

# Panel Challenges Canada's Regulation of Genetically Modified Foods

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Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p>Safety Approval of Monsanto's New GM Corn Questioned</p><p>Tuesday, December 1, Ottawa-

Today in Ottawa an international panel of scientists will challenge Canada's regulation of genetically modified (GM) foods, in particular Health Canada's failure to assess the controversial new eight-trait GM corn from Monsanto, called SmartStax. The panel is speaking on the same day that Parliamentary hearings on the regulation of GM foods begin. The unique evening panel, called Unsafe Genetically Modified Corn? Canada's lack of assessment for Monsanto's SmartStax GM corn, is open to the public as part of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network's Expert Lecture Series: 7:00 PM-9:00 PM at the Saint Paul University Amphitheatre, 223 Main Street in Ottawa. Preminent scientists Dr. Michael Hansen of the US Consumers Union and Consumers International, and Dr. Ricarda Steinbrecher of the Federation of German Scientists are internationally known for their expertise on the risks and risk assessment of genetically modified foods and crops. They will be joined by Dr. Peter Andree, an expert on Canadian regulation from Carleton University's Department of Political Science. The panel will be moderated by Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, the organization that has been investigating the problems with SmartStax. Health Canada has taken a dangerously negligent approach to the safety of SmartStax corn by not following the recommended guideline of the UN CODEX for a full safety assessment, said Dr. Hansen. There are so many possibilities for unintended effects from stacking GM traits like this, said Dr. Steinbrecher. Unlike in Canada, in Europe SmartStax has to be treated as a totally new GM product and our regulations require a full safety assessment. SmartStax exposes critical problems with the Canadian regulatory system, said Dr. Andree who will also testify in front of the House of Commons Agriculture Committee on the issue on Thursday December 3. Our system leaves too much discretion in the hands of the biotech companies and limits the ability of regulatory scientists to do their jobs properly. It's unacceptable that Canada approved Monsanto's SmartStax corn without a full safety assessment, said Lucy Sharratt. Health Canada has abdicated its responsibility to assess the safety of GM foods and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has resorted to rubber-stamping environmental safety approvals. The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) has asked the Minister of Health to withdraw approval for SmartStax corn before farmers plant the new GM crop next year. CBAN is also asking that the Ministers of Health and Agriculture initiate a system-wide review of Canada's regulation of GM foods and crops. For more information [www.cban.ca/corn](http://www.cban.ca/corn): Michael Hansen, Consumers Union, cell: 917 774 3801; Lucy Sharratt, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, 613 241 2267 ext 6, cell 613 263 9511; Peter Andree, Carleton University 613 520 2600 x1953