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Blood on our Farms: Is Monsanto Responsible 1 Suicide Every 30 Minutes?

Posted By [Dr. Mercola](#) | September 03 2010 | 137,286 views

India is in the midst of a flood of suicides among farmers. A new feature film written and directed by Anusha Rizwi and produced by Bollywood megastar Aamir Khan, called *Peepli Live*, takes a look at this grim topic.

The vast majority of people in India still farm for a living, but are caught between deep debt and the erratic nature of seasonal change.

Indian farmers are pressured into mortgaging their farms to purchase genetically modified seeds, pesticides, and fertilizer from American companies like Monsanto.



According to AlterNet:

“Since GM seeds are patented by Monsanto, their repeated use each year requires costly licensing fees that keep farmers impoverished. One bad yield due to drought or other reasons plunges farmers so deep into debt that they resort to suicide. One study estimates that farmers have killed themselves in the past ten years.”

Meanwhile, in the U.S., District Judge Jeffrey White, a federal judge in California, has banned planting of genetically modified Roundup Ready sugar beets created by Monsanto. The beets are engineered to withstand Monsanto’s Roundup weed killer.

White said he was *“troubled by maintaining the status quo that consists of 95 percent of sugar beets being genetically engineered while [the USDA] conducts the environmental review that should have occurred before the sugar beets were deregulated.”*

The ban does not affect crops already planted and harvested for sugar.

The St. Louis Business Journal reports:

“Environmental groups ... filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in January 2008 to challenge the deregulation of Roundup Ready sugar beets by the U.S. EPA. Opponents say the beets promote superweeds, weeds that cannot easily be killed because they have developed a tolerance to weed killer. They also raise concerns about the contamination of conventional and organic crops.”

Sources:

- » [AlterNet August 16, 2010](#)
- » [St. Louis Business Journal August 16, 2010](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

I believe genetically modified plants and foods are one of the most significant threats a number of reasons.

Biotechnology has changed the face of farming as we know it, and with each passing year a new farming practice of saving the best seeds for replanting the following season – a method that has been successful for optimal crop quality.

Now, the increased use of genetically modified seeds that must be purchased anew every 15 years into commercial GM seed use, we're now seeing GM crops contaminating conventional varieties combining with each other in the wild, creating unintended GM hybrids; and facing financial devastation.

Genetic Engineering May Sterilize Nature. Then What?

Consider this: Monsanto's "suicide gene" has not only been inserted into certain food crops but also requires farmers to buy new seeds. This technology is now spreading to other industries, such as

Scientific American reported on this in January. Two paper industry giants are planning to plant eucalyptus in the southwestern US with genetically engineered, sterile, eucalyptus. By making the trees sterile, there's no need to worry about the GM eucalyptus turning into an invasive species...

Really?

Earlier this week I wrote about two GM varieties of canola spreading into the wild, and a third hybrid that is resistant to not one but two herbicides. Science has already discovered more than previously thought, and by planting non-native trees that have been gene spliced to be sterile, it's not so rest easy.

On the contrary. I believe there are plenty of indications that the introduction of sterile plants has the ability to "turn off" reproductive capability to spread into other parts of nature, in ways that

For an eye opening look at the genetic engineering now overtaking the forestry industry documentary film "A Silent Forest," available in full on MEFEEEDIA.com.

How are GM Crops Provoking Farmers to Commit Suicide?

According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India, more than 182,900 Indian farmers committed suicide in 2006 and 2007. It estimates 46 Indian farmers commit suicide every day. That equates to roughly 16,920 farmers per year.

Some will argue that natural events are to blame, such as lack of rain, but crop failures have led to thousands of farmers to end their lives by drinking pesticide.

No, the increased desperation can be traced directly back to the use of patented, and the unconscionable tactics of Monsanto.

Monsanto has been ruthless in their drive to use India as a testing ground for genetically modified crops. Millions of Indian farmers have been promised radically increased harvests and income by switching to patented farming methods to genetically modified (GM) Bt cotton seeds.

So, they borrow money to buy GM seeds, which need certain pesticides that were previously not needed. When rain fall is sparse, the GM crops actually fare far worse than traditional crops. Often farmers don't learn until it's too late and they're standing there with failed crops, spiraling into debt.

And by next season, they have to do it all over again because the GM seeds cannot be purchased again.

In addition, GM crops have spawned:

- Bt resistant pests
- New pests
- Superweeds

For example, the evolution of Bt resistant bollworms worldwide have now been confirmed. Previously minor pests are now becoming major problems – such as mirid bugs, which *have increased* and are being directly linked to the scale of China's Bt cotton cultivation.

In addition, the promise that GM crops would reduce pesticide/herbicide use has turned out to be a lie.

The use of Roundup herbicide has increased dramatically since the GM Roundup Ready crops were introduced. In the first 10 years, American farmers sprayed an additional 383 million pounds of herbicide due to the fact that repeated exposures have given Mother Nature all she needs to stage her comeback in the form of superweeds.

Since 1996, when GM crops were first introduced, at least nine species of U.S. weeds have become resistant to the active ingredient in Roundup herbicide, which means farmers must use additional herbicides other than Roundup.

In the end, we're left with all of the downsides and none of the intended benefits.

Bollywood Brings Indian Farmers' Plight to the Big Screen

AlterNet.com reports on a new Indian film called *Peepli Live* that grapples with this topic

"The story is set in an Indian village named Peepli where one young debt-burdened man sacrifices his own life after he learns that his family will be financially compensated through the loss of farmers taking their own lives."

The film features Bollywood megastar Aamir Khan. An interview with him about the film found here.

Hopefully this film is successful in raising awareness about the destructive power of this

US Judge Halts Deregulation of Roundup Ready Sugar Beets – For Now...

Meanwhile, the US has been granted a temporary reprieve from yet another GM food.

The U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White, a federal judge in California, recently banned the resistant sugar beets. The ruling, which can be read here, does not affect any crop that is not resistant, so GM sugar will still reach the market place.

The GM sugar beet is called Genuity, and was introduced during the 2008-2009 season.

Although considered a victory, the judge's ruling did not grant plaintiffs' motion for a permanent injunction on plantings.

The St Louis Business Journal recently reported:

"White ruled in September 2009 that the USDA will have to complete an Environmental Impact Statement. The USDA has estimated that an EIS may be ready by 2012."

Monsanto has said in court papers that revoking regulators' approval of sugar beet production will cost customers approximately \$2 billion in 2011 and 2012."

Roundup Residue Causes Cell Damage

The increasing use of Roundup on crops engineered to survive being doused in the herbicide has led to serious consequences.

Residues of Monsanto's Roundup herbicide found in GM food and feed has been linked to cancer at very low levels. Researchers have also found it causes membrane and DNA damage, and

So not only are you exposed to foods that contain *built-in* toxins, you're also consuming herbicide-contaminated food, for the simple fact that more is now being used.

Pesticide and herbicide residues are very difficult to remove from grains, fruits and vegetables. You can't get rid of it all.

What Can You Do to Affect Change?

Did you know that genetically modified foods are so prevalent in the US that if you ranshelves, you have a 75 percent chance of picking a food with GM ingredients?

It's true. At least seven out of every 10 food items have been genetically modified, and 1

The potential health ramifications of these world-wide experiments with our food supply about the health and future of your family, I strongly urge you to refuse to participate in

How?

It's actually simpler than you might think... By buying only **non-GM** foods.

Must-Have Guide to NON-GMO Foods

The True Food Shopping Guide is a great tool for helping you determine which brands : 20 different food categories that include everything from baby food to chocolate.

Additionally, here are four simple steps to decrease your consumption of GM foods as r

- **Reduce or eliminate processed foods in your diet.** The fact that 75 percent of p only one of the many reasons to stick to a whole foods diet.
- **Read produce and food labels.** Conventionally raised soybeans and corn make crops. Ingredients made from these foods include high fructose corn syrup (HFCS sauce, margarine, and tofu.
- **Buy organic produce.** By definition, food that is certified organic must be free from artificial pesticides and fertilizers and from an animal reared without the routine us drugs. Additionally, grass-fed beef will not have been fed GM corn feed.

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Related Links:

- » [Chickens Not Fooled by GM Crops](#)
- » [Monsanto's Many Attempts to Destroy All Seeds but Their Own](#)
- » [Why are Monsanto Insiders Now Appointed to Protect Your Food Safety?](#)