

# PRESS RELEASE

Dublin, Earth Day, 22 April 2008 • GM-free Ireland Network

## RELAXING GM LAWS WILL NOT LOWER ANIMAL FEED PRICES IN EUROPE

### EU Parliament urged to maintain safety standards for GM food and feed

**European farming organisations, consumer cooperatives, and Non Governmental Organisations representing 50 million citizens from all 27 EU member states said today that relaxing EU laws on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) would not solve the problem of animal feed cost increases which have hit the continent's livestock and dairy industries.**

In a letter faxed to Members of the European Parliament [1] this morning, the coalition urged the European Union to ensure sustainable supplies of GM-free animal feed for European farmers, and to defend the EU's "zero tolerance" policy for food and animal feed containing or derived from unapproved genetically modified organisms.

The letter was co-signed by Coordination Paysanne Européenne, EuroCoop, European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth Europe, GM-free Ireland Network, Greenpeace, International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements EU Group, and the Save our Seeds Coalition.

This is the latest move in the war to control the world food supply through GM crops patented by agri-chemical-biotech corporate giants including Monsanto, BASF, Dupont/Pioneer/Dow, and Syngenta, in collusion with global commodity traders Cargill, Bunge, and Archer Daniel Midlands (ADM) which dominate the animal feed trade.

It's a war fought with crop patents, propaganda, and threats of punitive trade sanctions against European member states and other countries which refuse to vote their approval of new GMOs for animal feed, food and cultivation:

- - the crop patents enable Monsanto and few other giant companies to control 50% of the world's agricultural crops, making it illegal for farmers to save and plant their own seeds, enabling the corporations to file patent infringement lawsuits against farmers contaminated by GM seed dispersal and pollen drift, thus empowering corporate patent owners to expropriate the food supply of nations;
- - the propaganda includes false claims that GM crops do not contaminate natural crops, that they have higher yields, that they are proven to be medically and environmentally safe, that they require less toxic chemicals, and that rising animal feed costs in Europe are caused by the EU's refusal to fast-track the approval of new GM maize and soya varieties;
- - the punitive trade sanctions are being threatened - through the WTO - by the governments of the USA, Canada and Argentina: the US is currently threatening economic sanctions against the EU if it refuses to lift Austria's ban on GM crops, and has also threatened punitive import tariffs against individual EU member states unless they vote in favour of legalising new GM animal feed ingredients in the EU single market.

Some players, including the bosses of the Irish Farmers Association, seem to have swallowed the propaganda and deny the existence of certified non-GM feed. Like mice before a mousetrap, they have even become leading advocates of GM crops that would contaminate their own country in perpetuity and effectively shut them out of the growing EU market for quality meat, poultry and dairy produce from livestock fed a GM-free diet.

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In response to the rising cost of animal feed, the European GM-free coalition points out that the EU is the world's most powerful trading block, and thus has the economic strength to influence what exporting countries cultivate so as to secure the safe GM-free supply chain which the majority of European farmers, food brands, retailers and consumers demand. For example, last year Brazilian soya exporters offered to ship certified non-GMO soya meal for European farmers' entire requirements in 2008, subject to EU regional coordination and forward planning. Unfortunately, some importers (including Ireland's R&H Hall) failed to act on time, raising suspicions of collusion with commodity traders like Cargill which has joint ventures with Monsanto.

On Sunday, the German Minister for Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, Horst Seehofer, accused transnational animal feed and food corporations of being "primarily interested in maximising profits and not in provisioning people... It is not acceptable that in the U.S. there is essentially only one corporation left that supplies seed. This means farmers are blackmailed there and in the developing countries as well." Criticising the role played by market speculators and commodity traders in the rising cost of animal feed, he said "behind all that is the interest of the multinationals to sell their genetically modified soy and maize."

Tomorrow (Wednesday), a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg will debate a controversial proposal by a British MEP to "synchronise" new GMO approvals with those made in the USA (which are usually based on unverified safety claims made by the applicant companies).

The European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs, Stavros Dimas, said he will oppose all further approvals of GMOs until the European Food Safety Authority has been given the capacity to carry out its legal requirements for reliable scientific risk assessments.

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

1. Letter to the Members of the European Parliament, 22 April 2008:

[http://www.gmfreeireland.org/feed/EP/Ltr\\_animalFeed\\_EP\\_questions\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/feed/EP/Ltr_animalFeed_EP_questions_FINAL.pdf)

Attached Annex:

[http://www.gmfreeireland.org/feed/EP/ANNEX\\_Ltr\\_animalFeed\\_EP\\_questions\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.gmfreeireland.org/feed/EP/ANNEX_Ltr_animalFeed_EP_questions_FINAL.pdf)