

Date: Sun, 21 Apr 2013 09:40:03 -0400
To: "paedc@aol.com" <paedc@aol.com>
From: "Alice Jay - Avaaz.org" <avaaz@avaaz.org>
Subject: Break Monsanto's grip

Dear Avaazers,

One mega-company is gradually taking over our global food supply, poisoning our politics and putting the planet's food future in serious danger. To stop it we need to expose and break up Monsanto's worldwide grip.

Monsanto, the chemical giant that gave us poisons like Agent Orange and DDT, has a super-profitable racket. Step 1: Develop pesticides and genetically modified (GM) seeds designed to resist them, patent the seeds, prohibit farmers from replanting their seeds year to year, then send undercover agents out to investigate and sue farmers who don't comply. Step 2: Spend millions lobbying government officials and contributing to political campaigns, get former Monsanto bigwigs into top government jobs, and then work with them to weaken regulations and push Monsanto goods into markets across the world.

As long as US law allows corporations to spend unlimited sums to influence policy, they can often buy the laws they want. Last year, Monsanto and biotech giants spent a whopping \$45m to kill a ballot initiative that would have labelled GMO products just in California, despite 82 percent of Americans wanting to know if they are buying GM. And just this month, the company helped ram through the "Monsanto Protection Act," that blocks courts from stopping the sale of a product even if they've been wrongly approved by the government.

Monsanto's power in the US gives them a launch pad to dominate across the world. But brave farmers and activists from the EU, to Brazil, to India and Canada are resisting and starting to win.

We're at a global tipping point. If enough of us pledge just \$4 now, we can join forces to break Monsanto's grip on our politics and our food and help stop the corporate capture of our governments. Avaaz will only process the pledges if we get enough to make a real difference:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stop_monsanto_loc/?bAfBadb&v=24353

Monsanto is driving an industrial farming takeover -- trampling small farmers and small businesses as vast 'monoculture' farms of single crops leech the land of nutrients, diminish genetic diversity, and create dependency on fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals. The irony is, it's not clear that the decimation of natural, sustainable farming has brought any boom in crop yields. Just more profit for the corporations. Our governments should step in, but Monsanto's lobbying obstructs them.

Monsanto's near monopoly is breath-taking, with patent rights over 96% of the GM seeds planted in the US. And despite concerns about health and safety, the same patents allow Monsanto to prevent any farmer or scientist from testing their seeds! Still, a few countries have banned or restricted Monsanto products.

They claim their products cost less, but often farmers are lured into multi-year contracts, then seed prices rise, and they have buy new seed each season and use more herbicides to keep out 'superweeds'. **In India, the situation is so dire that one cotton area has been called 'the suicide belt', as tens of thousands of the poorest farmers have taken their lives to escape crippling debt.**



One mega-company is gradually taking over our food supply -- putting the planet's food future in serious danger. But we can turn the tide on Monsanto and other companies that push through policies that prioritise their profits over the public good. **Pledge \$4 now to help stop this dangerous domination of our politics and our food:**

Pledge now ▶

But farmers and scientists are also fighting back – and winning. One group in India has helped win three patent battles against the corporations, and in Brazil five million farmers sued Monsanto for unfair collection of royalties, and won a \$2 billion payout! Scientists are campaigning for sustainable agriculture models, and just last week 1.5 million of us joined the fight against non-GM patents in the EU.

Only a massive, global, united force can stand up to Monsanto and the corporate capture of our governments. Let's expose this dominance of our democracies, help farmers speak out, challenge unjust laws and patents, and go head to head with the corporate lobbies. **Pledge \$4 to support action now:**

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stop_monsanto_loc/?bAfBadb&v=24353

We are running out of time. As we confront massive environmental, climate and food crises, we need sustainable agriculture and innovation, but that is best done by multiple farmers and scientists who know what works best in different ecosystems, rather than one monolith driven by their own profit, taking control our food future.

This corporate Goliath is increasing in power across our world. But if our 21 million strong community stands together, we have a chance. Avaaz members have repeatedly stood up against the world's biggest bullies, and won. Now it is time for us to go big to save our policies from special interests, protect our food supply, and get justice for poor farmers.

With hope and determination,

Alice, Oli, Joseph, Ricken, Pascal, Chris, Michelle, Emily, and the whole Avaaz team

MORE INFORMATION

Seeds of discontent (Texas Observer):

<http://www.texasobserver.org/seeds-of-discontent/>

Monsanto sued small farmers to protect seed patents, report says (The Guardian):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/feb/12/monsanto-sues-farmers-seed-patents>

Political contribution disclosures (Monsanto):

<http://www.monsanto.com/whoweare/Pages/political-disclosures.aspx>

The Real Monsanto Protection Act: How The GMO Giant Corrupts Regulators And Consolidates Its Power (ThinkProgress)

:
<http://thinkprogress.org/health/2013/04/10/1832621/monsanto-protection-act-power/>

Monsanto Protection Act put GM companies above the federal courts (The Guardian):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2013/apr/04/monsanto-protection-act-gm>

Biodiversity for food and agriculture (UN Food and Agriculture Organization):

<http://www.fao.org/sd/EPdirect/EPRe0040.htm>

Monsanto's harvest of fear (Vanity Fair):

<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/05/monsanto200805>

Wikileaks shows US pushes GM on EU (The Guardian):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/03/wikileaks-us-eu-gm-crops>

USDA Greenlights Monsanto's Utterly Useless New GMO Corn (Mother Jones):

<http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2012/01/monsanto-gmo-drought-tolerant-corn>

Crop Scientists Say Biotechnology Seed Companies Are Thwarting Research (New York Times):

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/20/business/20crop.html?_r=0

Additional sources (Avaaz):

http://www.avaaz.org/en/stop_monsanto_sources/

Avaaz.org is a 21-million-person global campaign network that works to ensure that the views and values of the world's people shape global decision-making. ("Avaaz" means "voice" or "song" in many languages.) Avaaz members live in every nation of the world; our team is spread across 18 countries on 6 continents and operates in 17 languages. Learn about some of Avaaz's biggest campaigns [here](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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