

January 12, 2012

CT NOFA's Plaintiff Statement in the Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association et al. v. Monsanto.

The Connecticut chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (CT NOFA) was founded with three significant parts to our mission: strengthening the practices of ecologically sound farming and gardening, the development of local sustainable agriculture and giving consumers increased access to safe and healthy food. CT NOFA is a growing community of farmers, gardeners, land care professionals, businesses and consumers that encourages a healthy relationship to the natural world.

As an advocate for organic growers in the state of Connecticut, CT NOFA seeks to protect our farmers if their crops become contaminated with genetically modified foods. To define unwanted genetic contamination of non-GMO or organic crops as patent infringement threatens organic growing, local agriculture, and the consumer's right to choose between organic and genetically modified foods.

Ecologically sound farming and gardening



Genetically modified organisms have proven to be threatening to both wild and agricultural plant populations. Genetically modified genes have contaminated wild populations of canola and now transgenic canola grows independently around the country. One of the strains is resistant to Monsanto's Roundup herbicide while the other is resistant to Bayer Crop Science's Liberty herbicide.ⁱ "Round-Up Ready" and other herbicide-ready crops

have played a large role in increased use of herbicides – with an increase of 383 million

pounds more used in the US in 2008 than were applied in 1996. This use of herbicides has resulted in the development of super weeds, which can cause crop damage to conventional and organic crops as well as natural ecosystems. The US is fighting 13 different super weed species in 73 different locations.ⁱⁱ There are also reports of GM-resistant pests; rootworms are now able to eat Bt corn even though it was specifically modified to be poisonous to rootworms. This could very well be the first report of many on super-pests.ⁱⁱⁱ Contamination of organic and non-GMO crops will contribute to the evolution of more pesticide-resistant pests and herbicide-resistant weeds which harm a farmer's right to choose to grow organically. Organic practices are designed to respond to natural conditions and the introduction of super-weeds and super-pests are unnatural challenges that organic farming is not as able to manage.

Development of local, sustainable agriculture

A decentralized food system has been cited as a way to stimulate the economy, stabilize the food supply, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and improve the nutritional quality of consumers' diets. Farmers, environmentalists, policy makers, food providers and public health advocates have agreed on the value of local food production.



Despite the social value of local farming, small farmers are financially constrained and strive to break even their first few years of farming. The added financial risk associated with patent infringement for GMO-contamination make small-scale agriculture even less viable.

Giving consumers increased access to safe and healthy food

There are grave concerns about the potential health threats for people and animals eating genetically modified crops including: organ failure in test mice^{iv}, a pathogen thought to cause livestock infertility and miscarriages linked to the use of Roundup Ready Corn or the increased usage of roundup.^v While these concerns are being researched, consumers have the right to choose sustainable, organic and non-GMO foods. The local farmers that provide these products require legal protection.



Local, small-scale agriculture is strongly supported by Connecticut consumers. The "Connecticut Grown" label is taken seriously by customers, and the number of farmers' markets in Connecticut has grown dramatically in the past several years. Our members are concerned that their food has been grown sustainably and safely, and for most this means non-GMO production. GMO contamination harms this local food system that Connecticut is carefully nourishing.

ⁱ Gilbert, Natasha. "GM Crop Escapes into the American Wild : Nature News." *Nature Publishing Group : Science Journals, Jobs, and Information*. Nature, 6 Aug. 2010. Web. 29 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100806/full/news.2010.393.html>>.

ⁱⁱ Sirinathsinghji, Eva. "Monsanto Defeated by Roundup Resistant Weeds." *The Institute of Science In Society*. 28 Nov. 2011. Web. 29 Dec. 2011. <http://www.institutefor.org.uk/Monsanto_defeated_by_herbicide_resistant_superweeds.php>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Killman, Scott. "Monsanto Corn Under Attack by Superbug - WSJ.com." *The Wall Street Journal*. 29 Aug. 2011. Web. 29 Dec. 2011. <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904009304576532742267732046.html>>.

^{iv} Goldstein, Katherine, and Gazelle Emami. "Monsanto's GMO Corn Linked To Organ Failure, Study Reveals." *The Huffington Post*. 25 May 2011. Web. 29 Dec. 2011. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/01/12/monsantos-gmo-corn-linked_n_420365.html?mid=56465>.

^v "Scientist Warns of Dire Consequences with Widespread Use of Glyphosate." *The Organic & Non-GMO Report*. May 2010. Web. 29 Dec. 2011. <http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/may10/consequenceso_widespread_glyphosate_use.php>.