

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CANADA DIRTY TRICKS EXPOSED IN WTO DISPUTE ON GMOs**

- **Covert campaign denounced in Irish Senate and UK House of Commons**
- **European Parliament asked to launch investigation**

DUBLIN — Thirty three Irish and British politicians — including the former UK Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP, Senators David Norris, Dan Boyle, Pearse Doherty, Deirdre de Burca and Phil Prendergast, and Kathy Sinnott MEP — have denounced the activities of a Canadian Government agent, who has attempted to sabotage Ireland's policy to keep the island of Ireland free of genetically modified crops [1].

Canada launched its covert strategy to undermine Ireland's growing opposition to GM crops [2] after failing to force the EU to accept its unwanted GM food exports [3] by legal means via a WTO trade dispute in 2006 [4]. Canada has given the EU an 11 February deadline to change its policy on GM foods.

#### **Dirty tricks**

Shane Morris, an Irish biotech scientist employed by the Canadian Government agency Agri-Food and Agriculture Canada, began harassing the GM-free Ireland campaign from his office in Ottawa, whilst posing as an "Irish lad" and "private citizen" living in Dublin [5]. Morris set up a dedicated web blog [6] to disseminate disinformation, slander, innuendo and highly personal defamatory attacks [7] to discredit Irish politicians, scientists, and organisations which speak out against the dangers of GM food and farming. He rounded up biotech industry colleagues to complain about coverage of GM health risks on RTE [8] and in the Irish Medical News [9]. He intimidated Bord Bia [the Irish Food Board] to cancel funding for a conference on GM-free branding for food, farming and tourism [10], and harassed sponsors [11] of a scientific briefing on GMOs at the European Parliament Office in Dublin, where the Minister of State for Food and Horticulture, Trevor Sargent, first announced the Government's policy goal to declare Ireland a GM-free zone [12]. Morris now intends to set up "a similar info service from a National University of Ireland perspective". [13] Shane Morris is also advising Fine Gael TDs and MEPs, and was the author of a secret Fine Gael briefing on GMOs [14]. The briefing contains text from a letter by Morris previously published in the Kilkenny Voice. Morris's authorship of the briefing is well-known in Fine Gael circles and was also confirmed by Fianna Fáil politicians after the briefing was sent to them by mistake in October [15].

#### **"Flagrant fraud"**

In 2003, when he was working for the Canadian Government, the prestigious British Food Journal published a scientific study co-authored by Morris and partly funded by the biotech industry, which claimed that consumers prefer GM food. The paper received the Journal's "Award for Excellence for the Most Outstanding Paper of 2004" and has been widely cited by biotech advocates. But the paper has been denounced as "misleading" and/or a "flagrant fraud" by Cambridge University research ethics expert Dr. Richard Jennings, Prof. Joe Cummins (Emeritus Professor of Genetics at the University of Western Ontario, Canada), by other scientists at York and Guelph Universities in Canada, the University of New South Wales in Australia, and in various publications including New Scientist, Food Consumer, The Ecologist and Private Eye magazines. Last week 40 scientists wrote to the British Food Journal demanding it withdraw the paper and the award [16].

#### **Intimidation**

GM-free Ireland [17] and the UK-based GM Watch [18] outed Morris as a Canadian Government agent last July and reported his involvement in what they regarded as a scientific fraud. Morris then engaged McCann Fitzgerald and other law firms to intimidate both organisations, using threats of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation to censor and/or shut down their web sites [19]. The attempt failed in Ireland but succeeded in the UK, when the GM Watch site was shut for nearly a week last August. In September, the policy director of the Soil Association [20], Peter Melchett, wrote to the UK High Commissioner for Canada, requesting the Canadian Government to stop its attempts to "undermine the wishes of the democratically elected Irish Government". [21]

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## Political reaction from Ireland and the UK

The former UK Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP, has tabled an Early Day Motion [22] in the House of Commons which states: "This House (...) deplores the continuing efforts by an employee of the Canadian Government, Shane Morris, to close down websites in the UK and Republic of Ireland which have, along with Dr Richard Jennings of Cambridge University, said that research which claimed that consumers prefer GM sweetcorn published by this employee and others and given an Award for Excellence is a flagrant fraud." [23] The motion has since been co-signed by twenty six MPs.

Senators David Norris, Dan Boyle, Deirdre de Burca, Pearse Doherty, and Phil Prendergast are calling for the Irish Government to intervene. In a Senate speech on 6 December, Senator David Norris condemned the "extraordinary interference by an agent of the Canadian Government in the political discourse of this country" who is "trying to close down Irish networks that tell the truth about GM food", and called for the Senate to request the Government to raise the matter with its Canadian counterpart [24].

## European Parliament to launch investigation

Kathy Sinnott MEP said "this covert interference by the Government of Canada is an affront to Irish and UK sovereignty and to the Precautionary Principle which is a cornerstone of EU policy on GM food and farming. I am calling on the European Parliament to investigate this scandal, as we have done regarding the CIA's violation of European airspace for illegal torture flights. We need a full investigation into the extent of covert influence by foreign governments and corporations on the GM policies and decisions of the Commission, EU member states, and their regulatory bodies."

Michael O'Callaghan of GM-free Ireland said "The European Parliament needs to investigate the extent of covert influence by foreign governments and corporations on the GM policies and decisions of the Commission, member states, and their regulatory bodies. The investigation should also examine the amount of industry lobby funding in the area of Public Relations and public perception management which, in some member states, distorts media coverage of GM policy issues and stifles public debate on the biotech industry threat to European food sovereignty and food security."

[ENDS]

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## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Ireland's agreed Programme for Government is "to seek to negotiate to declare the whole island of Ireland as a GMO-free zone" in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Assembly. The policy aims to prohibit the release of GM crops, and to implement a voluntary phase out of GM animal feed (which is widely available according to the recent conference co-hosted by the EU Committee of the Regions and the European GMO-Free Regions Network <http://www.gmofree-euregions.net>).

2. Canada's covert campaign surfaced in February 2006, a week after RTE broadcast "The Future of Food" (<http://www.thefutureoffood.com>), a documentary film which featured an interview with the alternative Nobel Prize-winning Canadian farmer Percy Schmeiser, who faced a patent infringement lawsuit and lost ownership of his seeds and crops after they became contaminated by Monsanto's patented GM oilseed rape (see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/conference/trans/pschmeiser.php>).

Canada and the biotech industry must have been concerned about the film's impact on Irish public opinion prior to a then forthcoming decision by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to approve or deny BASF's highly controversial application to conduct an experimental release of 450,000 GMO potatoes near the Hill of Tara. After the EPA gave conditional consent subject to BASF's agreeing to pay for an environmental impact study, BASF decided not to go ahead with the experiment in 2006 and 2007. For details see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/potato>

3. The USA and Canada — along with Monsanto and the other five giant agri-biotech corporations which control 50% of the world's agricultural seeds — are desperate to force the EU market open to their GM food and animal feed exports. Although imported GM animal feed is widely sold to EU farmers, the EU market for GM food exports (from Canada and other countries) is virtually zero. This has been a disaster for contaminated Canadian farmers. For more info, see the interview with Darrin Qualman, Director of Research, National Farmers Union of Canada: "Canadian agriculture 'probably the least profitable in the world'", Seedling magazine, October 2007: <http://grain.org/seedling/?id=509>. Qualman says that "GM seeds do not increase profitability. They do not increase yield. They do not decrease costs".

4. In August 2003, the US, Canada and Argentina (the world's three largest producers of GM crops) attempted to force GM products into European markets by filing a WTO trade dispute against the EU for suspending approvals of biotech products, and for national bans on EC-approved GM crops in six EU member states.

In February 2006, after months of delays, the WTO Trade Dispute Panel finally released its secret 1,050-page Interim ruling "Measures affecting the Approval and Marketing of Biotech Products (EC-Biotech)" that reportedly backed the US, Canada and Argentina in their efforts to force Europe to accept GMOs. According to first press reports, the WTO decided that EU national bans contravened trade rules. In reality, the WTO rejected most of the arguments, conceding that national bans are justifiable subject to risk assessment. Since then, EU Environment and Agriculture Ministers (including the Irish ones) voted three times to support the member states' legal right to maintain these bans.

Greenpeace and other NGOs said that just as the WTO case did not challenge EU laws designed to protect the environment, it could not be used to undermine existing international agreements on biosafety. For details see <http://www.genewatch.org/sub-405264>

The WTO Interim report was released on 7 February 2006, the same day that Shane Morris launched his web blog at <http://gmoireland.blogspot.com>

The WTO ruled that the EU would face punitive trade sanctions unless it ended restrictions on GM imports from the USA, Canada and Argentina by 15 January 2008, the same day that France extended its recent ban on GM maize. Canada then extended the deadline to 11 February 2008, Argentina extended it to 11 July. The USA did not indicate if will also accept an extended deadline, or push for immediate sanctions.

5. Shane Morris is currently employed as Senior Consumer Analyst at the Consumer Analysis Section of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris/ShaneMorris.pdf>).

Although the Canadian Government had denied Morris' official role in Ireland, Prof Joe Cummins (Emeritus Professor of Genetics at the University of Western Ontario, Canada) said: "Shane is a bureaucrat in Agriculture Canada and his views are supported by that Ministry. It is very clear that the Canadian government hired Shane... as a way of promoting GM crops. Shane's attacks may seem like sheer lunacy to most of us but the Canadian bureaucrats think he is brilliant in damaging the detractors of GM crops. I expect they will hire other nationals to attack those opposed to GM crops in their home countries."

Until he was outed as a Canadian Government agent, Morris gave his address at 6 Coolkill, Sandyford, Dublin 18, describing himself as "private citizen and scientist". Since then he has added his Canadian address (Woodford Way, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada) to his numerous letters to the editor of various newspapers, including the Irish Farmers Journal which has published them almost every week in recent months.

According to his CV, Shane Morris spent five years (1992-1997) studying at the National University of Ireland / Maynooth for a Bachelor of Science degree in molecular genetics and statistics. He then studied "the public perceptions and attitudes to modern biotechnology and resulting public policy and legislation" at the University of Limerick from 1997 to 2000, where he was the Manager of the now defunct "Irish Biotechnology Information Centre". He then took a brief course in "Bioethics and Public Perceptions of Biotechnology" at Oxford University. From 2002 to 2003 he was an invited reviewer for the scientific journals Trends in Biotechnology and the Journal of the Association of Analytical Communities International. His papers on GM food, GM livestock and related issues have been widely published. According to his CV, Morris is also a private consultant to "EU MEPs and members of Parliament."

The Canadian Government and the biotech industry are said to have adopted a sophisticated high tech PR propaganda technique called Public Perception Management (PPM), which uses computerised semantic analysis of daily media coverage of GM issues to feed pro-GMO stories to public relations companies, spin doctors, policy makers, and journalists. The current PPM objective aims to convince policy makers, farmers and consumers that nothing can be done to stop the GMO invasion. This strategy has proven extremely effective in shaping coverage of GMO issues in the Irish Times, the Irish Farmers Journal and other newspapers, whose superficial coverage of the controversy usually frames the debate as scientists

versus Luddites.

6. Shane Morris's blog may be found at <http://gmoireland.blogspot.com>

7. For details of Morris's attempts to sabotage the GM-free Ireland campaign see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris>

For his attacks on individuals and organisations which promote awareness of the dangers of GM food and farming, see various pages of Morris's blog at <http://gmoireland.blogspot.com>. A few examples include:

- A series of defamatory attacks on the coordinator of the GM-free Ireland network, Michael O'Callaghan, accusing him of being a "liar" and of misleading potential sponsors in order to attract funding for the GM-free Ireland campaign (<http://gmoireland.blogspot.com>).
- Defamatory attack on the journalist Jeffrey Smith, author of *Genetic Roulette: the documented health risks of GM food* (letter to the Editor, Irish Times, 29 June).
- Rounding up a group of biotech industry colleagues to discredit a fellow Canadian scientist, Prof Joe Cummins of the University of Ontario who was advising the Irish Environmental Protection Agency to refuse approval for BASF's GMO potato experiment mentioned in note 4 above.
- Using innuendo to discredit Darina Allen of Slow Food Ireland for her opposition to GM food (blog entry for 14 March 2006).
- Defamatory attack on the journalist Jeffrey Smith, author of *Genetic Roulette: the documented health risks of GM food*" (letter to the Editor, Irish Times, 29 June).
- Defamatory attack on the new Fianna Fáil / Green Party coalition government for its new policy goal to declare the island of Ireland as a GMO-free crop zone. " Irish Greens serve up fudge on GM food" [http://gmoireland.blogspot.com/2007\\_06\\_14\\_archive.html](http://gmoireland.blogspot.com/2007_06_14_archive.html)

8. In January 2007, Morris and the Chairman of Monsanto Ireland complained to the Irish Broadcasting Commission for RTE's television broadcast of the documentary film "The Future of Food" (<http://www.thefutureoffood.com>) which outlines the dangers of GM food and farming, with allegations that Percy Schmeiser was a liar [10].

9. Attack on Irish Medical News article "Claim that GM foods present health risk 'irrefutable'", 30 June 2007, by Julie-Anne Barnes: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/news/2007/jun.php>

10. In June 2006, Morris intimidated a senior executive at Bord Bia (the Irish Government Food Board) into withdrawing agreed sponsorship for the Green Ireland conference on branding for food, farming and eco-tourism where leading international experts on GMOs including Vandana Shiva, Percy Schmeiser, and Benedikt Haerlin, warned Ireland of the economic benefits of keeping Ireland free of GM crops. For conference proceedings see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/conference>.

After Bord Bia subsequently denied having made the offer to sponsor the event, Morris published defamatory allegations that GM-free Ireland had lured funding from other sponsors under false pretences, by lying about the Bord Bia sponsorship which he himself caused to be cancelled: see details at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/conference/trans/bordbia.php>.

11. In June 2007, Morris got 50 biotech industry colleagues to complain to sponsors of a Briefing on Food Safety and GMOs co-hosted by GM-free Ireland and the European Parliament Independence/Democracy Group at the European Parliament Office in Dublin (see note 12 below).

12. The Briefing on Food Safety and GMOs was held at the European Parliament Office in Dublin on 15 June 2007 (two days after the new coalition government had agreed its policy goal to declare the whole island of Ireland as a GMO-free zone). The event was co-hosted by the GM-free Ireland Network and the European Parliament Independence/Democracy Group. It was sponsored by various organisations including the European Parliament Independence/Democracy Group (<http://www.europarl.eu.int/inddem>), Euro-Toques Ireland (<http://www.eurotoquesirl.org>), Glenisk Organic Ireland (<http://www.glenisk.com>), GM-free Ireland Network (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org>), Irish Doctors Environmental Association (<http://www.ideaireland.org>), Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association (<http://www.irishorganic.ie>), and Slow Food Ireland (<http://www.slowfoodireland.com>).

Speakers included:

- Trevor Sargent TD in his capacity as Acting Leader of the Green Party. He is now Minister of State for Food and Horticulture.
- Kathy Sinnott MEP, is the EU Parliament Representative to the European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office (<http://ec.europa.eu/food>) which is responsible for ensuring that Community legislation on food safety, animal health, plant health and animal welfare is properly implemented and enforced in the EU, and by third countries exporting to the EU. For details see: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/public/geoSearch/view.do;jsessionid=A9F55875EFB31DB5742F746CBD33E288.node1?country=IE&partNumber=1&zone=South&language=EN&id=28119>
- Jeffrey Smith, who launched his new book Genetic Roulette: the documented health risks of GM foods (Yes! Books. Fairfield, Iowa, USA, 2007. ISBN 978-0-9729665-2-8. Hardcover, 336 pages, € 23. Available at the Cultivate Centre, 15-19 Essex St. West, Temple Bar, Dublin 8, tel (01) 674 5773 or by mailorder from <http://www.GeneticRoulette.com>).
- Dr. Ricarda Steinbrecher PhD of EcoNexus (<http://www.econexus.info>) is part of the legal and scientific team of the ETC Group (<http://www.etcgroup.org>) which convinced the European Patent Office to revoke Monsanto's species-wide patent on genetically modified soybeans. Dr. Steinbrecher's briefing covered (a) the genome scrambling found in many GM crops (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/health/BSR-2-BGERvol23.pdf>), (b) a scientific study which found that a variety of Monsanto GM maize approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and widely fed to Irish cattle and sheep causes liver and kidney damage in laboratory animals (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/health/SeraliniPaper2007.pdf>), and (c) the EU-wide call for EFSA to stop using secret risk assessments provided to it by the biotech industry as the basis for approving the release of GM animal feed, food and crops, and for EFSA to make the related data available for public scrutiny and scientific peer review.
- Michael O'Callaghan, co-ordinator of the GM-free Ireland Network.

13. Morris's mentions his intention to set up a pro-GMO "information service" at the National University of Ireland on his blog at:

[http://gmoireland.blogspot.com/2007\\_09\\_14\\_archive.html#165453896628222342](http://gmoireland.blogspot.com/2007_09_14_archive.html#165453896628222342)

14. "Briefing Document for Fine Gael: GMOs and Ireland: 10 years of poor FF led policy":

<http://www.gmfreeireland.org/politics/GMOs-and-Ireland.fg.document.oct.2007.doc>

The briefing contains, inter alia, verbatim text from an earlier letter which Morris sent to the Editor of the Kilkenny Voice newspaper, dated 28 September 2007 (published 27 September). Morris's authorship of the briefing is well-known in Fine Gael circles and was also confirmed by Fianna Fáil politicians after the briefing was sent to them by mistake in October (see note 15 below).

Fine Gael's credibility on GM food and farming was already in tatters before this embarrassing revelation that they are being advised by a covert agent of the Canadian Government.

Speaking at a Government hearing convened by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Local Government on 15 June 2005, Fine Gael Senator James Bannon said:

"I am totally opposed to the introduction of GM foods because of the serious health repercussions. Experts throughout Europe observe that supermarkets and food manufacturers are concerned at the introduction of GM foods because the public does not want them and there is no market for such products. Moreover, the warnings from experts and doctors dictate that such products should not be forced into our food chains. I hope the Government will oppose the introduction of GM foods at EU level": <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/downloads/GMO-15June2005.pdf>

But in the lead up to the 2007 General Election, Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny told Michael O'Callaghan of GM-free Ireland that this country can "do nothing" to stop the invasion of GM animal feed, food and crops – apparently unaware that many other EU member states and Regions have already banned the crops and are now phasing out GM animal feed as well.

This contradicts the position taken in June 2006 by Brody Sweeney (the CEO of O'Briens Sandwich bars who ran unsuccessfully as a Fine Gael candidate in the General Election), when he presented his concept

for an explicitly GM-free "Green Ireland" food branding scheme at the Green Ireland conference in June 2006 (see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/conference/trans/bsweeney.php>).

But on 29 November 2006, Sweeney and Fine Gael's then agriculture spokesperson, Denis Naughten, officially launched Fine Gael's "Green Ireland" policy with a press release "FG's Green Ireland label will promote top quality Irish produce the world over – Naughten" (<http://www.finegael.ie/news/index.cfm/type/details/nkey/29899>). The arguments for such a label included all those made by GM-free Ireland at our Green Ireland conference, but with all references to GM ingredients carefully removed.

On 20 October 2007, Fine Gael MEP Mairead McGuinness, along with MEPs James Nicholson (Ulster Unionist Party) and Struan Stevenson (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party), engaged in a failed attempt to introduce numerous amendments to an EU Parliament Resolution on behalf of the PPE-DE Group. The amendments aimed, inter alia, to raise contamination thresholds for imported GM animal feed, and to fast track the EU approval of illegal GM imports from the USA and other countries.

In December 2006, Mairead McGuinness attempted to introduce numerous amendments into a Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on Biotechnology: Prospects and Challenges for Agriculture in Europe (2006/2059 (INI)). Mairead's amendments included weakening EU regulations on GM food and feed, and promoting the release of GM pharma crops, which would contaminate food crops with pharmaceutical products, agrofuels, and industrial chemicals! Luckily, MEPs threw out the Motion and the Resolution after widespread protest by citizens. For details see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/politics>

15. Miriam Lord's Week, Irish Times, 13 October 2007:

#### FINE GAEL EMAILER COMES A CROPPER

It's a slow day at the office. Then an e-mail lands in the Fianna Fáil adviser's in-box. His eyes light up when he sees the title: "Briefing Document for Fine Gael."

He opens the message to find Fine Gael's new 13-page strategy on the GMO issue has landed in his lap. They sent it to the enemy by mistake.

It begins "GMOs and Ireland: 10 years of poor FF-led policy." The opening paragraph begins thus: "Since 1997, Fianna Fáil governments have repeatedly flip-flopped the issue of GMOs. This recently came to a head on September 28th when Green Party Minister Trevor Sargent dramatically changed stated policy regarding a 'GM-free Ireland' by stating "GM free zone is not about banning imported GM feed" (possible draft Dáil questions, below on pg. 5)". And on it goes, with page after page of background rebuttal material, full of quotes from Fianna Fáil and Green politicians.

Suggested Dáil questions include ones for Trevor Sargent.

"Does Minister Sargent agree that this nation's food supply is not an issue for party political sound bites but rather political decisions made on the basis of scientifically sound independent advice?"

Lots of examples of previous statements are highlighted before a possible question for Minister Dempsey is offered: "Did Noel Dempsey, in his programme for government discussions with the Greens, forget the conclusions of his own tax payer-supported public consultations?" All that hard work for nothing. They're certainly green in Fine Gael now, but for all the wrong reasons. But Trevor Sargent had an extra pep in his step last week, and they're still laughing in Fianna Fáil.

Forwarned is forearmed.

16. Agronomic and consumer considerations for Bt and conventional sweet-corn, Powell D.A.; Blaine K.; Morris S.; Wilson J., British Food Journal, Volume: 105, Issue: 10, Page: 700-713 (Nov 2003): <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/00070700310506254>

When this paper was published in 2003, Shane Morris was employed as National Biotechnology Operations Coordinator at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (according to his CV).

The study was funded by the biotech-industry front group, Council for Biotechnology Information <http://www.gmwatch.org/profile1.asp?PrId=287> and the industry's trade association, the Crop Protection Institute of Canada (now Croplife Canada). The paper was given the British Food Journal's "Award for Excellence for the Most Outstanding Paper of 2004" and has been cited often by biotech advocates.

The study claimed that food consumers preferred GM maize over conventional maize.

But eyewitness accounts and photographic evidence showed that the paper failed to mention a large sign which biased the consumers choice. The paper has been internationally denounced as "misleading" and/or "fraudulent" by numerous scientists including Dr. Richard Jennings (an expert in research ethics at the University of Cambridge) Prof. Joe Cummins (Emeritus Professor of Genetics at the University of Western Ontario, Canada), by scientists at York University in Canada, the University of Guelph in Canada, and the University of New South Wales in Australia, and in various publications including New Scientist magazine, Food Consumer, Private Eye, and The Ecologist. The British Food Journal has been asked to retract the paper, and annul the award it gave it as Best Scientific Paper of the Year.

Senator Norris condemned Shane Morris's scientific paper as "a fraud" and denounced its "complete abnegation of all scientific standards".

The Canadian Government recently attempted to distance itself from the scandal by pointing out that Morris co-authored the paper before he started work with his current employer, Agri-Food Canada. But according to Morris's CV, at the time he wrote the paper he must have been employed as National Biotechnology Operations Coordinator for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (which is part of the Government).

Published critiques of the study include (in reverse chronological order):

- Open letter to the British Food Journal, co-signed by 40 scientists, 24 January 2008: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris/retraction.php>
- Corn on the cobblers. Private Eye Magazine, No. 1201, 11-24 January 2008 <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris/privateeye.php>
- Of wormy corn and websites: who pulled the plug on the GM Watch website? The Ecologist magazine, December 2007 / January 2008. <http://www.theecologist.org/news/2007/jun.php>
- Company Research on Genetically Modified Foods is Rigged, FoodConsumer.org, 21 November 2007. By the Institute for Responsible Technology (USA): [http://foodconsumer.org/7777/8888/Technologies\\_40/112107022007\\_Company\\_Research\\_on\\_Genetically\\_Modified\\_Foods\\_is\\_Rigged.shtml](http://foodconsumer.org/7777/8888/Technologies_40/112107022007_Company_Research_on_Genetically_Modified_Foods_is_Rigged.shtml)
- Controversy over claims in favour of GM corn. New Scientist magazine, Vol 190, No. 2553, 27 May 2006, p.7 <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn9235-controversy-over-claims-in-favour-of-gm-corn.html>
- Corn Fakes, Private Eye, No. 1194, 28 September-11 October 2007: <http://bioseguridad.blogspot.com/2007/09/fraude.html>
- Tim Lambert, Would you eat wormy corn?, 7 September 2007: [http://scienceblogs.com/deltoid/2007/09/would\\_you\\_eat\\_wormy\\_sweet\\_corn.php](http://scienceblogs.com/deltoid/2007/09/would_you_eat_wormy_sweet_corn.php)
- The GM propaganda lab. The British Food Journal's Award for Excellence for Most Outstanding Paper in 2004 went to research that should never have been published. What the reviewers mistook for an impressive piece of scientific enquiry was a carefully crafted propaganda exercise that could only have one outcome. Both the award and the paper now need to be retracted. <http://www.gmwatch.org/p1temp.asp?pid=72&page=1>
- Letters, British Food Journal 2006 Vol : 108, Issue: 8 (August 2006) <http://www.foodsafetynetwork.ca/en/article-details.php?a=3&c=9&sc=62&id=897>
- Secret Ingredients: The Brave New World of Industrial Farming, Stuart Laidlaw, McClelland & Stewart, 15 April 2003

17. The GM-free Ireland Network (<http://www.gmfreeireland.org>) is a coalition of over 130 Non Governmental Organisations, food businesses and farming organisations which promotes public awareness on the dangers of genetically modified food and farming through conferences, workshops, briefings and a lobbying campaign to declare the whole island of Ireland as a GMO-free zone, i.e. off-limits to GM seeds, crops, trees, fish and livestock.

18. GM watch (<http://www.gmwatch.org>) is a highly respected UK-based non-governmental organisation which fosters global public awareness about GMO issues through a free subscription to daily world-wide media coverage of GM issues. It also maintains a database of biotech lobby groups, front organisations, lobbyists and spin doctors. See their account of the controversy over Shane Morris's "scientific" methods at <http://www.gmwatch.org/p1temp.asp?pid=72&page=1>

19. Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation ("SLAPP") is a form of litigation filed by a large organization or in some cases an individual plaintiff, to intimidate and silence a less powerful critic by so severely burdening them with the cost of a legal defence that they abandon their criticism. For details see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris/slapp.php>

Shane Morris began his threats of SLAPP lawsuits against the GM-free Ireland Network on 20 July 2007, objecting to an (unpublished) letter sent by Michael O'Callaghan to the Irish Times on 29 June, which stated: "Morris and his biotech colleague and mentor Doug Powell (a well-known GM industry lobbyist) have co-authored a number of pro-GMO papers, one of which received the GM Watch Propaganda Lab Award 2006 for its fraudulent scientific claims, triggering a controversy reported by New Scientist magazine."

The attempt failed in Ireland, but briefly succeeded in the UK when GM Watch's internet service provider caved in to pressure and shut down that web site for a few days. Morris falsely claimed that GM-free Ireland had apologised for describing his work as "fraudulent".

On 17 August, Morris attempted to cover up the scandal about his misleading paper with a second threat of legal action against the GM-free Ireland Network, via an email with the following demand that we remove all mention of him on our web site:

"You will note that the GM Watch website in the UK has been disabled. As a matter of urgency please remove the (sic) all the GM Watch material on GM Free Ireland's website that you have reproduced in connection with me. The bulk of this material is sourced at <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/news/2007/jun.php#shane> and includes the following 'Award for a Fraud', published by GM Watch: <http://www.gmwatch.org/p1temp.asp?pid=72&page=%201>. Etc. Also please remove all references to "fraud" and myself including those you cite from GM Watch (for example at various locations I (sic) your news section). If this is not done by close of business today, August 17, 2007, I will have to further instruct my legal representatives on the matter."

On 22 August, GM-free Ireland notified Morris of our refusal to remove all references to him on our website, while updating the title of the quoted GM Watch article. We emphasized to Morris that this action did not constitute any admission of liability by us or our internet service provider, and requested him to cease and desist from further harrasing the GM-free Ireland Network and our internet service provider in relation to this or any other matter.

Morris responded by claiming that GM-free Ireland, GM Watch and their respective internet service providers in Ireland and the UK "have already admitted liability by your posting of an earlier correction", with the implied threat that he would yet seek recovery of his legal costs. For details see <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris>

20. The Soil Association is the UK's leading campaigning and certification organisation for organic food and farming: <http://www.soilassociation.org>. It's latest report on the dangers of GM animal feed may be found at <http://www.soilassociation.org/gm>

21: Letter from Peter Melchett to James Wright, UK High Commissioner for Canada, 4 September 2007: <http://www.gmfreeireland.org/morris/soilassociation1.php>

22. Early Day Motions (EDMs) are formal motions submitted for debate in the UK House of Commons. However, very few EDMs are actually debated. Instead, they are used to publicise the views of individual MPs, draw attention to specific events or campaigns, and demonstrate the extent of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.

23. Early Day Motion EDM 425 : SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INTO GM CROPS 28.11.2007  
<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=34547&SESSION=891>:

Meacher, Michael

That this House regrets the continuing attempts to silence or misrepresent scientists whose research indicates possible human health problems from GM crops, as in the case of Dr Irina Ermakova who was misled by the editor of Nature Biotechnology into submitting an article to the journal to be published

under her name, with the article in fact published under the editor's name with criticisms by four well-known GM supporters not seen by Dr Ermakova prior to publication; deplores the continuing efforts by an employee of the Canadian Government, Shane Morris, to close down websites in the UK and Republic of Ireland which have, along with Dr Richard Jennings of Cambridge University, said that research which claimed that consumers prefer GM sweetcorn published by this employee and others and given an Award for Excellence, is a flagrant fraud; and calls on the Government Chief Scientist to protect the integrity and objectivity of science by reasserting the right of scientists to have their views published by journals without underhand interference by journal editors, and for the Chief Scientist to encourage journal editors to withdraw papers they have published which subsequently turn out to be grossly misleading or even fraudulent.

Signatures (as of 14 December 2007)

Meacher, Michael (Labour), Simpson, Alan (Labour), George, Andrew (Liberal Democrats), Robertson, Angus (Scottish National Party), Baker, Norman (Liberal Democrats), Drew, David (Labour), Walley, Joan (Labour), Prentice, Gordon (Labour), Hopkins, Kelvin (Labour), Caton, Martin (Labour), Dean, Janet (Labour), Dismore, Andrew (Labour), McCafferty, Chris (Labour), Breed, Colin (Liberal Democrats), Stunell, Andrew (Liberal Democrats), Jackson, Glenda (Labour), Cryer, Ann (Labour), Rudi, Vis (Labour) Alexander, Danny (Liberal Democrats), McDonnell, John (Labour), Connarty, Michael (Labour), Leech, John (Liberal Democrats), Heyes, David (Labour).

For details of the Irina Ermakova affair mentioned above, see:

What is Nature Biotechnology good for? The case of Irina Ermakova, The Bioscience Resource Project, Dec 4 2007: <http://www.bioscienceresource.org/commentaries/brc6.php> .

See also <http://www.nature.com/nbt/index.html>

24. Extract from speech by Senator David Norris at the Irish Senate on 6 December 2007, <http://www.senatordavidnorris.ie/blogger/2007/12/order-of-business-6th-december-2007.html> :

"Will the Leader raise with Government the extraordinary interference by an agent of the Canadian Government in political discourse in this country?

I refer to the attempt by an agent of the Canadian Government - whose name I have, but I will not put it on the record as I understand this is improper - to close down the website of GM-Free Ireland. This has been raised in the House of Commons in an Early Day Motion signed by Michael Meacher and 17 other MPs deploring the efforts of this person to shut down websites using the threat of action for defamation, which is interesting given we were dealing with defamation yesterday.

The website referred to the fact that the research of this person was fraudulent, as it was. The fraud consisted of the following. The research group monitored the buying habits of consumers in a supermarket in Canada in their choice of sweetcorn and determined that a certain type of sweetcorn was more popular. It was later found, however, that one type of sweetcorn was sold next to a sign referring to quality sweetcorn while the other was next to a sign that read: "Would you eat wormy sweetcorn?" That is not exactly a level playing field. It was a complete abnegation of all scientific standards. This man is now trying to close down Irish networks that tell the truth about GM food, with interventions by large companies such as Monsanto to deface clear scientific research."