

# Millions Against Monsanto

## Take Action: Stop Monsanto's GE Alfalfa!

Don't believe Monsanto's greenwashing. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs), aren't meant to feed the world or survive the frequent droughts and floods brought on by global warming—they're designed to sell Monsanto's patented Roundup-resistant or Bt seeds and pesticides now spliced into millions of acres of corn, cotton, soy, canola, sugar beets and alfalfa.

In addition, once GM alfalfa and other Monsanto crops are planted in the open environment, they contaminate non-GMO and organic varieties as well as plant relatives. So if you are operating an organic dairy, feeding your cattle organic alfalfa, a nearby farm growing GMO alfalfa will almost inevitably contaminate your alfalfa fields, causing you to lose your organic certification. During the Bush administration, the movement to stop GMOs



was making progress. Reflecting public concern over GMOs, in 2007, a Federal court ruled that the Bush USDA's approval of Roundup Ready alfalfa violated the law because it failed to analyze risks such as the contamination of conventional and organic alfalfa and the development of "super-weeds." The court banned the planting of GM alfalfa until USDA completed a rigorous analysis of these impacts. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals twice affirmed the national ban on Roundup Ready alfalfa planting, but Monsanto is appealing. They're taking producers of organic alfalfa seed all the way to the Supreme Court.

Despite promising us "change we can believe in," Barack Obama, is turning out to be just as pro-GMO as the preceding Bush and Clinton administrations, packing the USDA and other government bureaucracies with Monsanto men and biotech cheerleaders such as former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack, named "Biotech Governor of the Year" in 2001, now serving as USDA Secretary. Vilsack, notorious for flying around in a Monsanto company jet during one of his previous election campaigns, is now busy trying to get the court-ordered ban on Roundup Ready alfalfa lifted by issuing a new draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that denies or down-plays the obvious environmental (genetic pollution and creation of herbicide-resistant superweeds) and human health hazards of GM alfalfa.

Alfalfa is the fourth most widely grown crop in the US and a key source of dairy forage and hay. The first perennial crop to be genetically engineered, GM alfalfa can regenerate itself from its root-stock. It is open-pollinated by bees, which can cross-pollinate at distances of several miles, spreading Monsanto's patented, foreign DNA to non-GMO and organic crops. Widespread GMO-contamination of organic alfalfa is inevitable if the Obama Administration successfully distorts science and ignores public opinion and allows Monsanto's GM Roundup Ready alfalfa to be planted across the US.

Consumers who ingest GM alfalfa are likely risking their health; since even the Obama Environmental Impact Statement admitted that, "acute toxicity in mice was observed."

According to the EIS, consumers who ingest foods with residues of Monsanto's Roundup herbicide may experience "general and non-specific signs of toxicity from subchronic and chronic exposure to glyphosate includ[ing] changes in liver weight, blood chemistry (may suggest mild liver toxicity), liver pathology, and weight of the pituitary gland." The EIS warns that, "Based on upper estimates of exposure ... infants consuming fruit and all age groups consuming vegetables may be at risk of adverse effects associated with acute exposure to glyphosate [the active ingredient in Roundup herbicide] residues."

Consuming milk and meat from animals fed GE crops is also risky. Mounting evidence shows damage to animals and humans from unlabeled and untested Frankenfoods. Even in Europe, where farmer and consumer rejection has kept GMO corn and soybean acreage to a bare minimum, (massive quantities of GMO tainted animal feed is imported from the US) a survey of milk products sold in stores in Italy, results from the screening of 60 samples of 12 different milk brands demonstrated the presence of GM maize sequences in 15 (25%) and of GM soybean sequences in 7 samples (11.7%).

Most consumers, especially organic consumers, are determined to avoid Roundup Ready alfalfa, and meat and dairy products derived from animals ingesting Roundup Ready alfalfa, but according to the EIS, we don't have that right because, "At the present time, there is no policy regarding the unintended presence of GE material in organic products or food, consistent with the fact that the NOP (National Organic Program) is a process-based program for certifying a farm or production system as organic, and not a product-based program that tests or certifies individual products as organic."

We must stop the Obama administration from taking away our right to grow and consume organic and GMO-free food. The "change we believe in" is a healthy and sustainable future based upon organic food and farming and a green economy. **Take Action:** [www.is.gd/6L6XN](http://www.is.gd/6L6XN)

## Senate Puts Hold on Siddiqui

President Obama is trying to persuade the Senate to confirm Islam Siddiqui as the US Trade Representative for Agriculture.

Islam Siddiqui is one of Obama's "Monsanto men." A contributor and fundraiser for Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, Siddiqui currently serves as the Vice President of CropLife, a powerful lobbying arm for the pesticide and biotech industry, representing, among others, the six multinational corporations that control 75% of the world's seeds and chemicals: Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer, BASF, Dow and DuPont.

There is still time to block Siddiqui's Senate confirmation. Sen. Jim Bunning (R-KY), for partisan political reasons of his own, that have nothing to do with protecting us from GMOs, has put a hold on Siddiqui's confirmation—giving us time to voice our opposition to Monsanto's takeover of US Food and farm policy. **Take Action:** [www.is.gd/6L76F](http://www.is.gd/6L76F)

## Action Updates

### Thousands of OCA Members Tell DOJ to Break Monsanto's Monopoly

After years of complaints from the OCA and our allies, the Justice Department (DOJ) is investigating how big biotech and food corporations, including Monsanto, are monopolizing and controlling our seeds, food and farming. On November 13, 2009, the Obama Administration opened a public comment period that closed on December 31, seeking comments and information about how corporate control of the food system affects average Americans. OCA members sent 8,954 letters to the DOJ last month about how control of the food system by companies like Monsanto affects us and our children. We've compiled a sample of the letters in a Daily Kos diary. The letters are articulate and passionate, many written by farmers and consumers who have first-hand experience of the health problems, pollution, and economic harm brought on by the biotech bullies and agribusiness monopolies. [www.is.gd/6L7nh](http://www.is.gd/6L7nh)

### Rajiv Shah Confirmed as USAID Director

Despite the efforts of 17,096 DOJ members who sent letters to their Senators in opposition, the Senate confirmed Rajiv Shah to lead US foreign assistance as director of USAID.

On January 7, 2010, Shah was sworn in by Secretary of State Clinton, who gave a speech outlining USAID's "enormous agenda," including food security and global health. Sec. Clinton said this agenda will be accomplished, in part, by expanding partnerships with corporations, non-profit organizations, and foundations. Clinton specifically highlighted Shah's ongoing collaboration with the Gates Foundation "to transform the global system of vaccine financing." She also subtly referenced Bill Gates by saying that Shah had provided a list of people willing to go to bat for him in the Senate confirmation process that included "giants... in the foundation world." Gates, billionaire tycoon founder of the Microsoft empire, is a friend and ally of Monsanto, and an avid supporter of GE crops and foods. [www.is.gd/6AWKv](http://www.is.gd/6AWKv)

**Monsanto in the News:** [www.is.gd/6L7jo](http://www.is.gd/6L7jo)

## Organic Empowerment 2010: Taking Action Locally

### Strategic Local Campaign of the Week: #5 - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Compost

The problem of "waste" in the US is both a local and a federal issue, with the EPA providing the scientific veneer, among others, for the nation's profit-at-any-cost, multibillion dollar sewage sludge, garbage, and chemical fertilizer industries. Several decades ago, after public pressure forced corporations and municipalities to stop dumping toxic sewage sludge into the oceans and waterways (it was killing all the fish and marine life and polluting beaches), the EPA decided it was time to rename this hazardous waste "organic fertilizer" (or "biosolids") and to begin to spread municipal sewage sludge on millions of acres of non-organic farmland and rangeland. Emboldened by their success, EPA and the sludge industry then tried to tell us in 1998 that it would be OK to spread sewage sludge on organic farms as well. Fortunately, OCA and the organic community beat them back as part of a massive nationwide grassroots campaign called Save Organic Standards (SOS).

A steady stream of greenwashing and false solutions that encourage waste production instead of waste reduction are coming at us from corporate marketing departments and the federal government. OCA believes that positive action to encourage waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting (real organic composting, not renaming sewage sludge or industrial waste as compost) is most likely to arise at the local level. Several cities have taken positive actions in the direction of zero waste, but the devil is in the details.

As an example, sewage sludge was dumped in the oceans and rivers for decades. It is now spread on non-organic farms and rangelands, while current industry plans include burning it and turning it into an energy source; but the problem isn't what to do with billions of pounds of toxic sewage sludge produced every year, but rather how can we stop producing it in the first place. Household sewage is contaminated with chemical cosmetics, toxic household cleaners and pharmaceutical drugs poured into toilets and kitchen sinks. After the toilet is flushed or the drain is emptied, household waste is funneled into a vast underground sewage system, where it joins a toxic stew of industrial and hospital wastes and rainwater runoff from our streets and highways. Allowing corporations to flood the environment and the waste stream with thousands of synthetic, mostly toxic chemicals, less than 1% of which have ever been proved to be safe for the environment and public health, is insanity. Besides contaminating the water and soil, this "sewage treatment" process wastes enormous amounts of potable water.

Cities and towns must realize that using clean water to flush away household waste; engineering rooftops, roadways and streets to funnel rainwater into our sewage systems (instead of capturing it or percolating it back into the soil); and allowing industry and hospitals to discharge toxic chemicals into our wastewater stream just doesn't make sense. Composting toilets, rooftop water catchments and cisterns, and zero discharge of synthetic chemicals potentially or actually proven to be hazardous to human health and the environment (the "precautionary principle") are not fringe ideas, but rather the wave of the future. That is if there is a future.

Human and animal manure,, throughout the centuries, and in the present time can and should be safely composted and utilized as a fertilizer on fields, farms, and forests. Although current organic standards prohibit the use of compost derived from human manure (properly composted animal manure is allowed) on food crops, feeding the soil with properly composted "humane" (or producing methane gas for energy use through bio-digesters) will no doubt become the norm in the future as fossil fuel and water supplies dwindle and chemical fertilizer costs become prohibitive.

Tune in to future issues of *Organic Bytes* for OCA's ideas on how we can and must reform our garbage, sludge, and chemical fertilizer industries and put an end to the rampant consumerism that is literally poisoning the planet with garbage and toxic chemicals.

**Ten Local Causes to Work for in 2010:** [www.is.gd/6AVOK](http://www.is.gd/6AVOK)