

VICFA Voice

Our Mission: To promote and preserve unregulated direct farmer-to-consumer trade that fosters availability of locally grown or home-produced food products

**Photos by Anika Kyronseppa-Edrei:
Monsanto Protests, Richmond VA**

June 2013

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Why Southern Exposure Seed Exchange Fights Back Against Monsanto and GMO's

By Ira Wallace



Most VICFA members know that Southern Exposure has joined 9 other members of the Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association and over 80 total plaintiffs in

taking a stand for the protection of organic seed thru the ant-GMO lawsuit OSGATA et al v Monsanto. Plaintiffs include agricultural organizations, seed companies and farmers. This landmark lawsuit, filed on March 29, 2012 by the Public Patent Foundation in US District Court in New York, asks the courts to declare that we plaintiffs will not be held liable if we become contaminated by Monsanto's GMO genes and to declare Monsanto's GMO patents invalid due to a lack of usefulness to society. The lawsuit was dismissed by New York Judge Buchwald and now we are waiting for a judgment on our appeal to the US Circuit Court.

Our lawsuit is just one of the many ways that Southern Exposure is fighting against the ever increasing threat to the availability of pure organic seed posed by the current patent laws and the concentration of ownership of seed genetics. In less than 15 years, many commodity crop farmers went from saving and replanting a portion of their harvest to largely buying new seed each year. This has increased farmers' dependence on a highly consolidated and narrowly focused seed industry. The transition has

GMO, Which Way Should We Go?

By Suzi Croes

As an advocacy group for food freedom and direct unregulated farm to consumer sales, VICFA, we run into many issues relating to farming. Genetically Modified food is a one that touches me from both sides, as a consumer and a farmer. Should VICFA take a public position on the GMO issue?

Early in my career as a mom I knew that nutrition was important for the health of my family. When my eldest child started showing symptoms of metabolic imbalance I knew that something was wrong with the current health protocol my pediatrician had set me on. I was lucky enough to have been introduced to the Weston Price Foundation. Through them I began learning about traditional whole foods like raw milk and beef from grass fed cows, pastured chickens and eggs, fermented foods and more. In my local market I began to look for these food stuffs and found that many were illegal for purchase. Through the organization I also learned about genetically modified foods and how pervasive they were in our industrialized food system, making direct purchasing from the farm a more important resource. Had I not been educated about these issues I might still be eating those GMO laden foods and not been the wiser. Sadly, many other unaware families are doing just that.

Today I farm in order to get the foods that are still illegal for direct purchase and we rarely eat GM foods, buying organic for the things we do not produce. While farming does afford me the foods that I desire it does not alleviate the influence of GM foods in my life. I first started out with dairy goats for milk and found that commercial feed available for most small growers contains GM grains. Though not all is, the supplemental feeds like sugar beet pulp and alfalfa I like to feed my herd for better nutrition have also been added to the growing list of GMO's. There is no disclosure of GM

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60% of all retail corn and soybean seeds sold in the US comes from two large chemical companies is another factor that makes people here at Southern Exposure concerned for the future.

Last year, Monsanto spent nearly \$6 million on lobbying, and their payoff was the “Monsanto Protection Act,” which was written anonymously, passed in secret, and allows Monsanto to keep selling genetically engineered seeds even if a federal court says they may pose a health risk.



We have experienced the losses that come with the current convoluted patent laws that favor the large corporations that hold patents when one of the lots of corn produced by one of our growers tested positive for GMO content making the seed unusable. Since the farmer had taken every precaution including checking on the plantings of neighbors for a mile around. We paid the farmer and took the loss. With the laws the way they are there is no recourse since the responsibility for controlling GMO seed is not on the patent holder but on the organic and non-GMO farmer. This is why we think challenging Monsanto in court, in the media and marching with Millions against Monsanto is a priority for all of us here at Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and anyone else who values freedom for farmers and clean food free of

GMO contamination. ■

VICFA VOICE thanks Southern Exposure Seed Exchange for their contribution to this newsletter: It is their mission to conserve genetic resource to ensure that people retain control of their food supply and also gardeners the option of saving their own seeds. For more information, visit <http://www.southernexposure.com>.

Resources:

- *The Organic and Non-GMO Report* - A monthly publication focusing on the threats posed by genetically engineered crops and foods. They also publish an annual directory, The Non-GMO Sourcebook, that lists global suppliers of non-GMO and organic seed, grains, food ingredients, and food products.
- *Center for Food Safety (also a plaintiff)* - leading landmark lawsuits challenging genetically engineered alfalfa, fish and sugar beets.
- *The Organic Seed Alliance* - supports the ethical development and stewardship of seed.
- "Lobbying Spending Database - Monsanto Co, 2013," OpenSecrets.org, accessed May 21, 2013
- <http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=D000000055>
- "How the Monsanto Protection Act snuck into law," Salon, March 27, 2013
- <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=290195&id=68663-23757677-dyEyJUX&t=5>
- "Monsanto Protection Act 2.0" Would Ban GMO-Labeling Laws At State Level," International Business Times, May 20, 2013
- <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=290225&id=68663-23757677-dyEyJUX&t=6>
- The Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association (OSGATA), lead plaintiff in the case, posts news about the lawsuit.
- www.SouthernExposure.com: "Saving the Past for the Future"; Southern Exposure Seed Exchange; Cell: 540-894-1470; festival@southernexposure.com; www.HeritageHarvestFestival.com

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ingredients. The feed store guy doesn't know (sometimes even what a GMO is). There really is no way of knowing which are or aren't unless you go organic or you know the farmer and buy directly. (Are you catching on to a common thread here?) I am fortunate to be able to buy from feed producer's that don't use GM grains, but will that last? Seed scarcity for non GM corn seeds are not always available to the traditional farmer that may not be aware of organic options and cross contamination of GM seeds are showing up all on their own.

The GM issue is here to stay and effects all of us, consumers and farmers worldwide. So, here at VICFA, where do we want to stand? ■

From the Contributing Photographer:

"March Against Monsanto"
Protest in Richmond, VA. 2013
by Anika Kyronseppa-Edrei

Many of you have already read about our membership with OSGATA and the current lawsuit local farmers are filing against Monsanto. It is an inarguable fact that the people, especially local organic farmers, deserve the right to choose between GMO & non-GMO products. We are proud to be a part of the movement to support transparent labeling.

"March against Monsanto" protests were held in 52 countries and 436 cities on May 25th, and many of us from Southern Exposure were very happy to attend the local protest in Richmond, VA. (Many members took the trip down to DC, too!)

We were surprised at the turnout for the event. The crowd grew and grew as the protest wore on. We handed out certified organic dark green zucchini to passersby and protesters, and received many thanks from local gardeners & farmers for our efforts to maintain the quality of our seed. There was not an "average" protester during the Richmond march--organic farmers, local gardeners, families and children all attended. This is a movement people from all areas of life can fight for. No one is exempt from the right to healthy, organic food. ■

What is GMO? Agricultural Crops That Have a Risk of Being GMO

GMOs, or “genetically modified organisms,” are plants or animals created through the gene splicing techniques of biotechnology (also called genetic engineering, or GE). This experimental technology merges DNA from different species, creating unstable combinations of plant, animal, bacterial and viral genes that cannot occur in nature or in traditional crossbreeding.

For consumers, it can be difficult to stay up-to-date on food ingredients that are at-risk of being genetically modified, as the list of at-risk agricultural ingredients is frequently changing. As part of the Non-GMO Project’s commitment to informed consumer choice, we work diligently to maintain an accurate list of risk ingredients.

Agricultural products are segmented into two groups: (1) those that are high-risk of being GMO because they are currently in commercial production, and (2) those that have a monitored risk because suspected or known incidents of contamination have occurred and/or the crops have genetically modified relatives in commercial production with which cross-pollination (and consequently contamination) is possible. For more information on the Non-GMO Project’s testing and verification of risk ingredients and processed foods, please see the Non-GMO Project Standard.

High-Risk Crops (in commercial production; ingredients derived from these must be tested every time prior to use in Non-GMO Project Verified products (as of December 2011):

- Alfalfa (first planting 2011)
- Canola (approx. 90% of U.S. crop)
- Corn (approx. 88% of U.S. crop in 2011)
- Cotton (approx. 90% of U.S. crop in 2011)
- Papaya (most of Hawaiian crop; approximately 988 acres)
- Soy (approx. 94% of U.S. crop in 2011)
- Sugar Beets (approx. 95% of U.S. crop in 2010)
- Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash (approx. 25,000 acres)

ALSO high-risk: animal products (milk, meat, eggs, honey, etc.) because of contamination in feed.

Monitored Crops (those for which suspected or known incidents of contamination have occurred, and those crops which have genetically modified relatives in commercial production with which cross-pollination is possible; we test regularly to assess risk, and move to “High-Risk” category for ongoing testing if we see contamination):

- Beta vulgaris (e.g., chard, table beets)
- Brassica napa (e.g., rutabaga, Siberian kale)
- Brassica rapa (e.g., bok choy, mizuna, Chinese cabbage, turnip, rapini, tatsoi)
- Cucurbita (acorn squash, delicata squash, patty pan)

- Flax
- Rice
- Wheat

The Non-GMO Project, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, offers North America’s only third party verification and labeling for non-GMO (genetically modified organism) food and products. <http://www.nongmoproject.org>

Common Ingredients Derived from GMO Risk Crops

Amino Acids, Aspartame, Ascorbic Acid, Sodium Ascorbate, Vitamin C, Citric Acid, Sodium Citrate, Ethanol, Flavorings (“natural” and “artificial”), High-Fructose Corn Syrup, Hydrolyzed



Vegetable Protein, Lactic Acid, Maltodextrins, Molasses, Monosodium Glutamate, Sucrose, Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP), Xanthan Gum, Vitamins, Yeast Products.

You may also be wondering about...

- **Tomatoes:** In 1994, genetically modified Flavr Savr tomatoes became the first commercially produced GMOs. They were brought out of production just a few years later, in 1997, due to problems with flavor and ability to hold up in shipping. There are no genetically engineered tomatoes in commercial production, and tomatoes are considered “low-risk” by the Non-GMO Project Standard.
- **Potatoes:** Genetically modified NewLeaf potatoes were introduced by Monsanto in 1996. Due to consumer rejection by several fast-food chains and chip makers, the product was never successful and was discontinued in the spring of 2001. There are no genetically engineered potatoes in commercial production, and potatoes are considered “low-risk” by the Non-GMO Project Standard.
- **Salmon:** A company called AquaBounty is currently petitioning the FDA to approve its genetically engineered variety of salmon, which has met with fierce consumer resistance.
- **Pigs:** A genetically engineered variety of pig, called Enviropig was developed by scientists at the University of Guelph, with research starting in 1995 and government approval sought beginning in 2009. In 2012 the University announced an end to the Enviropig program, and the pigs themselves were euthanized in June 2012. ■

2013 Farm Food Voices - UPDATE

When: August 8th, Thursday

Time: 3:00 - 9:00 PM

Where: Monticello High School
Charlottesville, VA

What: Bringing farmers, consumers and vendors together for better understanding of the local food movement.

Why to inform:

1. what are the consumers needs, desires
2. What are the farmers needs, desires
3. How can vendors facilitate the above

How Speakers:

1. Joel Salatin, master farmer
2. Ivana Kajda, consumer advocate
3. Lisa Reeder, local food hub representative
4. Booths representing vendors, farmers, restaurants, and consumer information advocates.

Booths still available at \$25 for a 8' space.

Families and quests may bring a dish or 2 for sharing.

A \$25 donation would be very welcome.

Door prizes galore.

CONTACT:

Richard Bean
1407 Hunting Lodge Rd.
Wingina, Va. 24599
farmily1@gmail.com
434.263.8704

Update on Vernon Hershberger Vernon Hershberger-Acquitted on Three out of Four Charges

In Wisconsin, a Sauk County jury acquitted dairy farmer Vernon Hershberger on three of four criminal charges. Hershberger was charged with violating the Wisconsin food and dairy code, for operating a farm store without a retail food establishment permit, operating a dairy farm without a milk producer license and operation of a dairy plant facility without a license, and violating a hold order that the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) officials had placed on food in his on-farm-store during a raid June 2012.

Less than a week after the jury acquitted him of three criminal charges, Eric Defort and Phillip Ferris, attorneys for the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), move to have the judge revoke the terms of the bond and jail Vernon Hershberger. In January 2012 Vernon Hershberger was arraigned at the Sauk County Courthouse on four criminal misdemeanor charges for violations of the state food and dairy code; after appearing before Judge Guy Reynolds, he was released on a \$500 bond with the bond containing conditions he was not to violate.

In March 2012, Defort and Ferris sent a letter to judge Guy Reynolds requesting a revocation of Vernon Hershberger's release order, based on the state's contention that Hershberger was violating terms of the release. The judge, in a court hearing in Baraboo, refused to hear the request, telling the prosecutors that he only responded to motions, not to letters. The prosecutors never followed up with a motion . . . until more than 14 months later. The motion was filed the morning of Friday, May 31, 2013.

The state filed its motion shortly after a Capital Times online article on Vernon Hershberger posted May 29. The motion claims "the article reflects that Hershberger admits that he violated the bail

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conditions ‘all along.’ The main conditions under the terms of Hershberger’s release were that he not sell food without a retail food establishment license, manufacture or process dairy products without a dairy plant license, nor sell or distribute milk produced on his farm without a

milk producer license. The jury acquitted Hershberger on charges that he failed to have these licenses. Hershberger was convicted on a fourth charge of violating a hold order. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) initially targeted Hershberger for supplying a private buying club with fresh milk and other farm products.

“This action by DATCP is disappointing because we had hoped that the verdict would trigger a re-evaluation at DATCP of its approach to enforcement in the agricultural community. The verdict offered an opportunity to open dialogue and a badly needed mending of the damaged relationship between the Department and family farms. It is unfortunate that the government has instead chosen to pursue more of the same: expensive, heavy-handed enforcement that further erodes trust of the community,” stated Hershberger’s attorney, Elizabeth Rich.

On June 3 at 1:00 p.m. there will be a telephone conference to set a date for sentencing on the hold order conviction. At that time DOJ will request a revocation of the January 2012 order releasing Hershberger.

The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund defends the rights and broadens the freedoms of family farms and artisan food producers while protecting consumer access to raw milk and nutrient-dense foods. Those concerned can support the FTCLDF, a U.S. based 501(c)(4) nonprofit, by joining or donating online at farmtoconsumer.org or by calling 703-208-FARM (3276).

Farm Food Freedom Coalition wants to ensure that America’s treasures, our independent farms and ranches, are able to thrive. We aim to preserve our agricultural heritage and the future availability of traditional, farm fresh foods. Americans want and deserve the freedom to choose natural, unprocessed foods for generations to come. Visit farmfoodfreedom.org ■

Photograph reproduced by permission from the Farm Food Freedom Coalition: 301-807-5063, lizreitzig@gmail.com



STOCK PHOTO

GMOs OPEN DISCUSSION

Join us at our Annual Meeting to discuss whether or not VICFA, as an organization, should take an official position concerning GMOs.



Join us for our Annual Meeting

VICFA will be voting on whether or not to make a formal position concerning GMOs. We want to know what you think! Come join us!

Be sure to make plans to join us for our
VICFA Annual Meeting:
June 9, 2013 at Polyface Farm
in Swope, VA.

1:00 PM

Hosted by Joel & Teresa Salatin

DIRECTIONS:

From I-81 take Exit 220 (Puts you on 262)

Take Middlebrook Ave/252 Exit

Follow this to Stop sign.

Turn LEFT onto Middlebrook Road (252)

Turn RIGHT onto Cedar Green Road (693)

Turn LEFT onto Hebron Road. (703)

Go about a mile, you will see a brick church on your right.

Turn LEFT onto Edson Creek Road (708)

Go ½ mile

Turn RIGHT onto Glebe School Road (708)(this appears to be a Y,
stay right)

Stay right at 2nd Y. Go about 4 miles or so total

Turn RIGHT onto Trimbles Mill Road

Go ¼ mile to first left

Turn LEFT onto Shuey Road (713)(this will be gravel)

Follow for exactly 1 mile

Turn RIGHT at Polyface Farm sign (Pure Meadows Lane)



JUNE 9, 2013 **VICFA ANNUAL MEETING**



VICFA Notes

The June **Annual Meeting**
will be held in
Swoope, VA on June 9, 2013
at **1:00 pm**

VICFA would like to extend our appreciation to our host for this month's meeting. Thank you to Joel and Teresa Salatin!

NOTE: At this meeting, we will be taking a vote as to whether or not VICFA, as an organization, should form an official group-wide position concerning the topic of GMOs.

We will share in a potluck lunch at **1:00 pm**, followed by our general business meeting from 2:00 - 4:00 pm. VICFA membership meetings are open to the public. Please bring a dish and a big helping of enthusiasm to share. Broaden our reach - invite a friend or neighbor to join you.

Sunday, June 9, 2013 at 1:00 PM
hosted by Joel and Teresa Salatin of Polyface Farms
Swoope, VA

DIRECTIONS:

From I-81 take Exit 220 (Puts you on 262): Take Middlebrook Ave/252 Exit. Follow this to Stop sign. Turn **LEFT** onto Middlebrook Road (252). Turn **RIGHT** onto Cedar Green Road (693). Turn **LEFT** onto Hebron Road. (703). Go about a mile, you will see a brick church on your right. Turn **LEFT** onto Edson Creek Road (708). Go ½ mile Turn **RIGHT** onto Glebe School Road (708) (this appears to be a Y, stay right). Stay right at 2nd Y. Go about 4 miles or so total. Turn **RIGHT** onto Trimble Mill Road. Go ¼ mile to first left. Turn **LEFT** onto Shuey Road (713)(this will be gravel). Follow for exactly 1 mile. Turn **RIGHT** at Polyface Farm sign (Pure Meadows Lane).

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VICFA

PO Box 6838

Charlottesville, VA 22906

VICFA

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President, Wayne Bolton

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Secretary, Christine Solem

Editorial Review: Suzi Croes

Proof Reader: Susan Verbeeck and Shannon Sankar

Contributing Columnist: Ira Wallace, Suzi Croes,
and Richard Bean. PHOTOS: Anika Kyronseppa-Edrei

Designer: Shannon Sankar

Members At Large: Richard Altice, Suzi Croes,
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Website: www.VICFA.org

E-group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VICFA>.

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Share this newsletter with a friend - encourage others to join VICFA!

Annual membership is \$25.00.

Please make check payable to VICFA and send to PO Box 6838, Charlottesville, VA 22906.

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County _____ Congressional District _____

*Phone (_____) _____ - _____

E-mail _____

Website _____

Producers, please list the products that you sell:

*Do you want to be listed in the Membership Directory? Yes No

Note. Your directory listing will contain all of the above information unless you indicate otherwise below.

How did you hear about VICFA?

Comments: