

“94.6 percent of EU citizens want the right to choose, 85.9 percent want to know more before eating GMOs, and 70.9 percent simply do not want GM food.”

Eurobarometer opinion poll, European Commission, December 2001.

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europa says ‘no’ to gmos

Since the 1990s, there has been growing public concern in Europe about the impact that GM crops will have on both the environment and public health. Environmental and consumer organizations, doctors, scientists, food processors and retailers, farmers, landowners, development agencies and the majority of European citizens have increasingly raised their concerns.

A survey of leading European food manufacturers carried out in 2000 showed that faced with consumer opposition to GMOs, nearly all of Europe’s top twenty food processing companies, including Unilever, Nestlé and Kraft/Jacobs/Suchard, had either already removed or intended to remove genetically modified ingredients from their product lines.



“Ingredients used in our products are not derived from genetically modified sources and no GMOs are used in our soft drink manufacturing process or in those of our ingredients suppliers in Europe.”

Pepsi Cola

“Respecting consumer concerns was a priority for Danone. Therefore it has decided not to use such ingredients in its products sold in the EU.”

Danone

“Kellogg’s is conscious of consumer preferences and does not use GM maize or soy ingredients or derivatives in its breakfast cereals sold in Europe.”

Kellogg’s



© foe swin/mick cobbins

more information:

A map of all GM-free communes in Italy can be found at:

www.rfb.it/comuni.liberi.ogm/comuni_aderenti/adesioni.htm

See UK GM free zones at:

www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/resource/gm_free_britain/index.html

An interactive map on the FoE UK website:

www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/press_for_change/email_la/index.shtml

Information about GM-free zones in Wales:

www.foe.co.uk/cymru/english/campaigns/real_food/gm.html

Friends of the Earth Europe GMO campaign:

www.foeeurope.org

moratorium mania

The growing concern about the release of GM crops into the food chain and into the environment had prompted five European Union member states to impose either specific bans or some form of moratorium on GM plants by the end of the 1990s. Austria and Luxembourg adopted a ban on Novartis GM maize; France imposed a moratorium on all GM plants with indigenous relatives (such as oilseed rape and beet) for two years; Greece banned a variety of GM oilseed rape; and the UK announced a three-year "moratorium" on insect-resistant GM crops.

In practice, no new GMOs have been authorized for planting or use in the EU since 1998. In June 1999, five EU member states – Denmark, France, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg – issued an official declaration which established a *de facto* moratorium:

they committed to effectively blocking new GMO approvals until comprehensive legislation on GMOs has been adopted. This moratorium has prevented new GMOs from entering the European market since that time.

In addition, independent of the EU moratorium, an increasing number of regions and local areas are working towards becoming GM-free zones. By the end of 2003, ten European regions had declared themselves "the network of GMO-free regions".

For example, the region of Upper Austria has passed a law making it a GM-free zone. Five other provincial parliaments (Salzburg, Tirol, Burgenland, Steiermark and Lower Austria) have also moved to declare their provinces GMO-free. In Italy, four regions (Tuscany, Molise, Lazio and Marche) have banned GM crops. Additionally, a large number of cities have declared themselves GM-free, including

Rome, Milan, Turin, Brescia and Genoa. In Spain, the government of the Basque region has issued a five-year blanket moratorium for GMOs. In Switzerland, three cantons have so far effectively banned the commercial release of GMOs: in the canton of Ticino, a law was passed banning the cultivation of GMOs.

In the UK, 22 areas have approved a GM-free resolution. In November 2003, the British National Trust voted overwhelmingly to go GM free and to ban GM crops from being grown on Trust land. The Trust is the largest private owner of agricultural land in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, owning more than 600,000 acres of land of which over 80 percent is farmed or depends upon farming for its management. Additionally, the Welsh Assembly has adopted a GM-free policy and has passed the first laws on separation distances for crops in Europe.

“The Georgian Ministry of the Environment demonstrates its negative attitude to the imports of transgenic potatoes and their cultivation. We’re not convinced that it’s safe. [...] The question of the imports and tests with such organisms should be considered in every country as a problem of national safety.”

Mrs. Nino Chkhobadze, Minister of the Environment in Georgia.

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gm potatoes mashed in georgia and the ukraine



monsanto messes with georgian potatoes

In May 1996, between 133 and 148 tons of Monsanto’s “NewLeaf” Bt potatoes were imported into Georgia. These GM seed potatoes, from the US and Canada, were planted in traditional potato growing regions in Georgia.

Civil society in Georgia, including Friends of the Earth, protested vocally against the import and cultivation of GM potatoes, and organized a seminar about the issue in the national parliament in August 1996. Despite the ban, approximately 300 tons of potatoes from the 1996 harvest were replanted in 1997 across some 144 to 400 hectares. No detailed figures are available, and so far it has been impossible to track down the transgenic potatoes. They may have been consumed by humans, but they also might have been exported to Azerbaijan or Russia and mixed with non-GM potatoes.

© bajah freeman

GM protesters in Georgia.



Moreover, the production of Monsanto's GM potatoes failed in Georgia, leading to commercial losses and debts for the farmers who cultivated them. The 1996 harvest was extremely low: instead of the estimated 18-22 tons per hectare, farmers only harvested some 8 tons per hectare. Some of the official reasons given for the failure were that the Bt potatoes were not adapted to local conditions, that the planting was done too late, and that the potatoes were affected by a fungus.

Unfortunately, neither Monsanto nor the Georgian Minister of Agriculture has assessed the negative ecological or health impacts of this transgenic potato. No adequate plan for resistance management was carried out for Monsanto's Bt potato harvest in Georgia, nor were farmers informed about the fact that they were sowing GM seeds. Additionally, no monitoring of the potential development of beetle resistance to the Bt toxin was undertaken.

hands off ukrainian potatoes!

The Ukraine's history with GM crops started in 1997, when Monsanto imported 37 tons of the "NewLeaf" Bt potato for test purposes. Another 367 tons of GM potato seeds entered the country the following year.

In the meantime, the public demonstrated their concerns about the dissemination of GM plants and the potential risks of GMOs in general. Government authorities also took interest in the issue. Consequently, in 1999, the Ministry of Agriculture refused to allow more GM potatoes to be grown as food.

Subsequently, biotech corporations began a widespread public and political pressure campaign to obtain official permission to plant GMOs. In 2000, a draft law with a clear orientation towards the wishes of the biotech industry was prepared. The law contained very weak provisions on biosafety (the safety of GMOs), and did not provide adequate measures to address the potential risks GM crops could have for the environment and for human health. The public was excluded from participating in the drafting of the law, and Friends of the Earth, civil society and some parliamentary groups exerted pressure until the law was finally rejected in the Ukrainian Parliament in January 2001.

more information:

Friends of the Earth Georgia: www.greens.ge

Friends of the Earth Ukraine: www.zsfoe.org

A crop's center of origin is the place where it originates. These centers are the basis of food security and cultural traditions, and where tens of thousands of varieties of crops such as corn, potato, soy, and rice are preserved, grown and used by local people.

the seeding of global opposition **four**

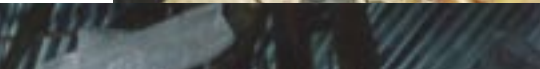
bolivian farmers refuse gm potatoes

*Potato varieties stored in the Garcia Rovira province,
Colombia, where potato is also a staple crop.*





source and more information:
 Fobomade, see:
www.fobomade.org.bo/index1.php



the importance of the potato in bolivia

Bolivia is the center of origin of the potato. Farmers in the high Andean region guarantee their food needs through the diversification of agriculture, and the potato is a basic component in ensuring food sovereignty for Bolivian farming families and for the country.

In April 2000, the Bolivian Biosafety Committee approved a request for field trials of a GM potato resistant to nematodes (a worm). The request was presented by the Bolivian Proinpa Foundation, with material originating from Leeds University in England. There is a high risk of genetic contamination of non-GM potato varieties in Bolivia. This would seriously impact biodiversity and cultural diversity, and could also cause genetic erosion, the disappearance of some varieties, and the loss of traditional cultural practices connected to the potato.

resistance and withdrawal

When the request to conduct GM potato field trials became known, farmers from different areas in the Andes rejected the experiments in a letter addressed to the Bolivian Vice Minister of Natural Resources and Environment. This strong negative reaction had not been foreseen by the project promoters. Andean farmers firmly opposed the plan, and threatened to destroy the field trials. Meanwhile, protest statements against the introduction of the Bolivian potato arrived from different parts of the world.

The Proinpa Foundation came under heavy criticism at several public meetings in La Paz, Cochabamba and Sucre, Bolivia. In June 2000, it withdrew its GM potatoes field trials project due to the “debate that GM potatoes were generating in the country” and with “the aim to create a better moment for doing so”.

“As the concerned parties were not willing to certify that the said consignment would not contain any traces of StarLink corn or any other GM traces hazardous to human health, the committee, under [the] circumstances, is unable to permit such imports.”

Indian Genetic Engineering Approval Committee, March 2003.



© Jaime Espinola, amigos de la tierra

the seeding of global opposition five

gmOs in food aid cause global outrage

Most in-kind food aid delivered today consists of US agricultural products provided for distribution in developing countries. A controversy exploded in the year 2000, when it became clear that GMOs were being introduced via food aid shipments into regions and countries where GM food was not allowed and/or without prior information. Such GM food aid shipments were criticized by civil society groups, and in some cases met with recipient government opposition.

india rejects us food aid

The first documented complaint about the shipment of GMOs in food aid was made in June 2000 in India, with the denunciation of food aid donated by USAID and the World Food Program containing GMOs. In December 2002, India rejected a large shipment of food aid from the United States because it contained genetically modified ingredients.

A. M. Gokhale, chairman of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee that rejected the consignment, said that: “If there is reason to believe that there may be damage to human health, we have the right to reject any import.” Among the concerns raised by the competent authorities was the fact that there was no full guarantee that StarLink (GM corn not authorized for human consumption in the US, see page 34) was not in the food aid.

Several agencies like CARE-India and Catholic Relief Services pressured the Indian government to authorize the food aid in the beginning of 2003, but in March the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee rejected it again, citing the fact that the food aid importers declined to certify the consignments as StarLink-free.

In fact, US food aid to India is paradoxical, since the country had 65 million tons of surplus non-GM wheat and rice in its Food Cooperation stocks in 2003.



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ecuador orders gm food aid destroyed

“We will not allow these types of products to be consumed in the country, especially taking into account that both products are destined for children up to six years of age, and pregnant mothers.” **Director General of the Ecuadorian Health Ministry, May 2001.**

In 2000, Ecuador received a large food aid donation that included 30,000 metric tons of bulk soy paste. The World Food Program (WFP) sold these products, and the money obtained was used in food aid programs for low-income sectors, especially Indigenous populations. Civil society groups monitored food donations in 2001, and discovered that the soy was genetically modified despite Bolivian technical stipulations stating that national products should be used. Furthermore, food programs also forbid GM ingredients in food aid.

Following this discovery, the Ecuadorian authorities ordered the destruction of the product containing raw GM material. They decided not to stop the food relief programs,

This happened despite a promise made in 2000 by the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, that the agency would ensure that this genetically modified maize did not enter food aid. When it was found in the US food supply in 2000, products containing StarLink were taken off the shelves via a huge product recall (see page 34). Nevertheless, despite written requests that USAID take similar measures in Bolivia, US authorities made no attempt to remove StarLink from the food aid.

gm soy removed from colombian food aid

Genetically modified ingredients were found in US food aid to Colombia in May 2001. The levels of GM content found in the samples tested were as high as 90 percent, the highest levels documented to date. After the discovery, the GM soy was withdrawn from national food aid programs aimed at young children.

contradictory food aid in guatemala

Civil society groups in Guatemala denounced the existence of GM ingredients in food aid, specifically corn seed from the World Food Program, in June 2002. The GMOs were not authorized in the EU, and the fact that Guatemala is also a center of origin of corn raised concerns about contamination. The presence of the GM corn was in contradiction to April 2002 statements by the World Food Program in Guatemala to the effect that: “All food given by the WFP is certified by the health authorities of the Minister of Agriculture, Ranching and Food and the Minister of Public Health and Social Assistance in order not to allow the introduction of GM products.”

unlabeled food aid gets the boot from uganda

In 2001, Uganda forbade the entrance of a consignment of corn soy blend, part of a US “food for peace” agreement, because it was contrary to the nation’s labeling requirements.

but asserted that the GM soy could be replaced by quinoa, beans or non-GMO soy available at the national level.

starlink sneaks into bolivian food donation

In May 2001, civil society groups in Bolivia denounced the presence of GM ingredients in food aid sent by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This was in violation of the moratorium on the introduction of GM food in place in the country at that time. US Ambassador Manuel Rocha said: “Those who don’t want our donation should not travel to our country, because this is the only food we can offer to our visitors.” One year later, in May 2002, the groups discovered “StarLink”, a genetically modified variety of maize not authorized in the US for human consumption, in US food aid sent to Bolivia.

contaminated corn seed in nicaraguan food aid

In June 2002, civil society groups in Nicaragua, a center of origin of corn, denounced the presence of GM ingredients in food aid samples. In a news release dated May 24, 2002, the World Food Program had declared that it “does not distribute food that is not acceptable for human consumption by the citizens of the producing countries (donor countries) and by the countries that receive the food assistance”.

Nonetheless, one of the seed samples donated by Germany via the World Food Program tested positive for genetically modified organisms, and had a GMO content of 3.8 percent. This level is sufficient to ban products from German grocery shelves. The organizations that made the findings raised the concern that GM corn seeds in food aid may allow genetically engineered corn to enter the birthplaces of corn, thus creating a form of biological pollution that cannot be recalled.

The Ugandan National Bureau of Standards noted that the food aid did not indicate the list of ingredients, the name and address of the manufacturers, nor instructions for use.

us withdraws bosnian food aid

In January 2001, Bosnian authorities asked US officials for detailed information on the possible effects (on both humans and animals) of the corn donated by the US. There was no reply, but the US subsequently withdrew a four million dollar donation of 40,000 tonnes of genetically engineered corn for animal feed.

*source: FoEI report *Playing with Hunger*: www.foei.org/publications/pdfs/playing_with_hunger2.pdf*

more information: geneticresourcesactioninternational.org www.grain.org

"We have traditional foods in abundance. I do not know why there is this maize mania when some of our provinces do not even grow maize, traditionally. [...] If we can buy cassava then we have won the war on this hunger and farmers will become solvent to produce more food for the next season."

Mundia Sikatana, Zambia's Minister of Agriculture.

In 2002 a food crisis affected many countries in Southern Africa, namely Angola, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. Zimbabwe was the first country to reject US food aid, and others followed. After a few months, some countries accepted food aid that had been milled, in order to avoid the accidental planting of GM seeds. Only Zambia decided to reject GM food aid in both the grain and milled forms.

restricting the right to choose

African countries that took a precautionary approach and asked for non-GMO food aid were initially left with little choice. The US and even the World Food Program told them that they should accept some GM content. Their right to choose was clearly impaired. An unnamed US official was even quoted as saying that "beggars can't be choosers".

The shipment of whole corn kernels as food aid carries the danger of genetic contamination, as it allows GM grains to be planted in countries with neither biosafety regulations nor the capacity to deal with GM crops. Further concerns include a negative impact on agro-ecosystems, including the development of

account the specific situation of people in developing countries". These organizations believe that populations fed with food aid, especially children, are particularly vulnerable due to malnutrition and lack of food, and that any potential danger presented by GM foods might increase when they are consumed by an immune-depressed population. According to UK Chief Scientific Advisor Professor David King, forcing GM foods into Africa as food aid is "a massive human experiment".

"is it better to die than to eat gm food?"

"It is very interesting to note that for the first time, Zambia was being forced to accept a gift. Doesn't this worry us as recipients that the giver is insisting that we take the GM foods? Are the Americans just concerned about our stomachs or there is something behind the gift?" **Zambia Daily Mail, November 5, 2002.**

Africans were forced to accept some GM content in their food aid. Nevertheless, the case of Zambia proved that there were alternatives to GM.

"Is it better to die than to eat GM food?" This question, often raised during the Southern African food crisis, presented a scenario in

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southern africa rejects food aid in hunger crisis



resistance in target insect pests, harmful effects on non-target insects, the development of herbicide tolerance in weeds, and genetic erosion or loss of traditional crop diversity as a result of genetic contamination through cross-fertilization. To avoid these potential risks, most of the countries decided that the GM food aid should at least be milled to prevent the planting of the grain.

However, milling the maize did not take into account any possible potential risk derived from the consumption of GM food. According to Norway's Minister of International Development: "There might also be a probability of higher risk when one is in a food crisis situation, consuming only one GMO product over time." Many Third World based organizations have been very critical of this risk, considering that the "assumptions about alleged GM food safety are based on a limited range of experiments that do not take into

which there was nothing but GM food available. This scenario has since been proven false, since alternatives could have been made available and are now being provided in large quantities. Current research shows that there was ample non-GM maize and non-GM cereals in the world that could have been sent to countries preferring not to accept GM food, African nations as well as India and Mexico. In fact, it has been shown that even the United States had enough non-GM corn to supply the requisite food aid.

Nonetheless, the World Food Program argued at the end of 2002 that the main goal was to meet the countries' short-term food needs. In the case of Zambia, which was the only country accepting no food aid whatsoever, the WFP claimed that it was impossible to mobilize non-GM food fast enough, as organizing food aid operations requires considerable time and resources.

But again, the lack of choice was just an illusion. Zambian NGOs pledged that they could quickly mobilize surpluses of traditional foods available in the country, like cassava, to food deficit areas if financial resources were made available.

The drought season in Zambia particularly affected the southern part of the country, and the local maize supplies were clearly insufficient. However the northern part of the country, particularly the northwestern province, had food security due to the fact that there were an estimated 300,000 metric tons of cassava, one of Zambia's staple foods, stockpiled there.

The Zambian government asked the WFP to use traditional foods to deal with the crisis. Cassava has a long history as a key crop in food security. Yet cassava was not even included in calculations of the country's food deficit, and the WFP didn't consider it as a possible solution to the crisis. The WFP apparently considers cassava to be an inferior food, although it is eaten by more than 200 million people in Africa and constitutes the main staple food for 30 percent of the Zambian population.



© Richard Lee, world food programme

A coalition of groups, comprising churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), worked with the Zambian government to form an alliance to raise funds to buy cassava from areas of surplus and distribute it to food-deficit areas. Despite their recognition that it was a good project, the WFP refused to support the initiative. Given that the WFP in Zambia channels the financial resources of donors and coordinates all food relief efforts, their refusal prevented the project from being implemented.

Instead, the WFP brought barley from the United States, which is not a staple food in Zambia and is only used there for producing beer. This clearly contradicts the principle that food aid should be socially and culturally acceptable to recipient countries.

In the end, the Zambian government stayed firm in its decision not to accept GM food aid. It proved able to cope with the food crisis, supported by many countries and organizations, and the country enjoyed a bumper crop in 2003.

linking aids funds to gm food aid

"It was a wrong decision by the government and I hope they will rethink it. We are going to make more food available to AIDS patients and the government must decide. [...] GM (genetically modified) food is absolutely safe, our experts have done tests and found it completely safe." **Tommy Thompson, US Health Secretary, December 2003, referring to the Zambian government's rejection of GM food aid.**

Another issue of serious concern arose in May 2003 when the US Senate passed a bill linking assistance for AIDS to acceptance of GMOs. The United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 urges African states to accept GM food aid, implying that this is a condition for the release of assistance funds. In December 2003 this became even clearer when US Health Secretary Tommy Thompson, in a visit to Zambia related to future donations on the topic of HIV/AIDS, criticized the decision of the Zambian government to reject GM food aid.

more information:
FoEI report *Playing with Hunger:*
www.foei.org/publications/pdfs/playing_with_hunger2.pdf

Protests against GM food and the Bush administration in Croatia.



the seeding of global opposition seven

croatia, bolivia and sri lanka receive trade threats



In face of the potential risks associated with GMOs, many countries have decided to adopt strict measures regulating genetically modified food. On every continent, governments have adopted or prepared moratoria, bans or legislation to prevent the unregulated flow of GM crops. The European Union froze new authorizations for GM crops in 1998. Croatia prepared a draft law for a moratorium on GMOs in 2001. In Asia, Sri Lanka prepared a Food Act with the goal of banning GM food. Japan and South Korea adopted new labeling rules for GMOs. In Latin America, Paraguay imposed a moratorium in 1998 and Bolivia banned GMOs in 2001. In Africa, Benin adopted a moratorium in 2002.

Close on the heels of these measures, biotech companies and pro-biotech governments such as the US started putting overwhelming pressure on these countries, threatening them with trade sanctions via the World Trade Organization (WTO).

sri lanka shrinks from gmo ban

Early in 2001, the Sri Lankan government drafted a Food Act that would ban GMOs. The Act aimed to protect the Sri Lankan people from the potential and incompletely understood impacts of GMOs.

The US immediately mounted opposition to the proposed ban. The Agricultural Counselor from the US Embassy in India threatened to challenge the ban under the WTO, which could have cost Sri Lanka US\$190 million in penalties if they refused to lift the ban.

Sri Lankan NGOs, including Friends of the Earth, mounted a campaign to urge their government to withstand the threat of a trade challenge. More than 200 consumer, farm and environmental groups worldwide added their voices in protest of the Bush administration's challenge to Sri Lanka's food safety laws. Ultimately, due to pressure from the US as



participating in a roundtable on biosafety organized by the Croatian Environmental Ministry denounced the US bullying of their government about its plans for a GMO moratorium.

The memo from the US Embassy also asserted that biotech food products “have been demonstrated to be as safe as conventional food products in the US and elsewhere”. However, in response to this memo, US NGOs asserted in a letter addressed to the Croatian Minister of Environment that the US regulatory framework and monitoring policies are currently not sufficient to conclude that GMOs are safe.

Although a total ban on GMOs was not adopted due to US intimidation, Croatia finally implemented strict legislation on GMOs in 2003. The legislation does not allow GMO releases in protected areas, buffer zones,

In August 2001, the Bolivian government pledged to extend the ban past the end of the year, and to upgrade it to a “Supreme Decree” having the full force of law. This promise was made in a written agreement between the Bolivian government, farm workers and small farmers’ organizations. Unexpectedly, however, the government was forced to revoke the legislation due to pressure from Argentina and its agri-biotech corporations. The ban was revoked without warning in October.

In a leaked memo from the Bolivian government, it is asserted that “the (Argentinean) soy corporate sector is behind it, because they export five thousand millions of dollars of genetically modified soy to Europe and North America”.

well as Australia, the Food Act ban was deferred indefinitely.

us bullies croatia to accept gmos

In June 2001, four Croatian ministries agreed on the text of a draft law to ban GMOs and derived products until a more specific regulatory framework is in place. The ban was proposed because of the possible negative impacts of the introduction of GMOs on the environment and human health in Croatia.

By September 2001, Croatia was under increasing pressure from the US to drop the draft law. In a memo dated November 28th from the US Embassy in Zagreb to the Croatian Ministry of Environment, the US tried to put trade before environmental protection, stating: “If such a ban is implemented, the US government must consider its rights under the WTO.” In December, environmental groups

or areas for eco-tourism or organic agriculture. There are also provisions for labeling, and no thresholds for GM content. In short, although US pressure managed to prevent the establishment of a ban, Croatia adopted a law that in practice prevents GM crops from entering the country.

revoked bolivian ban traced to biotech lobby

Bolivia adopted a resolution banning GMOs in January 2001. It outlawed the import of products, sub-products and foodstuffs of agricultural origin derived from GM crops during a one-year period from January to December 2001. The Bolivian government adopted these precautionary measures because of the potential risks of GMOs to human health and the environment.

Farmers’ and environmental organizations in Bolivia vowed to keep demanding that their country regulate GMOs despite pressure from other countries. Since the Environmental and Development Bolivian Forum discovered that food aid to Bolivia contained genetically modified ingredients, concern is even greater. The Association of Agro-ecology Producers of Bolivia has urged the establishment of controls on food and seed imports from countries like Argentina, Canada and the US, together with the imposition of strong sanctions on any corporation or organization marketing GM products in Bolivia.

more information:

Friends of the Earth Europe:

www.foeeurope.org/press/17.12.01.htm

Friends of the Earth Croatia: **www.zelena-akcija.hr/eng/green_action.html**

“[African] countries have not adopted biotechnologies not because of EU restrictions, but rather for other reasons, such as lack of suitable technologies, and lack of regulatory laws and capacity. Consequently, no sub-Saharan African nation joined the US challenge to Europe’s ban, and even Egypt withdrew from the complaint.”

Third World Network: “Genetically modified crops and sustainable poverty alleviation in Sub-Saharan Africa: An assessment of current evidence”, 2003.

the seeding of global opposition eight

force-feeding europe

eu and us launch trade war

Friends of the Earth’s Bite Back campaign aims to prevent the US and the World Trade Organization from force feeding GMOs to Europeans.



At the end of 2003, Friends of the Earth's giant tomato toured Europe to raise awareness about the US attempt to force GM food on Europeans.



Eventually, once the panel has been selected, it will take evidence (in secret) from both sides before coming to a ruling towards the end of 2004. Notably absent in the process will be civil society representatives, who are prevented from officially participating and even from knowing what is being discussed. While informal sources in Brussels expect a WTO ruling against Europe's restrictive stance on GMOs, the EU will have the right to appeal. The WTO Appellate body will then reconsider the case and come to a final and legally binding ruling 3-6 months after the first ruling. If Europe loses, it will have to comply with the ruling: either adapt its legislation or face heavy trade sanctions.

This battle is not only about Europe: the Bush administration claims that the European moratorium is not only harming US farmers but also stopping developing countries from adopting the controversial technology. However Egypt, the only African country originally



The first shots in the transatlantic trade war over Europe's position on GMOs were fired in May 2003, when the US, Canada, Argentina and Egypt registered a formal complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO). They complained that Europe's moratorium on new products and the various national bans were a barrier to trade costing the US an estimated \$300 million in lost exports. The complainants were backed up by a number of third parties including Australia, Chile and Mexico.

To date, the dispute has hardly gotten off the ground. In August, the US, Argentina and Canada requested that the WTO form a Dispute Panel, the usual next stage in any trade conflict. However, attempts to decide who should sit on the Panel have slowed the process, with each side repeatedly rejecting the other's suggestions. By the end of 2003 there was still no agreement about the identity of the panelists.

supporting the US position, withdrew even before the consultation process began. In a letter to the European Consumers' Organization, the Egyptian government announced its decision not to proceed "in conscious emulation of the need to preserve adequate and effective consumer and environmental protection". The move angered US trade negotiators, who reportedly tore up a draft free trade agreement with the North African country.

The European Commission has issued statements "regretting" the US move. They also take issue with President Bush's accusations that European policy is hindering hunger relief in Africa, calling the allegations "not founded". In one of their statements, the Commission points to opinion polls in the US that show "a whopping 92 percent of Americans support labeling".

Friends of the Earth Europe's Bite Back Campaign:
www.foeeurope.org/biteback/index.htm