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PERVERTED SCIENCE -- THE MANIPULATION OF GM RESEARCH

How "inconvenient" GM research is stifled, starved, marginalized and patronized

Brian John GM Free Cymru

Over the last decade there have been many instances of lies, deception, corruption and scientific fraud in the field GM research which have caused good scientists to despair (and sometimes to lose their jobs) and which have brought shame to science generally (1). Results are blatantly doctored or manipulated (2); "maverick" scientists who uncover uncomfortable things in their field or laboratory experiments are systematically vilified by GM industry "hitmen" and even by august bodies like the Royal Society (3); supplies of GM reference or research materials are refused to those who are not "trusted" by the multinationals (4); corporations like Monsanto, Syngenta and Bayer are merciless in their manipulation of a servile EC, and know that they will not be punished no matter what they do (5); and inconvenient research results owned by the GM corporations are simply hidden away, with research teams forbidden to report them even to peer groups (6). In three celebrated recent cases, centred upon maize MON863, maize Bt10 and LLRICE601, the corporations involved (Monsanto, Syngenta and Bayer) have caused intense frustration within the scientific community by refusing to release key information about the genetic constructs of the GM varieties involved under the pretext that it is CBI or "commercial business information." In the case of Monsanto, it required a German court ruling to force the corporation to release research information that should have been in the public domain from the outset. In the case of LLRICE601 both EFSA and FSA have refused to release 30 pages of "secret" dossier information simply because Bayer has labelled it as CBI.

The result of these abuses is that the science of GM is profoundly corrupt. The EC and the governments of the EU member states know this, but they do nothing because of the personal pro-GM crusades by particular leaders (including Tony Blair), because of the wealth and influence of the biotechnology corporations, and because of the blustering of the United States administration and the WTO. So they become implicated in the corruption themselves, ably assisted by the self-serving scientific clique which makes up the membership of the EC "advisory committees" including EFSA, ACRE, FSA and ACNFP (7). Those committees advise the EC and the politicians -- and they can be counted upon to read and cite very selectively; to dismiss any research which might prove inconvenient to the GM enterprise; and to take at face value all the assurances which they may be given by the GM seed owners (8). The situation in the United States is even more corrupt (9), as pointed out by Prof David Schubert and Steven Druker, amongst many others.

In the UK the GM regulatory process is designed (a) to facilitate the submission of favourable or supporting evidence by the GM corporations applying for consent, and (b) to assist applicants in obtaining consent as smoothly as possible. The process is based upon "advocacy science" commissioned and carefully selected by the applicant corporations, and the science is in many cases non-replicable since the corporations will not allow "independent scientists" access to their plants and seed stocks. The recent case in which Monsanto shut off supplies of MON810 seeds to Hungarian researchers (when they started to find uncomfortable evidence of environmental damage) illustrates this perfectly. We are now aware of another case in which supplies of NK603 maize needed for an animal feeding trial have been refused by Monsanto, presumably because the laboratory involved is intent upon doing some careful and objective science.

Universities, which used to be trusted as beacons of light in a dark world of corporate corruption, have found it almost impossible to maintain their scientific integrity. To quote Dr Richard Horton, the Editor of The Lancet: "Universities have sacrificed their larger social responsibilities to accommodate a new purpose -- 'the privatization of knowledge' -- by engaging in multimillion-dollar contracts with industries that demand the rights to negotiate licenses from any subsequent discovery... Science has long been ripe for industrial colonization. The traditional norms of disinterested inquiry and free expression of opinion have been given up in order to harvest new and much-needed revenues.... Universities have reinvented themselves as corporations." There is a massive debate going on at the moment about the manner in which

Oxford University will be governed in the future; there are proposals from the Vice-Chancellor for "corporate governance" partly by industry and management experts, which are being resisted strongly by many of the dons (10).

There are also concerns about the control of the means of scientific communication. To quote Dr Horton again: "Even scientific journals, supposedly the neutral arbiters of quality by virtue of their much-vaunted process of critical peer review, are owned by publishers and scientific societies that derive and demand huge earnings from advertising by drug companies and from the sale of commercially valuable content. The pressure on editors to adopt positions that favor these industries is yet another example of the bias that has infiltrated academic exchange." (11) I have tried, without success, to get journal editors to commit themselves to certain standards of behaviour when considering research papers from scientists who have been corporately funded. For example, I have asked them only to consider papers for publication where there is a declaration that the owners of the GM materials used (seed or animal feed, for example) will allow the research to be independently replicated (12). Sue Mayer (13) has recently warned about the creeping corruption in academic science, with biotechnology papers being submitted -- and accepted --for publication without proper declarations of financial interest.

As a result of these sinister developments there has been virtually no sound independent research into the health effects of consuming GM food. Indeed, it is the clear intention of the GM corporations, the regulatory and advisory bodies and Government departments like DEFRA and the Health Department that such research should not be conducted, and there is an underlying assumption that because GM crops (and hence animal feed and human foods derived from them) are, in their terms, "substantially equivalent" to their nearest non-GM varieties, it can be taken as read that they are all perfectly safe. There has been a conspiracy on a gigantic scale, designed to mislead and deceive the public, and we are convinced that in this matter the Government itself is guilty of criminal negligence and of the willful suppression of inconvenient facts (14). Our accusations have been given added weight by the recent publication of a paper by Judy Carman (15) which shows that articles cited as showing that GM crops are safe to eat actually do nothing of the sort, and that the majority of them show that such crops may well be dangerous. And in a comprehensive recent report (16) Prof Terje Traavik and Prof Jack Heinemann have identified numerous areas of omitted research, which need urgent investigation. These include risks related to rearrangements of transgene inserts, the fate and consequences of DNA persistence and uptake in the mammalian gastro-intestinal tract, alterations in the protein contents of GM food, the allergenicity of transgenic products, the implications of post-translational modifications and questions over the 35S CaMV promoter and the use of antibiotic resistance marker genes. The authors call for publicly funded, independent biosafety research rooted in the Precautionary Principle, in order to address this situation. There is also a need to follow-up on “early warnings” of potential health and environmental impacts that are already in the literature but which have been systematically dismissed by advisory committees and governments.

The situation today is reminiscent of the situation which existed in the Nazi era in Germany: "..... far from being subjected to force, many scientists voluntarily oriented their work to fit government policies - as a way of getting money and of exploiting the new resources that Nazi policies made available ..... Most researchers, it turns out, seem to have regarded the regime not as a threat, but as an opportunity for their research ambitions." (Nature, 7 April 2005) That having been said, it is no bad thing to cite one of the most famous quotations of the last century. Encouraging the people of Britain to stand up to Hitler, Winston Churchill said this: "..... if we fail, the whole world, including the Unites States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age, made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science." (June 18th, 1940)

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A FEW EXAMPLES

..... of the tactics used by the GM industry, with EC and Government support, to kill off inconvenient research. They use several different methods to achieve their ends. "Shoot the messenger" is one, and "Refuse seed supply" is another. These methods are relatively easy to recognize, as outlined in the examples below. Many other scientists will not speak up about what has happened to them, for a variety of reasons.

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"Just a few months ago (2005), I wrote to Bayer CropScience here in Australia, asking for only a tablespoon of their InVigor GM canola seeds when I was trying to determine the sensitivity and specificity of some field "strip tests" that are on sale that are supposed to be able to determine GM contamination in otherwise non-GM canola seed. I recieved no reply. They simply ignored me and made the research impossible."

Dr Judy Carman BSc(Hons), PhD, MPH, Epidemiologist and Biochemist

Affiliate Senior Lecturer, Department of Public Health, University of Adelaide

Director, Institute of Health and Environmental Research Inc.

PO Box 155 , Kensington Park, SA, 5068

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"After three years of research (2001-2003) Monsanto refused in 2004 to allow us further MON 810 seeds for our experiments, although we are absolutely neutral on seed-politics. We also won a Hungarian grant from the Education Ministry here to work with maize containing the Cry3-toxin (MON 863 or MON 88017 or DAS-59122-7), but Monsanto, Pioneer/DuPont, and Mycogene/Dow have all refused to supply seeds for our independent experiments. Probably we will loose this project in this year if we do not obtain seeds by May 2005."

Prof Bela Darvas,

Plant Protection Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

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Responding to complaints from a range of farmers, Friesen et al. (2003) at the University of Manitoba compared 33 batches of certified canola seed for contamination with one or more of the three commercially available herbicide-resistance genes. They sampled 18 non-GM, and 8 glufosinate-resistant seed batches. No batches of Roundup Ready (glyphosate-resistant) seed could be sampled, because the farmers in the study area were contractually prevented by Monsanto from providing seed to third parties for any reason, including research. Thirty two of the 33 seed batches (97%) had detectable levels of adventitious contamination with herbicide-tolerant traits, of which 14 (42%) exceeded the purity guideline for certified canola seed (0.25% same crop contamination). The RR trait contaminated 81% of the seed batches, to a maximum of 4.89%, while 21% of the seed batches were contaminated adventitiously with both RR and glufosinate ammonium (Liberty) resistance. Intra-specific gene flow among certified seed fields means that whether through inadvertent seed or pollen drift from neighbors or as a contaminant in non-GM certified seed, growers of supposedly non-GM crops experience the same weed control difficulties as GM crop growers.

Dr Ann Clark

Dept of Agriculture, University of Guelph, Canada

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In May 2005 it was reported that a female bioscientist in Turkey was pursuing a court case against her university for reassigning her to another department and taking her lab away. The researcher had raised funds from government and industry (80,000 euros from the State Planning Organization and 175,000 euros from Turkish food conglomerate Ülker) to set up an independent laboratory. She was days away from final stage testing on seed samples gathered around Turkey when the news came from her rector. Her crime? Probably the discovery of illegal GM seeds in corn, soy and tomato crops. A study at the Middle Eastern Technical University (METU) also found GM tomato seeds in Turkey. This was denied by the minister of agriculture, but METU researcher Candan Gurakan asserted that foreign labs had confirmed the findings. Pressure to stay away from GM research was also put on the chairman of the Agricultural Engineers Association, Gökhan Günaydýn.....

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=5288

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"We have always believed in the transparency of our work and were disappointed Monsanto scientists did not share their results with us. We believe the work we have conducted is an "initial" study and we would like to do more testing. Unfortunately, we are no longer privy to obtaining Monsanto's seeds. We were directly told by a Hartz seed company (a wholly owned subsidiary of Monsanto) representative who graciously supplied us with seed for our initial study, that he was told he could no longer provide us with seed samples. Even if we were to obtain seeds the chances of finding isogenically matched varieties is becoming increasingly more difficult. When we contacted Hartz a few months ago, we were told there were 23 varieties of Roundup Ready soybeans and only 8 varieties of conventional. Even if we wanted to move beyond our 2 variety - triplicate testing, we would not be able to expand our research beyond the levels of seed available."

Marc Lappe

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Is the genetic diversity of Mexican maize - a biological insurance policy against pests and disease - in danger? In 2002 Paul Gepts (a professor of agronomy and plant genetics at the University of California, Davis) received a $25,000 grant to look for answers. But when he asked three biotechnology companies for the seed samples he needed for his research, the trail went cold. Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. in Des Moines, Iowa, said no. Syngenta and Monsanto also turned him down. "I was not surprised," Gepts said. "If you want to study the effects of biotechnology, you come up against a wall. Pioneer spokesman Doyle Karr said the seed sample "wasn't ours to give away. It was licensed from Monsanto." Monsanto spokesman Bryan Hurley said the company was cooperating with an environmental commission, under the North American Free Trade Agreement, which was also examining gene-flow issues south of the border. "Given that the commission's work is still outstanding, we believed it was premature to support related work," Hurley said. Gepts sighed. "That's ridiculous," he said. "The commission is not involved in experimental work. It is a purely bibliographic review. Monsanto is using the commission as an excuse not to provide seeds. I don't think that's right."

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3703

Welcome or not, modified strains pop up in crops near and far

By Tom Knudson and Edie Lau -- Bee Staff Writers

Published 2:15 am PDT Monday, June 7, 2004

http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/9568700p-10492368c.html

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"The Birchip Cropping Group proposed trials of Bayer's canola in Australia. The rural newspaper "Stock and Land" reported on March 10 2005 that Bayer had rejected Birchip's request for GM seed for trials, saying there would be additional costs to the research that they could not afford to meet."

Bob Phelps, GeneEthics

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http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3703

Industry resistance killed Allison Snow's work on sunflowers. For five years at a test plot in Nebraska, Ohio State professor Snow had painstakingly monitored the flow of genes from genetically engineered sunflowers to wild relatives - and found that the wild kin were capitalizing on the exchange. They were producing more seeds, perhaps evolving into "super-weeds." She also found that wild sunflower plants containing a Bt-toxin gene specific to lepidoptera exhibited decreased lepidopteran herbivory; in other words, lepidoptera were unambiguously being damaged.

But as she prepared to begin a new phase of research in 2002, Pioneer Hi-Bred International and Dow Chemical Co., which had funded her work, put a stop to it, saying they owned the genes. "We had to destroy all of our seeds," Snow said. "We were so disappointed. No one had ever studied these questions before. We thought, just for the sake of science and openness, it would be good to explore this further." "It's outrageous that these companies claim that their products are thoroughly tested and good for the environment but throttle research when the results go counter to their PR message," said Laurel Hopwood, Chair of Sierra Club's Genetic Engineering Committee. "It's sad we don't have more data," added Snow. "There isn't a lot of money, and there isn't a big community working on risk assessment. Companies don't really pay for research that's not in their own interest. You don't make money on risk assessment, and you do make money on biotechnology."

http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/9568700p-10492368c.html

http://www.saynotogmos.org/news_updates2d.htm

October 30th 2002

http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:wmPSXpPD0NUJ:www.agbios.com/docroot/articles/02-281-002.pdf+%22Snow%22+%22Bt+TRANSGENE+REDUCES%22&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=6&lr=lang_en

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"In a similar vein, I also know of a researcher who found soil microbe differences for a GM crop and was told, when he wanted to repeat this experiment, that the plot was 'unavailable'. This was a report at the 2004 ISBGMO meeting in Montpellier."

Jonathan Latham

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Manuela Malatesta

This Italian scientist and her colleagues at the Universities of Urbino and Pavia have found life very uncomfortable following the publication of their seriously worrying research results relating to the feeding of mice on GM soy. Their funding was tight to begin with, but it has now mysteriously dried up, probably due to high-level political pressure from biotechnology companies and their lobbyists on the university authorities.....

The Italian team published five papers 2002-2004.

http://www.greenplanet.net/Articolo9833.html&prev=/search?q=Manuela+Malatesta&hl=en&lr=&ie=UTF-8&sa=G)

MANGIARE OGM NON FA DIFFERENZA? NON PROPRIO

Abstracts of the papers can be found here:

http://www.agbioworld.org/biotech-info/articles/agbio-articles/GMfeedsafetypapers.html

http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/lemonde021706.cfm

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Irina Ermakova

This Russian scientist was given worldwide media coverage in 2005 when she found a clear relationship between the consumption of GM soya and the posterity of living creatures. During her experiment Ermakova added GM soya flour to the food of female rats two weeks before conception, during conception and during nurturing. The experiments appear to have been well controlled. She and her team counted the number of females who gave birth, the number of rats born and the number of rats that died. The researchers found that there was an abnormally high level of deaths among rats that were born to females who had received GM soy in their food. In addition 36% of rats born to such mothers weighed less than 20 grams. In other words they were in an extremely poor condition. Because the morphology and biochemical structures of rats are similar to humans this made the results very disturbing, particularly to the proponents of GM crops and foods. Although her studies were not published in a peer-reviewed journal, Ermakova pleaded with public authorities throughout the world to repeat her experiments and to engage in full scale tests of all GM products before they are made available to human beings or animals that humans will eat. Following the publication of her research, the American Academy of Environmental Medicine urged the US National Institutes of Health to commission follow-up studies. these studies have not been done. Predictably, the GM industry mounted a campaign of vilification against Dr Ermakove, accusing her of using non-scientific methods, of seeking the media spotlight, and even of manipulating her results. Her worst "crime" was to be a committed environmentalist with a known anti-GM stance. Her work was effectively dismissed in this country by ACNFP, who cited an American paper in support of their position that her work was an aberration. She is fighting back against this patronising and misguided criticism, with the support of GM scientists including Arpad Pusztai and Mae-wan Ho, but in the meantime her funding for GM research in Russia has been withdrawn and she has been "warned off" a continuation of animal feeding studies involving GM feed.

http://irina-ermakova.by.ru/eng/art/art15.html

http://www.seedsofdeception.com/utility/showArticle/?objectID=299

http://irina-ermakova.by.ru/eng/art/art16.html

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Dr Arpad Pusztai and Dr Stanley Ewen

They were the first of the "GM martyrs." Their paper on physiological changes in rats fed on GM potatoes caused a worldwide sensation in 1999. The authors were given the full "shoot the messenger" treatment; they were widely vilified by the scientific community, and following an intervention from the office of Prime Minister Tony Blair Dr Pusztai was sacked, his research team was dismantled, and his funding stopped. The Ewen/Pusztai research has never been repeated, let alone extended, for fear that their results will also be replicated. There is no doubt that pressure from the GM / biotechnology industry was exerted at a political level in 1999, and that this pressure has continued to this day. See Jeffrey Smith: Seeds of Deception, Ch 1 -- summary here:

http://www.seedsofdeception.com/utility/showArticle/?objectID=51

Ref: Ewen SWB, Pusztai A (1999) Effect of diets containing genetically modified potatoes expressing Galanthus nivalis lectin on rat small intestine. Lancet 354:1353-1354

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Ignacio Chapela

In 2001, University of California researchers Ignacio Chapela and David Quist discovered that traditional varieties of corn had been contaminated with GE transgenes, in rural southern Mexico. Local environmentalists and scientists had been warning about such a possibility since the 1990's. The GM industry and its advocates (AgBioWorld, Monsanto, Bivings Group etc) engaged in a persistent and vicious campaign to discredit Chapela and Quist and to pressure Nature magazine, where their study was published, to retract it. Faced with a barrage of criticism from pro-industry scientists (some of whom were simply "invented" by the Bivings Group), Nature published in its April 4, 2002 issue, an editorial note on the Chapela-Quist study stating that "evidence available is not sufficient to justify the publication of the original paper." Following this episode, Ignacio Chapela found that his university tenure was under threat, partly because he had the temerity to question the influence exerted through $50 million of sponsorship from Novartis. He was also threatened by the Mexican government, which felt that his research findings on GM corn contamination were negatively affecting the country's image! It took great political courage by Chapela, and a prolonged campaign by supporters, to finally obtain his confirmation of tenure in May 2005.

http://www.theava.com/04/0218-chapela.html

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=5261

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=1346

http://www.gmwatch.org/p2temp2.asp?aid=19&page=1&op=2

http://www.gmwatch.org/p2temp2.asp?aid=15&page=1&op=1

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Charles Losey

Bt crops can harm beneficial insects and adversely affect soil ecology. Adverse effects of Bt crops on beneficial insects were assumed before 1999, when research led by Charles Losey of Cornell University discovered that Bt corn pollen was toxic to monarch butterflies, under laboratory conditions. Losey came under withering attack by pro-industry scientists, orchestrated by AgbioWorld. Much of the "evidence" used against him was absolute rubbish. Research now shows that Bt crops adversely affect ladybugs that eat Colorado potato beetles, a major potato pest, and lacewing larvae that fed on pests that were fed Bt corn had a strikingly high mortality rate. Furthermore, the Bt toxin persists in the soil for months, by binding to clay and soil particles. It has been found to persist for as long as 234 days. In 2003 Allison Snow and colleagues showed that Bt toxins introduced into sunflowers spread into wild sunflower populations and also killed not-target lepidoptera. Losey got further vindication recently when field and laboratory studies in Hungary, Australia and Germany proved that Bt crops damage soil micro-organisms and various non-target insects.

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=6832

http://www.gmwatch.org/p2temp2.asp?aid=25&page=1&op=1

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=6516

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At the University of Perugia (Italy) hundreds of lambs and sheep have been fed on Syngenta Bt176 maize and three generations have been studied. Many technical approaches have been applied and numerous parameters have been investigated, but the publication of research results has been mysteriously blocked since April 2004. The director of the research (at the Istituto Zooprofilattico dell'Umbria e delle Marche) always says that he wants to publish all the results, but they are effectively "frozen" by a Syngenta veto. We gather that most of the results demonstrated that there is no difference between animals fed on GM maize and controls fed on nontransgenic maize, but some results (including EM data) indicated modifications which urgently need more investigation. Currently, if the situation does not change, it will be impossible for the research to continue.

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"As far as I know, there is nobody who would do precautionary research who has managed to obtain seed directly from the producers without selling their soul. In our case, we obtained seed from farmers whose identity has to be kept secret, since these farmers' act of giving us bought seed could be used to drag them to court."

Dr Ignacio Chapela

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With reference to the Bt10 contamination incident: While regulators in Japan and the EU attempted to establish a reliable test for Bt10 so that incoming cargoes of maize products from the US could be monitored, Syngenta refused absolutely to provide information about the genetic makeup of the variety which could have enabled GM testing labs to start work. It also refused to supply reference materials to independent or government-owned testing laboratories. After a considerable delay, Syngenta worked out a testing method with a company called GeneScan in May 2005 which was suspected to have been carefully designed to provide "false negatives" -- in other words, to ensure that shipments with low or moderate contamination would not be identified no matter how much sampling was done. Apart from one or two slightly irate letters from the EC to Syngenta, no action has been taken against the corporation.

See "Syngenta's Corporate Crimes"

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=6567

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/BT10DMA.php

Bt10 Detection Method Unacceptable

Dr Mae-Wan Ho and Prof. Joe Cummins

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Dead cows and dirty dealings in Hesse, Germany.

In 2001-2002 twelve dairy cows died in Hesse, Germany, after being fed Syngenta's Bt176 GM maize and other cows had to be slaughtered due to mysterious illnesses. Later, protestors in front of the Robert Koch Institute claimed that there was an officially-sanctioned cover-up. There was virtually no coverage in the mainstream media; not even after ISIS circulated a detailed report, showing how Bt176 has the worst of features common to practically all commercially approved GM crops. Not only is Bt176 unstable (like all GM varieties analyzed so far), it is also non-uniform, so that different samples of the variety gave different results. Either of those features would make the GM crops illegal under European law. In parallel with the cover-up, there was a concerted attempt at the character assassination of the farmer involved (Gottfried Glöckner), and it was reported through the pro-GM media that the animals had died as a consequence of bad husbandry and that the farmer was making an opportunistic claim fro compensation from Syngenta. Syngenta is reputed to have paid him 40,000 Euros in compensation, no doubt as a "goodwill gesture" and while no doubt refusing to accept any liability.

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/CAGMMAD.php

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=1890

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Dead Goats and Sheep in India

There is an on-going crisis in Andhra Pradesh associated with the deaths of animals which have been allowed to graze Bt cotton plants following the completion of the cotton harvest. In May it was reported by farmers in Warangal District, Andhra Pradesh, that they had counted 12,000 dead goats and sheep attributable to the animals grazing on Bt cotton plants. Among sheep the death rate in places was as high as 25%. The deaths stopped when the animals were removed from the Bt cotton fields. In spite of strong evidence of a causal link between the animal deaths and the Bt cotton plants Monsanto -- and government authorities -- claimed at first that there was no hard scientific data to go on. So attempts were made by voluntary groups made to supplement the post-mortem studies on sheep with blood tests. It looks increasingly likely that the deaths of the animals was down to the severe toxicity of consumed fodder -- but proving that will be very difficult in the face of official obstruction, corporate denials and lack of funds and laboratory facilities.

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/MDSGBTC.php

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=6499

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=6494

http://www.organicconsumers.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.pl?archive=1&num=646

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Bribery repeatedly used by Monsanto

"Integrity is the foundation for all that we do," Monsanto boasts on its website. And "integrity", according to the company, includes "honesty, decency, consistency and courage". These are all part of the Monsanto Pledge, which is of course not worth the paper it is written on. On 6 January 2005, nobody was surprised when Monsanto (USA) was fined US$ 1.5 million for bribing government officials in Indonesia to avoid a decree that demanded an environmental risk assessment for the Bt cotton Bollgard. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charged Monsanto with illicit payments, with bribery including US$ 50,000 in cash to repeal a decree requiring an environmental risk assessment, falsifying books and invoices, and “questionable payments” such as for the purchase of land and the design and construction of a house in the name of the wife of a senior Ministry of Agriculture official. Such payments of approximately US$ 700,000 were made to at least 140 Indonesian government officials and their family members from 1997 to 2002. Monsanto agreed to pay US$ 500,000 to settle the bribe charge and other related violations, and to pay its fine to the US Department of Justice, to adopt internal compliance measures including an having an independent compliance expert and to cooperate

with continuing civil and criminal investigations. As GM Watch asked in 2005: “If they go to corrupt lengths to avoid impact studies, what chances are there of data manipulation when it is totally under Monsanto's control?”

Finally, the notorious comment made by Phil Angell, when Monsanto's director of corporate

communications: "Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the FDA's job." - New York Times, October 25, 1998

http://www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.cfm

http://www.gmwatch.org/p1temp.asp?pid=58&page=1

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Percy Schmeiser

In 1997, Monsanto's genetically modified RR Canola plants were found in Percy Schmeiser's field. In the spring of 1998, before Schmeiser planted his 1998 crop, he was informed that Monsanto believed that he had grown Roundup Ready canola in 1997. In the summer of 1998 the canola in Schmeiser's fields was found to be Roundup Ready canola. After this, Monsanto sued Schmeiser for patent infringement. For the next few years, the case travelled through the Canadian courts. Ultimately, a Supreme Court ruling found in favour of Monsanto. Often misinterpreted, the decision was relatively limited. The publicity around the case focussed on whether Monsanto would be held responsible for GE crop contamination. This issue was, in explicit fact, not considered by the courts. The patent infringement finding was based solely on the determination that Schmeiser had recognized the cross-contamination, and knowingly went on to collect the crossbred seed, and replant and harvest it the next year. This ruling caused worldwide outrage. However, no punitive damages were awarded to Monsanto, and the issue of responsibility for GE seed was left up in the air. Schmeiser has become one of the heroes or martyrs of the anti-GM movement, largely because of the manner in which he was mercilessly pursued by a giant corporation. Monsanto was widely portrayed as Goliath while Schmeiser was the people's David. What happened to Schmeiser was by no means unique; as at 2000 Monsanto representatives acknowledged that they had launched somewhere over 100 technology infringement cases against farmers in the United States and Canada. There have been many more since then, and victimisation is a crucial weapon in the Monsanto armoury. Many cases are settled out of court and are not publicised; but there have been many bankruptcies.

http://www.geo-pie.cornell.edu/issues/schmeiser.html

http://www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2000/12/schmeiser.html

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/MonsantovsFarmers.php

http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/Monsantovsusfarmersreport.cfm

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"In the 1950s and 1960s, chemical companies persuaded governments to fund research into the use of chemicals in agriculture. In the 1980s and 1990s, many of the same companies used their influence to get public monies to do research on genetically engineered (GM) crops. Corporate influence over government has always been present, but ..... that influence is stronger than ever. For example, much of the public research carried out in areas like agriculture only meets the needs of

large corporations. Although it would serve the public good, neither the Canadian nor the U.S. governments have spent adequate research dollars on the environmental impacts of GM organisms. Outright attempts by governments to muzzle scientists doing public research is not that common, but here are much more subtle ways to direct research. Decisions about what projects are funded, for how long, the methodology used, and the assumptions made all influence the eventual outcome. Research results tends to reflect who's paying for it."

Stephen Bocking, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Canada's Trent

University. See this:

POLITICS-US:

"They Blinded Us With Science" by Stephen Leahy

Inter Press Service News Agency, February 18, 2006

http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=32201

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NOTES

(1) http://www.gmfreecymru.org/news/Press_Notice21February2006.htm

http://www.gmfreecymru.org/documents.htm

(2)
http://www.seedsofdeception.com/Public/AboutGeneticallyModifiedFoods/CaseStudyonIndustryResearchSoyStu/index.cfm

(3) http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=1132

(4) http://www.gmfreecymru.org/news/Press_Notice21February2006.htm

(5) http://www.gmfreecymru.org/news/Press_Notice24May2005.htm

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=5073

(6) http://members.tripod.com/~ngin/scigag.htm

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/isisnews/i-sisnews7-17.php

Delborne, J.A. (August 27, 2004) Transforming Scientific Dissent into Dissidence: Analysis of "The Pulse of Scientific Freedom in the Age of the Biotech Industry", Annual Conference of the Society for the Social Studies of Science, Ecole des Mines, Paris.

(http://www.csi.ensmp.fr/WebCSI/4S/download_paper/download_paper.php?paper=delborne.pdf)

(7) See for example (May 2004) 'Independent and objective consultants servicing the agricultural, agricultural supply trade, rural and food industries' (http://www.gmwatch.org/profile1.asp?PrId=308&page=P)

On the distortion of science by EFSA:

http://www.gmfreecymru.org/open_letters/Open_letter27Feb2006.htm

(8) http://www.gmfreecymru.org/open_letters/Open_letter27Feb2006.htm

(9) Prof David Schubert: Sensible regulations for GM food crops

http://www.gmfreecymru.org/pivotal_papers/sensible.htm

GM FOOD AND THE DEMISE OF THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE by Steven M. Druker

http://www.gmfreecymru.org/pivotal_papers/demise.htm

http://www.ucsusa.org/news/press_release/fda-scientists-pressured.html

(10) See, for example, http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/comment/story/0,,1951596,00.html

(11) LANCET EDITOR WRITES ON CORPORATE TAKEOVER OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH. An interesting book review by Richard Horton, editor of the Lancet, details the corporate takeover of universities and research labs, is at:

http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3305.

(12) In the spring of this year I made formal submissions to both the UK Research Integrity Office and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and asked them both to take action to prevent the publication of the results of "non-replicable" science conducted at the behest of the GM corporations. Both bodies have declined to take action; and it is clear that they are much more interested in fraudulent science by maverick scientists than in fraudulent science sanctioned and paid for by corporations and government establishments.

(13) http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=7221

(14) http://www.gmfreecymru.org/pivotal_papers/newevidence.htm

(15) http://www.gmfreecymru.org/pivotal_papers/listofabstracts.htm

(16) http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=7219

http://www.biosafety-info.net/article.php?aid=413&PHPSESSID=9ead902ad24879cf9111558dbeecfea1

Genetic Engineering and Omitted health research: Prof Terje Traavik and Prof Jack Heinemann, 12 pp