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## Resources



## Farmer becomes disillusioned with GMOs, switches to non-GMO

By [Ken Roseboro](#)  
Published: July 21, 2012

Category: [Non-GMO Farmer Profiles](#)

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Wendel Lutz

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*Weed resistance to Roundup, high seed costs, and doubts about GMO safety spur switch to non-GMO*

Wendel Lutz hardly qualifies as an anti-GMO activist. As a conventional corn and soybean farmer is nearly a polar opposite of an environmentalist. Yet, he shares some views with opponents of genetically modified foods based on his experience growing GM crops.

Lutz has been farming since 1979, producing corn and soybeans on about 500 acres in Dewey, Illinois. He is also a District 11 director for the Illinois Soybean Association and a member of the American Soybean Association.

### Increasing Roundup applications

Lutz started growing Roundup Ready (RR) GM corn and soybeans in 2006 after seeing his neighbors effectively control weeds.

In his first year growing RR crops, he says, "I had nice clean beans" with no weed problems.

But in his second year, he started seeing problems. "We went from a 32 ounce formulation (with Roundup) to 36 ounces," Lutz says. "As time went on we were upping the rates," he says.

Last year, Lutz grew Monsanto's Roundup Ready 2 Yield soybeans, but they didn't increase yields as promised. "They were my worst soybeans," he says.

On top of that, weeds became resistant to Roundup, which was confirmed by lab tests on weed samples he submitted.

### "I might as well go non-GMO"

Based on his bad experience with the more expensive GM seeds, Lutz decided to produce non-GMO this year. He planted non-GMO soybean seed varieties from Schillinger/eMerge Genetics and joined a non-GMO soybean program organized by Premier Cooperative that encompasses 26,000 acres. He is earning a \$1.90 per bushel premium for growing the non-GMO soybeans and can deliver the soybeans to a local grain elevator at harvest, which offers convenience.

Lutz has also grown a food-grade white, non-GMO corn although he says this a bad year for corn because of drought. "This is the third rotten year of corn. This can't go on. We have to have more crop diversity," he says.

Lutz believes GMOs aren't the answer, comparing them to fancy options on a car. "If you don't have a good engine, it still won't work. You have to have good genetics. I don't see the benefits (of GMOs)."

### "Let's see what the truth is"

He is also concerned about the availability of good corn inbreds, which produce corn hybrids, for non-GMO production. "I don't have the variety of genetics to choose from that farmers who buy GM corn do."

Lutz also opposes Monsanto's patents on seeds. "Isn't that slavery? Didn't we fight a war over that?" he asks.

He supports GM food labeling, asking "why not put it on there to expose a little

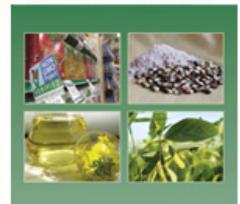
## This Month's News

- ▶ Farm Bill "riders" aim to eliminate GM crop safeguards
- ▶ Farmer becomes disillusioned with GMOs, switches to non-GMO
- ▶ Arkansas could become leader in non-GMO soybeans
- ▶ Genetic engineers document why GM foods are dangerous

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light?"

Most importantly, he wonders if GM foods are safe and wants scientists to find out. "I want to know what the truth is. Are we poisoning ourselves and the land? By the time we know there is a problem, how much damage will be done to the gene pool and our health? Let's see both sides of the debate and see what the truth is."

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