

Recipe for Strategic Planning Campaigning, Step-by-Step

- 1. ESTABLISH a COMMITMENT and DEFINE a POLICY GOAL.**
- 2. RESEARCH the FACTS about GM foods LOCALLY and create an ADVISORY EXPERT GROUP.**
- 3. COORDINATE STRATEGIES for research, legal representation and media work.**
- 4. Identify ALLIANCES and PARTNERS.**
- 5. Identify a FOCUS and create a SLOGAN.**
- 6. MONITOR LOCAL and INTERNATIONAL developments in biotechnology, food safety, trade and activism.**
- 7. Evaluate STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES and identify areas where you can MAKE an IMPACT.**
- 8. Make use of LEGAL and REGULATORY MECHANISMS to seek protection, compliance and accountability.**
- 9. Create channels for PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**
- 10. Cultivate MEDIA contacts and keep them UP-TO-DATE.**

These steps were developed in a brainstorming session with Brazil's Institute for Consumer Defence (IDEC), whose successful campaign to block the introduction of GM soya is described on page 25.

Seeds and Society

Questions to Ask

Information is an essential campaigning tool. The following questionnaire can be used as a guide to fact-finding. The answers, and the research they involve, will help consumer groups gather the knowledge they need to reap fruits in the field of GM food activism.

Agriculture and Food Security

- Do farmers in your country grow GM crops or GM seeds, either for domestic use and consumption or for export? Does your country grow crops liable to be subject to genetic modification?
- Is GM research being conducted in your country? Who is paying for the research? Who will profit from it?
- Which agrochemical companies supply local markets with pesticides and seeds? If GM seeds are being introduced in your country, what marketing and information techniques are being used to reach local farmers?

Environmental Controls

- What are the protocols in your country governing field testing and cultivation of GMOs? What kinds of environmental impact studies are required before GMOs can be field tested and commercialised? Does the government keep track of all GMO releases?
- If GM crops are planted in your country, what research is being done to monitor their impact on related plant varieties, wild relatives, insects, soil quality and other ecological impacts?

Food Safety and Health Regulations

- Does your country import GM foods or derivatives? Are these segregated from conventional, non-GM products? Are mechanisms in place to trace GM foods and ingredients?
- What is the status of GM and non-GM food labelling laws in your country? What norms and regulatory bodies determine these?
- What is the status of food production norms and standards (for pesticides, additives, etc.) and how are they implemented? What legal or administrative mechanisms exist to monitor compliance and register complaints?

National Policies

- What mechanisms exist for NGO participation in policy-making and advisory bodies such as Codex National Committees, biotechnology and science commissions, agricultural and environmental commissions, national standards agencies, Congressional committees on food safety and environmental protection, Health Ministry food safety oversight committees, etc.?
- What international treaty and convention obligations (UN Consumer Protection Guidelines, Biodiversity Convention, WTO and Codex membership, etc.) are recognised by your country? What interests are represented on national delegations and what possibilities exist for consumer group and other NGO participation?
- Through what channels do the food and biotech industries exercise influence over policies related to GM crops and foods? Do they participate in advisory and governmental committees, commissions, delegations, etc.? What is the balance between industry and consumer representation?
- Does your country have some form of intellectual property rights covering GMOs in general or GM seeds in particular? Are there plans to introduce patents on GMOs?

Agribusiness and Allies

- What influence do agrochemical and biotech industry interests have? Do legislators and regulators have links, as shareholders, board members or funding recipients, to national subsidiaries of GM-producing multinational seed and agrochemical corporations? Who handles public relations and advertising campaigns for these companies locally? What public disclosure mechanisms exist that could help you monitor the activities (financial, field-based and commercial) of these companies?
- Are farmers, environmental and consumer groups, professional associations (scientists, veterinarians, nutritionists, patent lawyers) and trade groups (food producers, restaurants, chefs, organic farmers) active in GM food issues?
- Do local supermarkets, restaurants and other retailers take a position on GM foods? Do they source and sell GM-free foods? Do they provide information to consumers at point-of-sale?

IDEC

Getting the Word Out

To Food Producers and Retailers

Campaigners in the UK asked food manufacturers:

- Do you have a statement of your company's position on GM foods?
- Do you permit GM ingredients in your brands?
- What ingredients do you label? Do you go beyond what the law requires and label derivatives such as oil and lecithin from GM sources?
- Do you produce a list of products containing GM ingredients?
- Do you produce a list of products that are GM-free?
- Do you require animal feed to be GM-free for products such as meat, eggs and milk?

Consumer groups in Brazil asked producers:

- Is it in the interests of your company to supply local markets with GM-free products?
- Are you currently using GM soya, corn or derivatives?
- Do you support the segregation of GM and GM-free products in production, transportation and processing?
- Do you support mandatory labelling?
- Does your company possess procedures to certify the GM or non-GM origin of its products?
- Is your company willing to go public with the information you have provided?

To Government Officials

Inform government and regulatory officials of the potential health and environmental dangers of GM crops and foods being grown, manufactured and imported into your country. Communicate your concerns to Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Environment, Consumer Affairs, legislators, national science and research commissions, etc.

Include recommendations to protect the health of consumers and the well-being of the environment, such as stringent pre-market safety testing and mandatory labelling of all GM foods and derivatives.

Ask for a written response and don't forget to send copies to the media.

More Ideas for Letter-Writing

• **Letters of solidarity** between consumer groups, like those sent by the Consumer Union of Japan to Brazil's IDEC, expressing support, as consumers of imported soya, for IDEC's battle to keep Brazil's soya exports GM-free.

• **Circulate petitions and leaflets** at supermarkets, school cafeterias, dining halls, restaurants, etc. informing customers about GM food issues and asking establishments to make information on their use of GM ingredients available to customers.

• **GM Booby Prizes.** Consumers in the UK are awarding booby prizes to producers and stores that continue to sell GM foods "against the wishes of the majority." Letters of nomination read: "I am one of those consumers voting for your company to receive a GM award. I will also avoid purchasing your products." Nominated stores are posted on website: wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/pbrown/index.htm

To the Media

Take advantage of international news pegs, such as: World Food Day (October 16), World Consumer Rights Day (March 15), Earth Day (June 5). Link events at home to international developments on GM foods, such as Codex meetings, upcoming WTO trade negotiations, regional trade agreements, release of new scientific findings, emerging concerns over health, etc.

Watch for local developments to use as news pegs, such as: field testing of GM crops, new food safety norms, patent legislation, acquisitions of domestic agrochemical and seed companies, advertising and sale of GM seeds, planting trends, environmental impact regulations, research conducted in biotech labs at universities, etc.

Networking and Information

Greenpeace

Website: www.greenpeace.org

Friends of the Earth (FOE)

Website: www.foe.co.uk/camps/foodbio/genetic.html

Website: www.foe.org/safefood

Campaign for Consumer Choice

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC)

Avenue de Tervuren 36

1040 Brussels, Belgium

Fax: (32-2) 7357455

E-Mail: consumers@beuc.org

Website: www.beuc.org

Ag Biotech InfoNet

Website: www.biotech-info.net

PAN-AP Safe Food Campaign Pesticide Action Network Asia-Pacific

Website: www.poptel.org.uk/panap

Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN)

Girona 25, pral. E-8010

Barcelona, Spain

Fax: (343) 301-1627

E-mail: grain@gn.apc.org

Website: www.grain.org/index-s.htm

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)

2105 First Ave. So.

Minneapolis, MN 55404 USA

Fax: (612) 870-4846

Website: www.iatp.org

Biotech Activists mailing list:

biotech_activists@iatp.org

Council for Responsible Genetics

5 Upland Road, Suite 3

Cambridge MA 02140 USA

Fax: (617) 491-5344

Website: www.gene.watch.org

Campaign for Food Safety (CFS)

6114 Hwy 61

Little Marais, MN 55614 USA

Fax: (218) 226-4157

Website: www.purefood.org

Rural Advancement Foundation Int'l (RAFI)

110 Osborne St. Suite 202

Winnipeg MB R3L 1 Y5 Canada

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E-mail: rafi@rafi.org

Website: www.rafi.org

A SEED Europe

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E-mail: groundup@aseed.antenna.nl

Website: www.antenna.nl/aseed

Union of Concerned Scientists

Website: www.ucusa.org

Physicians and Scientists for Responsible Application of Science and Technology

Website: www.psrast.org

Third World Network/ Red del Tercer Mundo

Website: www.southside.org.sg/souths/twn/twn.htm

Website: www.chasque.apc.org/redesur

Global Forum on Sustainable Food and Nutritional Security

SGAN 905 Conjunto B

70790-050 Brasilia, Brazil

Fax: (55-61) 274-8822

E-mail: agora@tba.com.br

Website: www.globalforum.org.br

General References

Many sources of information were used to prepare this kit, including the campaigns and websites listed here, sources cited in the text and the CI documents listed on page 18.

Also useful were:

- *GM Foods: The Consumers' Revolt* by María Elena Hurtado, forthcoming from CI
- Panos Media Briefings #30 (Oct. 1998) and #7 (Dec. 1993)
- "Food for Thought" *The Economist*, June 19, 1999
- Center for International Environmental Law Brief, Nov. 1999

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Red por una America Libre de Transgénicos

Quito, Ecuador

Fax: (593) 2-527-583

E-mail: ebravo@hoy.net

Biotechnology Industry Organisation

Website: www.bio.org

For Children:

Whose Genes? Tiki's Guide to Genetic Engineering at website: www.oneworld.org/penguin/genetics/home.html