

# **CLEAR YOUR CALENDARS! VV PARTY ON MARCH 6 - INVITATIONS COMING SOON...**

## Veritable Vegetable's Produce Notes

### **GENETIC ENGINEERING IS NOT ONLY UNACCEPTABLE, BUT HAZARDOUS**

The following abbreviated Position Statement was excerpted from the Winter 1999 *The Voice of Demeter* newsletter. Demeter Association, Inc. is an independent non-profit corporation which certifies farms and processors in the US and Mexico according to international DEMETER standards of diodynamic farming.

**It is estimated that 35% of US corn and soybean crops grown in 1998 were derived from genetically engineered (GE) seed. With no requirement for segregation or labeling in place at this time, these GE crops have been mixed in the market stream and can be found in most corn and soy products currently available. Our main concerns with GE are as follows:**

- 1) Genetically engineered plant genes can cross with wild and domestic relatives, and over time can change the genetic makeup of some of the world's vegetation.
- 2) Insects will adapt to the built-in insecticide of new plant species. The pesticide most often engineered into plants is Bt (bacillus thuringiensis), a bacterium which has been the mainstay of organic pest control for many years. Beneficial insects will decline as they come into contact with new plants.
- 3) Engineered plants will contain insecticide over entire lifespans and beyond, through decay. This differs dramatically from applications of Bt which may only be effective for several hours.
- 4) Gene manipulation requires the use of a marker to determine the method's success. The marker most often used is an antibiotic resistant gene.
- 5) The purpose of GE is to develop plants tolerant to herbicides. Clearly this means more chemicals will be used on farms which will then mean more chemical pollution in our water supplies and residues in the plants we eat.
- 6) GE plants will contain DNA from undisclosed and non-food sources. Most such crops contain material from organisms which have never been part of the human diet.
- 7) Biotech companies can now breed sterility into their seeds thanks to a USDA patent. This will mean that farmers must purchase each year's seed from such companies rather than saving their own.
- 8) Adequate testing is not being done on GE. Biotech companies are rushing new product to market without publicizing the negative results obtained from limited testing.
- 9) A widely used common seed supply can spell disaster when a pest penetrates the plant's weakness. The more narrow the crop diversity, the more susceptible is the world to crop failure and hunger.
- 10) There are no long term benefits to humanity as a result of genetic engineering. Rather, we have seen crop failure from use of GE seed, decreased life span for cows injected with bovine growth hormone, and high concentration of Roundup herbicide in Roundup resistant soybeans.
- 11) The effects of introducing GE crops to the environment are irreversible.
- 12) Biotech companies promoting this technology apparently are not interested in the environmental and human impact of their innovation.

**Consumers need to step up to the plate...in this case the dinner plate. More wakefulness and more involvement of consumers to demand full disclosure in labeling would at least give us a choice in how we use our food dollars.**

**For more information, or the entire text of this article call 315-364-5617 or send email to [demeter@baldcom.net](mailto:demeter@baldcom.net)**

