

GM Wheat rejected by 233 Consumer, Farmer Groups in 26 Countries

Author: Lucy

Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p>February 9, 2010. Ottawa, Montreal, Washington, Tokyo, Sydney: 233 consumer and farmer groups in 26 countries have joined the "Definitive Global Rejection of GM Wheat" statement to stop the commercialization of genetically modified (GM) wheat and remind the biotechnology corporation Monsanto that genetically modifying this major crop is not acceptable to farmers or consumers. (1)
<p>The 233 group signed the rejection statement first launched by 15 Australian, Canadian and U.S. farmer and consumer groups in June 2009.</p><p>Canadian farmers have just lost their exports sale to Europe and other markets because of GM flax contamination from a GM variety deregistered a decade ago and never even sold. Our current experience with GM flax contamination clearly illustrates the crippling losses Canadian farmers will suffer if GM wheat is introduced," said Terry Boehm, a flax and wheat farmer and President of the National Farmers Union in Canada. "Flax is yet another warning that once a GM crop is introduced, contamination is inevitable."</p><p>In July 2009, Monsanto announced new research into GM wheat and industry groups kicked their promotion of GM wheat into high gear. "Widespread farmer and consumer resistance defeated GM wheat in 2004 and this global rejection remains strong, as demonstrated by today's statement," said Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.</p><p>In 2004, a coalition of Japanese consumer and food industry groups delivered a petition to the Governments of Canada and the U.S. urging them not to introduce GM wheat. Today, consumer rejection of GM wheat in Japan is just as strong as ever. 80 organizations in Japan have already signed the rejection statement," said Keisuke Amagasa of the Tokyo-based No! GM Campaign. "A large majority of consumers here in Japan are voicing their strong opposition to the cultivation of GM wheat. We see strong opposition from all sectors of society."</p><p>Japan's flour companies are also rejecting GM wheat, echoing consumer opposition. In a statement released today, the Flour Miller's Association of Japan wrote to the No! GM Campaign indicating its opposition.</p><p>Under the present circumstances, with all the doubts about safety and the environment that the consumers in Japan have, including the effect on the human body from GM foods, GM wheat is included among the items that are not acceptable for the Japanese market," Kadota Masaaki, senior managing director of the Flour Miller's Association wrote to the No! GM Campaign.</p><p>In the U.S., a recent report from the Western Organization of Resource Councils, a network of seven community farmer, rancher and consumer organizations, shows that U.S. wheat prices could fall by 40 percent or more if industry effort to develop GM wheats succeed. (2)</p><p>U.S. family farmers will do everything to protect our wheat from Monsanto and we do not accept that a corporation has the right to patent on life, including seeds," said Dena Hoff from the National Family Farm Coalition in the U.S. "GM wheat would contaminate our crops and food supply, and put an end to organic grain production. Farmers in the U.S. have already rejected GM wheat and Monsanto is sorely mistaken if they think farmers will ever accept GM wheat."</p><p>The big push is on from Monsanto to pave the way for GM wheat but the reality is that strong and widespread opposition from farmers and consumers in Australia and across the world is here to stay," said Laura Kelly from Greenpeace Australia Pacific.</p><p>-30-</p><p>(1) The list of signatories to the "Definitive Global Rejection of Genetically Modified Wheat" statement can be viewed at www.cban.ca/globalstopGMwheat</p><p>(2) "A Review of the Potential Market Impacts of Commercializing GM Wheat in the U.S." January 2010, Western Organization of Resource Councils, www.worc.org/GM-Wheat</p><p>Formore information:
In Canada: Terry Boehm, National Farmers Union Canada, (in Paris) 331 4484 7250; Lucy Sharratt, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, 613 241 2267 ext. 6 info@cban.ca
In Tokyo: Michiyo Koketsu, NO! GM Campaign, 81 351 554 756, office@gmo-iranai.org; Ryoko Shimizu, Policy Research Institute for the Civil Sector, 81 906 001 0495, ryoko-s@prics.net
In the US: Kathy Ozer, National Family Farm Coalition, 202 543 5675
In Australia: Laura Kelly, Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 61 040 741 4572
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