14 traits and allow farmers to spray five different kinds of herbicide.

Newer genetically modified crops claim to do many things, such as protecting against crop diseases and making food more nutritious. Some may be effective, some not. To the industry, shifting crucial crops like corn, soybeans, cotton and rapeseed almost entirely to genetically modified varieties in many parts of the world fulfills a genuine need. To critics, it is a marketing opportunity.

"G.M.O. acceptance is exceptionally low in Europe," said Liam Condon, the head of Bayer's crop science division, in an interview the day the Monsanto deal was announced. He added: "But there are many geographies around the world

market and the customers demand our technology."

Correction: November 2, 2016

A chart on Sunday with the continuation of an article about the unmet promises of genetically modified crops misstated the mode of action of Herculex I, a genetic trait developed by Dow AgroSciences and Pioneer. It breaks down the gut wall of insect larvae; it does not create a bacterium that does so.

A version of this article appears in print on October 30, 2016, on page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Doubts About a Promised Bounty.

Why Are Taxpayers Being Asked to Pay to Promote a Failed Ag Technology?

by Katherine Paul, Organic Consumers Association
November 3, 2016

On October 29 (2016), the New York Times ran a piece on how the biotech industry has failed to deliver on its promises for GMO crops. The article followed less than a month after the biotech industry asked congressional leaders for $3 million in taxpayer-provided funding to "educate" the public about biotechnology and agricultural production.

Congress should turn down this request for two reasons. First, the biotech and food industries should spend their own money to market their products. And second, Congress shouldn't use taxpayer money to promote what scientists and international organizations have said for years, and the latest investigation by the Times reveals, is a technology that not only doesn't live up it its hype, but is counterproductive to resolving the critical issues of global food sovereignty and global warming. As reported by Farm Futures, 56 groups, including biotech and food industry lobbying organizations, wrote a letter asking four members of the Ag Appropriations Committee to include $3 million in the 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act in order to "ensure key federal agencies responsible for the safety of our nation's food supply – the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – are able to more easily convey to the public science- and fact-based information about food."

The groups justify their request for consumers to foot the bill for industry's marketing campaign by stating that: "These benefits are passed on to consumers who reap the advantage of affordable food prices, greater access to nutritious food, an improved environment, a strengthened rural economy, and enhanced domestic and international food security."

In their letter, the groups claim "there is a tremendous amount of misinformation about agricultural biotechnology in the public domain." We would argue, and the Times investigation confirms, that much of that "misinformation" comes from industry itself, in the form of false promises. Specifically, as the Times reports, GMO crops have not led to higher yields, while they have led to greater, not reduced, use of pesticides.

That's not news to those who track issues of world hunger and the harm, to the environment and to human health, of higher and higher volumes of increasingly toxic pesticides.

The United Nations Human Rights Council is just one international organization that has reported on the failure of GMO crops to feed the world, and the fact that the only path toward global food security is agroecology, or regenerative agriculture. In its "Agriculture at the Crossroads" report, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) drew the same conclusions.

Next week, governments, scientists and activists will gather in Marrakech for the COP22 Climate Summit. Thanks to French agriculture officials, who launched the 4 per 1000 Soils for Food Security and Climate Initiative last year at the Paris Climate Summit, the COP22 agenda will include discussions about the potential for regenerative agriculture to draw down and re-sequester carbon in the soil.

This soil carbon sequestration strategy, recently hailed by climate scientist James Hansen, requires healthy soils in order to work, the kind of soils that can only be generated by regenerative agriculture

practices—not GMO monocultures.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's 2013 Trade and Environment Review estimates that the industrial food system generates 43-57 percent of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.

We must reduce fossil fuel emissions. But we also must draw down the legacy carbon already in the atmosphere. Regenerative agriculture practices provide our best hope for achieving that, while at the same time providing food and economic security to populations at risk.

Admittedly, $3 million is peanuts in the overall scheme of congressional spending bills—especially for an industry that, according to 2015 report, "has spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the past few years on stealth PR tactics and deployed over a dozen front groups to push coordinated messages to attack organic food, defend pesticides and the routine use of antibiotics, and promote GMOs — messages that are making their way, day after day, to the pages of the largest media outlets."

GMOs have been on the market for more than 20 years. Yet the number of hungry people in the U.S. is on the rise. Congress should allocate money to support the type of agriculture we know will lead to food security, at home and abroad, not to what has already proven a failure.

Katherine Paul is associate director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA). OCA's Regeneration International project team is attending the COP22 Climate Summit in Marrakech, Nov. 9-19.

Link to article:
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/business/gmo-promise-falls-short.html?_r=3

Historic International Monsanto Tribunal Begins in The Hague

Opening Press Conference, People's Assembly Mark First of Three-Day Event to Expose Monsanto's Crimes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 14, 2016

Contact:

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THE HAGUE, Netherlands—The organizers of the International Monsanto Tribunal and People's Assembly addressed international journalists today at an opening press conference preceding today's People's Assembly and the October 15-16 Tribunal.

"If global governments and courts won't rein in Monsanto and hold it accountable for its crimes, the people will," said Ronnie Cummins, international director of the Organic Consumers Association and member of the Tribunal organizing committee. "Monsanto's toxic products, toxic commodities and toxic monocultures are destroying human health and our soils, without which life on Earth is unsustainable."

"A patent of life and on seeds is a crime against farmers who are trapped in debt for costly patented seed," said Vandana Shiva, founder of Navdanya and member of the Tribunal organizing committee. "It is also a crime against nature. The claim that by adding a gene Monsanto is 'making' life violates the self-organizing, self-renewing capacity of seed. The crime is further aggravated by destroying biodiversity, and spreading genetic pollution through the introduction of GMOs."

The People's Assembly will conclude on October 16, World Food Day, with a global citizens pledge to transition to a healthy and regenerative, and socially and economically just and democratic global food and farming system.

The Monsanto Tribunal, supported by more than 1000 organizations worldwide, is an international civil society initiative to examine Monsanto's accountability for human rights violations, for crimes against humanity, and for ecocide. Eminent judges will hear testimonies from victims, and deliver an advisory opinion following procedures of the International Court of Justice. The People's Assembly provides opportunity for social movements to rally and plan for an alternative future.

Organizing groups behind the Monsanto Tribunal include the Organic Consumers Association, Navdanya, IFOAM Organics International, the Biovision Foundation and Regeneration International.

Regeneration International, a project of the Organic Consumers Association, is building a global network of farmers, scientists, businesses, activists, educators, journalists, governments and consumers who will promote and put into practice regenerative agriculture and land-use practices that: provide abundant, nutritious food; revive local economies; rebuild soil fertility and biodiversity; and restore climate stability by returning carbon to the soil, through the natural process of photosynthesis.

https://www.organicconsumers.org/press/historic-international-monsanto-tribunal-begins-hague

Monsanto Tribunal in The Hague 14-16th of October 2016

For an increasing number of people from around the world, Monsanto today is the symbol of industrial agriculture. This chemical-intensive form of production pollutes the environment, accelerates biodiversity loss, and massively contributes to global warming.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Monsanto, a US-based company, has developed a number of highly toxic products, which have permanently damaged the environment and caused illness or death for thousands of people. These products include:

- **PCBs** (polychlorinated biphenyl), one of the twelve Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) that affect human and animal fertility;
- **2,4,5 T** (2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid), a dioxin-containing component of the defoliant, Agent Orange, which was used by the US Army during the Vietnam War and continues to cause birth defects and cancer;
- **Lasso**, an herbicide that is now banned in Europe;
- and **RoundUp**, the most widely used herbicide in the world, and the source of the greatest health and

environmental scandal in modern history - this toxic herbicide is used in combination with genetically modified (GM) RoundUp Ready seeds in large-scale monocultures, primarily to produce soybeans, maize and rapeseed for animal feed and biofuels.

Monsanto promotes an agroindustrial model that contributes at least one third of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions; it is also largely responsible for the depletion of soil and water resources, species extinction and declining biodiversity, and the displacement of millions of small farmers worldwide. This is a model that threatens peoples' food sovereignty by patenting seeds and privatizing life.

According to its critics, Monsanto is able to ignore the human and environmental damage caused by its products and maintain its devastating activities through a strategy of systemic concealment: by lobbying regulatory agencies and governments, by resorting to lying and corruption, by financing fraudulent scientific studies, by pressuring independent scientists, by manipulating the press and media, etc. The history of Monsanto would thereby constitute a text-book case of impunity, benefiting transnational corporations and their executives, whose activities contribute to climate and biosphere crises and threaten the safety of the planet.

The Monsanto Tribunal, which will be held in The Hague from 14 to 16 October 2016, aims to assess these allegations made against Monsanto, and to evaluate the damages caused by this transnational company. The Tribunal will rely on the "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights" adopted at the UN in 2011. It will also assess potential criminal liability on the basis of the Rome Statute that created the International Criminal Court in The Hague in 2002. The Tribunal shall also assess the conduct of Monsanto as regards the crime of ecocide, which it has been proposed to include in international criminal law. It shall examine whether the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court in force since 2002 should be reformed, in order to include the crime of ecocide and to allow for the prosecution of individual and legal entities suspected of having committed this crime.

Aware of these planetary stakes, the initiators of the Monsanto Tribunal are appealing to civil society and to all citizens of the world to participate in financing this unique operation through **a big international crowdfunding campaign**.

Defending the safety of the planet, and the conditions of life itself, concerns us all. Only collective action can stop this machine of destruction!

http://www.monsanto-tribunal.org/why-a-tribunal

Successful Monsanto Tribunal and People's Assembly!
The hearings of the Monsanto Tribunal have been very impressive, and so was the People's Assembly. During the last two days the world was watching witnesses' testimonies, lawyers' pleas, and the first impressions of the judges. We had 750 participants in The Hague representing 30 nationalities from all over the world, thousands were following us online on the livestream and social media, and the Tribunal received a lot of press attention.

Both victims and experts thanked us for giving them a voice on this important international platform; and a very well documented voice in this new process to hold corporations accountable for their acts.

The chairwoman of the Tribunal, Judge Tulkens, expressed the importance of the Tribunal in an interview with the French newspaper, Le Monde:

"The questions of the access to water and to healthy food are old. Those are not new issues coming out of the mind of angry activists. Those issues, just like the right to a healthy environment are likely to become more important with climate change. It is our duty to set legal tools to face those issues. The Monsanto Tribunal is a step and a tool within this dynamic."

The Tribunal received quite a lot of media coverage. From French and German TV news programs to many newspapers and radio programs in various countries. See the links on our social media platforms (and later on the website).

Monsanto was invited to the Tribunal, but decided not to appear for their defense. We did get their attention though. They issued a statement in 5 languages saying that we are 'pushing' the wrong issues, since the real discussion is about feeding the world. Monsanto fails to see feeding the world in a safe way was exactly the topic of the Tribunal and of the discussion farmers, consumer movements, and their associated networks had in the parallel People's Assembly. Many eminent speakers stressed that Monsanto and agribusiness giants like them do not feed the world. Rather, they are involved in producing commodities, feed for animals, fuel for cars, and sugar for the food industry at a very high cost for human health and environment. This is production that feeds profit, not people. It's the small- and medium-scale farmers that are actually feeding the world.

This Tribunal and People's Assembly are about showing the tremendous costs of industrial farming for humans, for health, and for nature. They are also about standing up to Monsanto and their likes, and stopping them from poisoning our world and controlling our food supply. One way to do this is by showing the true cost of the current global food system, and the very real alternatives that exist.

Nnimmo Bassey at the opening said:

"Being an ambassador to this Tribunal is like being an ambassador to mother Earth. If mother Earth could speak, Monsanto ought to be in jail long before now. Food is a celebration, it is culture, it is life. This is a struggle not against one multinational corporation, it is a struggle for life, it is a struggle for liberty. A struggle to stop big companies from colonizing our food systems, colonizing our agriculture, holding mother Earth as a slave for their profits."

Please follow us on Facebook where many pictures and videos have already been posted. You can also see them if you have no Facebook yourself. In the coming weeks we will continue to release short interviews of the witnesses, experts and lawyers, as well as the speakers in the People's Assembly. We will also add all of this to our website, including all the hearings of the Tribunal and the written testimonies in different languages. Please be patient, we will keep you informed!

The judges are now thoroughly reviewing the evidence from legal briefs and witness testimonies to answer the six questions posed in the Tribunal's terms of reference. They will then present a legal advisory opinion, hopefully soon but if necessary next spring: we will supply logistic support, but the timing is up to them.

As Judge Tulkens said:

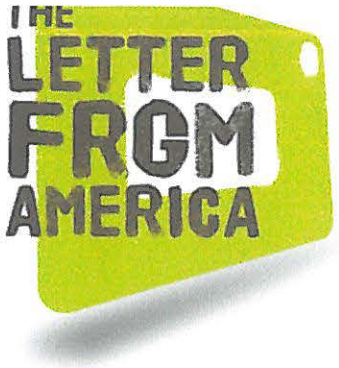
"We will try to deliver the legal opinion before December 10th, the International Day of human Rights. It will be addressed to Monsanto and to the United Nations. From this legal opinion, other jurisdictions can be involved and more judges will step in. We, as the judges [at the Monsanto Tribunal] have seen, heard, noted and deliberated. Chances are that the international law will take into consideration new issues such as the ones related to ecocide."

We would like to thank you and all the volunteers for your amazing support. This would not have been possible without you. Stay tuned, follow us on social media, show your support and share messages wherever and whenever you can. Ask friends to sign their support. Together we will put an end to the era of poisoning and exploiting the world and move onward to a system where we work with nature instead of waging a war against it.

http://www.monsanto-tribunal.org/main.php?obj_id=1039072492

(https://www.facebook.com/pages/Beyond-GM/262007693985135?ref=hl)

keyword search



(http://www.theletterfromamerica.org)

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