



THE RAM'S HORN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOOD SYSTEM ANALYSIS

No. 262, February 2009

ISSN 0827-4053

Three Blind Mice

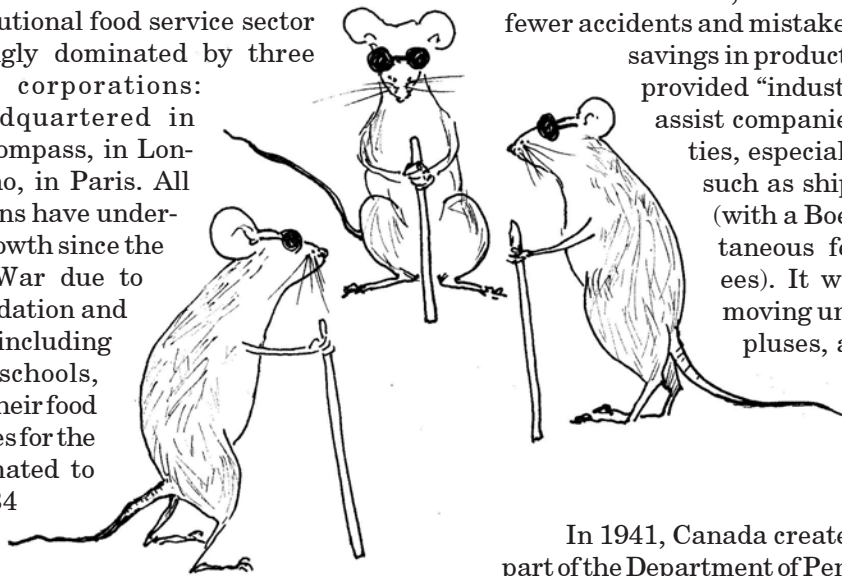
In the first edition (1989) of *From Land to Mouth: Understanding the Food System*, Brewster wrote that six corporations in a sector seemed to be the lowest number for a 'sustainable oligopoly'. That number now seems to have dropped to three (though some sectors still entertain more than that), for example: Kraft-Saputo-Parmalat (dairy), Cargill-ADM-Bunge (grain), Nestlé-PepsiCo-Kraft (food & beverage), Monsanto-DuPont-Syngenta (seeds), (Hewlett-Packard-IBM-Microsoft (computing), Aramark-Compass-Sodexo (food service)). . .

— for more, go to www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub_id=707

Industrial feeding

Edited and adapted from the thesis research of Sarah Martin, Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies, Carleton University

Today the institutional food service sector is overwhelmingly dominated by three transnational corporations: Aramark, headquartered in Philadelphia, Compass, in London and Sodexo, in Paris. All three corporations have undergone massive growth since the Second World War due to industry consolidation and public agencies, including hospitals and schools, contracting out their food services. The sales for the sector are estimated to be over US\$234 billion annually worldwide.



Institutional foodservices are located primarily in workplaces and educational and healthcare facilities. The Canadian institutional foodservice market makes up just over 2% of the total global market with \$5.2 billion in sales. It fills 32.7% of the total foodservice market in Canada, higher than fast food at 23.3% but lower than cafes and restaurants at 42.9%. However, its growth rate has far outstripped all other foodservice areas, and this trend is expected to continue, especially with universities and colleges; in 2006 the educational sector generated 40% of institutional food's total value, and the healthcare sector followed with 28%.

Institutional foodservice really got underway during the Second World War, when "proper feeding stations" were installed in factories to counter the wartime loss of labour, resulting in increased production, fewer accidents and mistakes and a claim of up to 300% savings in production costs. The government provided "industrial feeding specialists" to assist companies in improving food facilities, especially targeting larger plants, such as shipyards and aircraft plants (with a Boeing plant reporting simultaneous feeding of 30,000 employees). It was also a new avenue for moving unexpected agricultural surpluses, and surplus that had been previously sent to relief agencies was now shifted to the industrial sector.

In 1941, Canada created the Nutrition Service as part of the Department of Pensions and National Health. The first function of the service was to "study the food facilities in defence industries from a nutritional viewpoint, and to suggest improvements where possible." Thus a precedent was set for government involvement in population nutrition.

... See How They Run ...

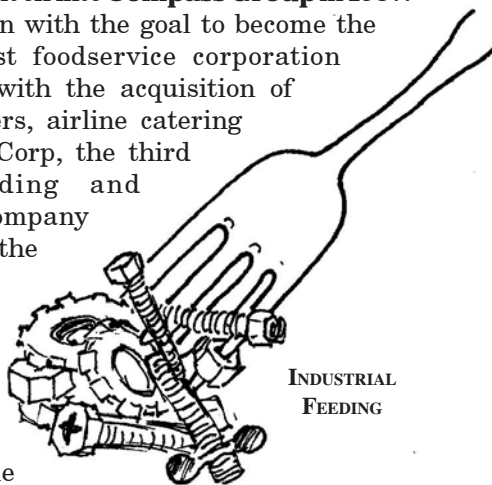
The two founders of **Aramark** met in a Second World War aircraft plant because they both had contracts to supply peanut vending machines to Douglas Aircraft.

... continued next page

Dave Davidson and Bill Fishman of the Automatic Merchandising Company, both signed contracts to supply Douglas Aircraft plants in Santa Monica and Chicago during the Second World War. Davidson was moving his machines from retail outlets to factories and offices in Chicago, and Fishman was attempting to transform his vending operation into a food service operation. The two owners individually tried throughout the 1950s to expand into food services but were unsuccessful. However, they merged the two companies in 1959 into the Automatic Retailers of America, (ARA), and from this position were able to consolidate their holdings and buy more than 150 vending companies between 1959 and 1964. The expansion included the purchase of Slater Systems, a “manual” (as opposed to automatic) foodservice operator; they then bought a company that specialized in institutional markets such as college and university cafeterias.

ARA continued moving into new service areas including nursing homes and magazine distribution companies. By 1964 they were operating over 750 manual food operations and began an aggressive expansion into airline catering, periodical sales, resort management and laundry services among others. Despite several run-ins with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for market monopoly and price-fixing, ARA continued to expand by buying up smaller service companies, for example, laundry, trucking and daycare, along with new services like airline catering. During the late 1970s the company began to expand into Europe and Canada and became the largest food services company in the Canada with the purchase of VS Services. New management in the 1980s in the 1990s changed ARA’s name to Aramark and the food services division, in particular began to prosper.

As in Canada, the British government legislated industrial feeding facilities and programs during the Second World War. In 1967, Factory Canteens was bought by Grand Metropolitan, a food and spirits company, and spun it off into **Compass Group** in 1987. Compass began with the goal to become the world’s largest foodservice corporation which began with the acquisition of railway caterers, airline catering and Canteen Corp, the third largest vending and foodservice company in the US in the early 1990s. By purchasing Eurest Compass in 1995, Compass met its goal and became



the largest food service organization in the world.

At this point all three corporations continued aggressive expansions and bought up smaller dining services. For example, Compass was able to gain large contracts like IBM and secure advantageous terms from suppliers. **Sodexo** moved into prison management in the US, bought the largest British catering firm, and in 1998 bought the foodservice arm of Marriott. Along with the entire institutional foodservice sector **Compass** has experienced “record expansion” including new sites in Africa, and purchasing Brazil’s largest caterer. In Canada, as market leader it is forecast to have sales of \$1.1 billion. In addition to its position as the world’s largest foodservice corporation, Compass is now the seventh largest employer in the world.

Sodexo (now Sodexo), for its part, promotes itself as an important player in the fight against hunger, and was one of the corporate sponsors of the US Community Food Security Coalition’s conference last fall.

Cheese [made from milk] Please

For more than a decade, Canada’s big cheese-makers, Saputo and Parmalat have been buying up and shutting down Canada’s regional, cooperative dairies. Now, together with Kraft Canada, they are fighting new regulations to protect Canadian dairy farmers and the integrity of Canadian cheese products.

The cheese corporations are trying to defend their practice of replacing whole milk from Canadian dairy farms with imported milk derivatives – things like dried milk powder but also whey powder, casein and other milk ‘fractions’ which can be used to bulk up dairy products. The lower cost of such products was enhanced in 2006 when the tariff on imported milk protein concentrates dropped from 270% to 6.5%.

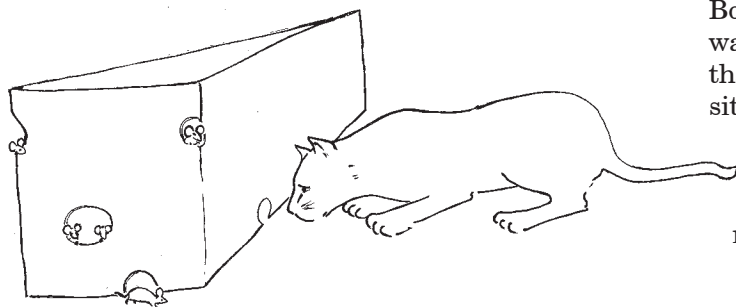
As Wendy Holm commented in a column for *Western Dairy Farmer*, “Saputo, Parmalat and Kraft’s rapid substitution of imported milk protein concentrates for higher quality Canadian milk in the manufacture of cheese and other dairy products would never have occurred were the plants still farmer-owned cooperatives. With 37 percent of Canadian milk destined for cheese production, the switch to milk protein concentrates by the big three cheese-makers is costing Canadian dairy farmers \$250 million a year in surplus removal costs.” She added, “From an industry perspective, the use of milk derivatives erodes the integrity, quality and reputation of Canadian-manufactured cheeses. For consumers, the use of globally sourced

derivatives in domestic cheese production not only compromises taste; it also increases risk associated with standards, inspection and traceability.”

Last fall, the Canadian government made changes to both the Import Control List (to add a new category for milk protein substances) and the Canadian Food and Drug Act (to establish minimum domestic milk content for four categories of Canadian cheese: “Pizza mozzarella” is allowed to have only 63% domestic milk content, while Canada’s hallmark cheese, “traditional Cheddar” must now be made from 100% milk). Predictably, the big three cried foul at the notion that cheese should be made from milk, and petitioned the Supreme Court for a judicial review of the new regulations which is scheduled for March 2009.

In addition, Saputo is now calling for reductions in prices to dairy farmers, claiming they can’t afford to make cheese with Canadian milk – even though no fewer than seventeen independent surveys over the past decade have found Canadian milk prices average 15% below US product.

– for more, see www.theholmteam.ca/Columns.html



MARKETING

New CWB executive changes tack

Given the amount of ink that has been spilled in analyzing, attacking and defending the Canadian Wheat Board (a Google search for the Canadian Wheat Board yields more than 1,300,000 pages), we have been hesitant to do more than provide brief updates from time to time. However, given the orchestrated effort from the political right in Canada to destroy the CWB and its importance as a farmer-governed institution providing the stability of single-desk selling for farmers in the Western provinces of Canada, we do want to make sure that our diverse readership understands what is at stake.

The Harper government made no secret of its hatred of the CWB as a ‘socialist’ institution and during the past two years has made numerous attempts, some legal, many illegal, to carry out its destruction. The

rhetoric they use is “freedom of choice”, implying that an individual farmer could negotiate with buyers (like Cargill) on the same footing as the Board – and that the Board would continue to have clout in the marketplace if it were not a monopoly. Of course the grain troika (Cargill, ADM, Bunge) will happily take a little loss here or there to encourage farmers’ individualism and opportunism, and thus to break the only market power they really have.

In its campaign against the CWB, the government even went so far as to fire the top leadership of the Board and make its own appointment of Australian Ian White, who had previously worked in the private grain trade and oversaw the dismantling of the single desk marketing authority of Queensland Sugar Ltd. in Australia. Since his hiring a year ago, White has kept a low profile, but at the end of January, in an interview, announced that he had come to the conclusion that the CWB’s single-desk marketing system provides significant benefits to prairie wheat and barley growers. “I have now had a good look at the numbers and I’m quite satisfied that, on average, compared with our competitors, we do in fact put more money into people’s pockets.” The Board is able to use its single desk authority in many ways to produce value for farmers, he added. White said that if Canada deregulated its wheat industry, a similar situation would arise here as had developed in Australia, where as many as twenty grain exporters have been competing fiercely against each other and selling wheat at discount prices to gain market share.

– sources include WP, 29/1/09

Profits – but not for the farmers

It was once a co-op. In 2007, Viterra was formed as a public corporation after a bold takeover move that saw the Alberta and Manitoba assets of Agricore acquired by the smaller Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The company has become highly profitable: in 2008 it ‘earned’ \$288.3 million (up sharply from \$116.5 million for the same period of the previous year) on sales of \$6.8 billion in its financial year ended Oct 31. The real questions this raises are, Where did the profits really come from? and, What did the corporation actually do to appropriate this much ‘profit’? Have farmers benefited?

And more agrofuels subsidies

Looking at the following item, we thought we might offer a contest to readers: How many pieces of misleading or egregiously inaccurate expressions can you find in it? Extra points if you can pinpoint the serious environmental hazards of these ideas (no extra points if reading it makes you sick.)



According to the Agricultural Bioproducts Innovation Program (ABIP), farmers in Canada will be able to harness new market opportunities and get better prices for their crops thanks to a new and innovative research network funded by the Government of Canada. The **Cellulosic Biofuels Network** (CBN) will receive \$19.9 million in funding. This assistance is being provided through ABIP. The research done by CBN will make possible the creation of biofuels from agricultural waste, and that will help Canadian farmers seize new market opportunities in the energy sector. According to Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture) Blackburn, "This major research will not only help advance our cellulosic ethanol production, but will also help our farmers increase their income by producing new crop varieties designed specifically for the energy market."

"The Agricultural Bioproducts Innovation Program (ABIP) is a multi-year program that seeks to mobilize Canada's creative talent in academia and in the private and public sectors and to integrate resources to build greater research capacity in agricultural bioproducts and bioprocesses. . . in areas such as biofuels, other forms of bioenergy, biochemicals, biopharmaceuticals, etc." – www.agr.gc.ca/abip

DNA Testing for Adulteration

It seems that DNA testing can be useful to detect adulteration as well as adultery. UK based Reading Scientific Services Ltd (RSSL), claims it has developed a reliable DNA screening method for identifying adulteration of Basmati rice. According to RSSL, DNA testing is particularly useful for identifying basmati rice varieties. Under European law a basmati product must not be more than 7% non-basmati rice, and variety testing on rice is very difficult to do without using DNA techniques.

A basic version of the method will identify the presence of any other non-Basmati rice present in the product, and will establish if the amount of Basmati achieves the minimum level of 93% set by EU Regulation, while for samples that are to be labelled as a single Basmati rice variety, the method can also be used to verify whether or not the declared Basmati rice is the variety present.

DNA testing performed in 2002 showed that only 54% of bags labelled as basmati rice contained purely that product. 46% were diluted with inferior products, some by up to 60%. – foodproductiondaily.com, 27/1/09

Not A Straight Line

"Development is not a rigid program, says Mark Blumberg. (*Freaks of Nature: Developmental anomalies and evolutionary diversity*, Oxford.) Instead, the embryo monitors its environment and adjusts accordingly. There's a clear evolutionary advantage to this. Imagine navigating a road trip using a specific route map you downloaded off the web. The list of instructions is fine – until you get lost or hit a traffic jam, at which point you're stuck. A map, on the other hand, would allow you to find alternative paths to you destination.

"The journey from fertilized egg to trillion-celled adult is so complicated and so chancy that none of us would make it there were no room for last-minute manoeuvres. So development is like a map with the destination circled: responding to internal and external factors, the body finds its way one step at a time. . . strict definitions of normality have no real basis in science." – *Interview with Blumberg by John Whitfield, New Scientist, 10/1/09*

Sophisticated Science



PARASITIC WASP OF THE
DIAMONDBACK MOTH

In stark contrast with genetic engineering and its use of vectors to insert alien transgenes is the work of *icipe* on natural vectors.

icipe – African Insect Science for Food and Health – was established in 1970 to conduct research and develop methods for environmentally friendly pest and vector management for pest control and the conservation and utilization of Africa's rich insect biodiversity.

icipe publishes a wonderful little desk-top calendar to promote its work. The photo for March is of a lizard. The description captures well the approach taken by *icipe*: "Monitor lizards are preferred hosts of riverine tsetse flies, vectors of the dreaded human sleeping sickness. *icipe* scientists are conducting studies on these reptiles to identify the odours that attract tsetse, with the aim of developing a bait to be used in tsetse traps."



DUNG BEETLE

Plant breeding in China

The following report draws a very useful distinction between genetic engineering – the introduction of transgenes – and the use of ‘marker-assisted selection’ or ‘sequencing and gene-expression technologies’ to identify and select plants with particular characteristics that are then used in traditional plant breeding.

With 10.7 million hectares of crops affected by the worst drought in half a century, China is expected to lose about 2.5% of its wheat production this year. Despite insufficient proof that climate change is the direct cause of the dire drought that has lasted around 100 days, the impact of global warming on agricultural production should never be underestimated, warned Lin Erda of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

The Ministry of Science and Technology guidelines on growing winter wheat in the dry spell include a list of 20 types of drought-resistant wheat seeds. These seeds, available on the market at roughly the same cost as common varieties, are the result of research conducted by universities and academies in nine provinces in northern China.

Scientists have found that plants have their own mechanisms to cope with drought. Certain crop varieties are able to survive as long as water shortages are not too severe. Through growing and crossbreeding these varieties, scientists are able to select and breed the most effective ones. “Seed selection and breeding remains a major technological solution in terms of developing drought-resistant crops in China,” Lin said. “Modern biotechnology makes it possible to understand crops’ ability to resist droughts and other natural adversities at the molecular level, which is more effective than the traditional approach of seed selection and breeding,” said Xiong Lizhong, a professor at Huazhong Agriculture University in Wuhan, Hubei province.

Armed with sequencing and gene-expression technologies, Xiong and his colleagues have identified about 100 genes with the ability to resist adverse conditions. But only a few of them are effective in the field, Xiong said. His team will continue to separate and filter anti-adversity genes that can be used commercially, so as to avoid production losses from unfavorable natural conditions, such as droughts or high temperatures.

– *China Daily, 16/2/09*

The Taro Story (cont.)

(see Attack on the Eldest Brother, RH #254)

The House Hawaiian Affairs Committee has unanimously approved a statewide prohibition on develop-

ment, testing, planting or importation of genetically modified taro. The bill now goes to the House Agriculture Committee, where a similar measure died last year when a proposed compromise (for a 5-year moratorium on modifications of Hawaiian taro but not on non-Hawaiian varieties) upset Native Hawaiians.

The proposal reopens the debate on how to best protect the crop, considered sacred by Native Hawaiians and used to make the starchy food poi. Taro farmers and Native Hawaiians want it to remain pure, but scientists warn that disease could wipe it out unless they take action. Taro farmers say altered varieties can easily breed with and contaminate existing taro plants, resulting in a new kind of poi that tastes different. “Taro has been grown for 50,000 years, and it’s the root of Hawaiian culture,” said Jim Cain, a Waipio Valley taro farmer, as he showed lawmakers his green taro huli (shoots). “Now we need to suddenly genetically alter it?”

Researchers believe taro will need science to grow resistance to powerful and deadly crop diseases, said Kevin Kelly, managing director for the Experimental Programme to Stimulate Competitive Research at the University of Hawaii. “We want to find a position where we can respect the cultural practices while also doing world-class research,” Mr Kelly said.

Hawaiian Affairs chairman Rep. Mele Carroll said scientists should evaluate traditional Hawaiian practices that sustained taro for all these years. “We were able to feed our people for generations,” said Ms Carroll. “I wish researchers would look at Hawaiian practices and determine the real causes of crop depletion.”

– *The Straits Times, Singapore 19/2/09*

Crop destruction in Gaza

“The World Food Program, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization and Palestinian officials said between 35% and 60% of agriculture has been wrecked by the 3-week Israeli attack, which followed two years of economic siege. . . Buildings and resources destroyed or heavily damaged by bombing, shelling and bulldozers included farms, greenhouses, dairy parlours, livestock, chicken coops and orchards. The ministry of Agriculture was targeted, the agriculture faculty at al-Azhar university largely destroyed and the offices of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees in Zaitoun – which provides cheap food for the poor – ransacked by soldiers.

It is estimated that scores, perhaps hundreds, of wells and water sources have been damaged, as well as 18,000 hectares of farmable land. Much land has been contaminated by munitions, including white phosphorous, burst sewage pipes, animal carcasses and asbestos.”

– *GW, 6/2/09*

Cooking the GMO Books

In our last issue we reported on World Watch's figures about the level of planting of GM crops worldwide. Since then a number of respectable publications, including the Gobe & Mail, have written that global production of GM crops has increased by 9.4% in the past year. Very few identified the source of these statistics as a very high-power lobby for the biotech industry.

ISAAA, The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications, has been very successful in portraying itself as a reliable, neutral source of information on agricultural biotechnology.

On its website, ISAAA describes itself very skillfully as "a not-for-profit organization that delivers the benefits of new agricultural biotechnologies to the poor in developing countries. It aims to share these powerful technologies to those who stand to benefit from them and at the same time establish an enabling environment for their safe use."

"As early as 1991, the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) saw the potential of crop biotechnology to improve the lives of small-scale farmers in developing countries. By facilitating the transfer of technologies to developing countries through public-private partnerships, and by sharing and disseminating scientific knowledge to the global community, ISAAA has established its role and contribution in world efforts to help achieve agricultural sustainability and development. . . Since ISAAA does not own or use the technologies it transfers, it is able to have a high degree of independence and credibility as "honest broker" as it interfaces with different partners."

ISAAA says it "has been principally sponsored by philanthropic foundations, and cosponsored by a donor support group consisting of public and private institutions," among them,

- * ABSPII/Cornell University
- * Barwale Foundation, India
- * CropLife International
- * FARM-Africa – Maendeleo Agricultural Technology Fund (MATF)
- * Fondazione Bussolera, Branca, Italy
- * Government of Kenya/KAPP (Kenya Agricultural Productivity Project)
- * Ibercaja, Spain
- * JK Organisation, India
- * Kilimo Trust, Uganda
- * Ministry of Environment and Forests, India
- * Monsanto
- * Dept. of Agriculture, Philippines

- * Program for Biosafety Systems, IFPRI
- * Rasi Seeds Ltd., India
- * SEAMEO SEARCA, Philippines
- * USAID
- * USDA

It is a very curious mixture, and it would be most interesting to know just who is hiding behind all these facades. CropLife, Monsanto, USAID and USDA are obvious, but the others?

In its just-released brief, *Global Status of Commercialized Biotech / GM Crops: 2008*, ISAAA offers up its customary biotech promotion of half-truths and unsubstantiated promises: "As a result of the consistent and substantial economic, environmental and welfare benefits offered by biotech crops, millions of small and resource-poor farmers around the world continued to plant more hectares of biotech crops in 2008, the thirteenth year of commercialization . . . given that biotech crops can contribute to some of the major challenges facing global society, including: food security, high price of food, sustainability, alleviation of poverty and hunger, and help mitigate some of the challenges associated with climate change."

Friends of the Earth has published a fine critique of ISAAA's statistics:

"The ISAAA figures are frequently inflated and poorly referenced, if at all. In last year's report, for example, the ISAAA more than doubled the increase in GM crops worldwide to 22% by multiplying the actual surface area by the number of GM traits in the crops. So, for a field of one hectare growing a GM crop which is tolerant to two herbicides and secretes insecticide toxin (three traits) suddenly becomes three fields, and ISAAA therefore triples its figures for the area under GM crop cultivation. The ISAAA justifies this inflation of the figures as "more accurate[ly] account[ing]" for the use of different types of GM crops. This rather desperate and nonsensical approach is most likely because the area under crop cultivation worldwide, 114.3 million hectares, is a mere 2.4% of global agricultural land and because key markets like the European Union have resoundingly rejected GM foods. The ISAAA report is a PR strategy to pressure governments, and to convince investors, that GM crops are a success."

FOE also commented on the work of the European biotech lobby association, EuropaBio:

"In 2008, the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) crops in Europe has been so dismal that the biotech industry has had to cook the books, has inflated the figures by almost a quarter and has claimed that GM crop cultivation in the EU in 2008 showed "a 21%

increase over 2007” when in fact there has been a 2% DECREASE. EuropaBio erased the latest country to have banned growing GM crops – France – from its calculations. By doing this, the biotech industry could falsely claim an increase for 2008. . . The European lobby group also masked the steady drop in GM crop cultivation in Europe that has occurred over the last four years by counting EU member states rather than European countries as a whole. Therefore an overall steady increase was shown when in fact GM crop cultivation in European countries has decreased 35% over the last four years. . . Only seven European countries grow GM crops - Spain, Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany, Slovakia, Romania and Poland - and to such a small extent that GM crops make up a tiny percentage of EU arable land (0.36%) and agricultural land (0.21%).

– www.foeeurope.org/GMOs/Index.htm

ISAAA’s new brief really outdoes itself with its hype, while indicating how much the ‘advance’ of biotech is political. One would think that after 18 years this propaganda would be wearing a bit thin, but ISAAA still does not hesitate to talk about the ‘window of opportunity’ that will quickly shut:

“It is encouraging to witness the growing “political will” for biotech crops at the G8 international level and at the national level in developing countries. . . Failure to provide the necessary political will and support for biotech crops at this time will risk many developing countries missing out on a one-time window of opportunity and as a result become permanently disadvantaged and noncompetitive in crop productivity.” This time they have not repeated yet again that the train (of

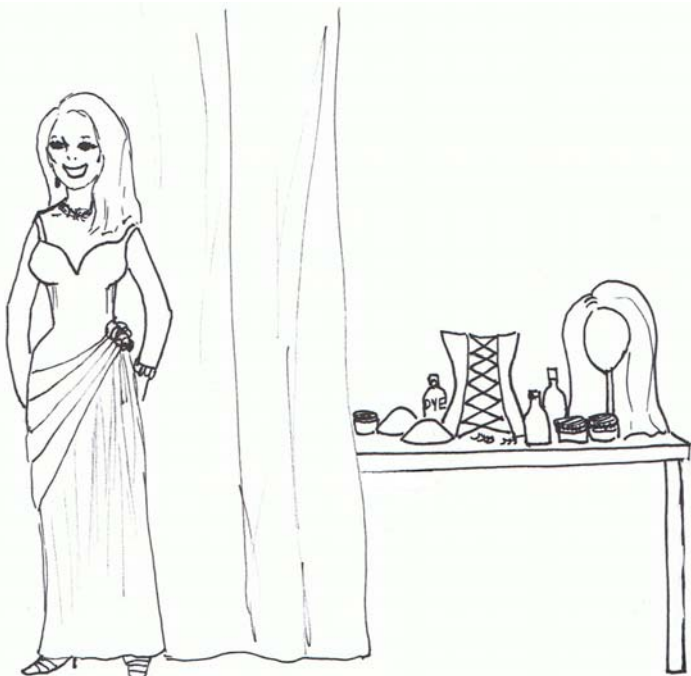
GE) is about to leave the station, but they do self-righteously state that the failure to quickly adopt GE crops “has dire implications for the hope of alleviating poverty for up to 1 billion resource-poor farmers and the rural landless whose livelihoods, and indeed survival, is largely dependent on improved yields of crops which are the principal source of food and sustenance for over 5 billion people in the developing world, a significant proportion of whom are extremely poor and desperately hungry – a situation that is morally unacceptable in a just society.”

For some reason ISAAA does not make reference to who will control and profit from the crops in its fantasyland of genetic engineered seeds and crops.

Kenya has become the fourth African country to allow the production and use of genetically modified (GM) crops after president Mwai Kibaki signed off on parliament’s approval of new biosafety legislation on 13 February. Kenya joins Burkina Faso, Egypt and South Africa as African nations which permit genetically modified farming. A National Biosafety Authority will now be created, under the National Council for Science and Technology, to implement the legislation and to follow priorities as stated in the National Biotechnology Development Policy passed in 2006.

ISAAA founder Clive James said at a press conference in Nairobi the day before that biotechnology delivers food that is as safe as those produced through conventional agriculture. “This technology is regulated more heavily than any other,” said James. James added that ISAAA is interested in helping developing countries like Kenya with the decision-making process but that ultimately it is up to the individual countries to make decisions on biotechnology.

– SciDev.Net, UK, 18/2/09



ISAAA AT THE OSCARS: NOT EXACTLY AS REPRESENTED

A More Reliable Source

The latest statistics on organic food production show that worldwide, 32.2m hectares were certified according to organic standards in 2007, 1.5m more than the previous year, reports the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL). “*The World of Organic Agriculture: Statistics and Emerging Trends 2009*” shows that by geographical region, growth was strongest in Latin America and Africa, with production of cash crops such as coffee, cocoa and tropical fruit had increasing by as much as 30%.



With its vast grazing lands, Australia continues to account for the largest certified organic surface area, 12 million hectares, followed by Argentina (2.8 million ha), and Brazil (1.8 million ha). In terms of certified land under organic management as a proportion of national agricultural area, the Alpine countries, such as Austria (13.4%) and Switzerland (11%), top the statistics. The global market for organic products reached a value of over 46 billion US \$ in 2007, with the vast majority of products being consumed in North America and Europe, according to Organic Monitor.

Milk going into Class I, or fluid, sales has been essentially rBGH-free in New England for at least the past two years. Customers for rBGH farm milk in New York have decreased sharply, with only a couple of Class I handlers and a handful of manufacturing plants left willing to receive product from producers employing the artificial hormone.

—Lancaster Farming, Vermont, 23/1/09

General Mills, no small outfit, has announced that it is going to stop using milk from rBGH-injected cows in its Yoplait yogurt. Wall Mart has stopped accepting rBGH milk for its store-label fluid milk. Who's next?

rBGH failing

Agri-Mark Says Stop Usage or Truck Milk to N.Y. Instead

For all intents and purposes, the New England dairy industry will be "rbST-free" [rBGH] by the end of this summer. Facing the threat of losing markets for its highly successful Cabot brand of cheeses, cooperative owner Agri-Mark has told its member farmers that if they want to continue using bovine somatotropin to boost production their milk will have to go to a cheese plant in northern New York State and cover the cost of the extra trucking.



THE RAM'S HORN

Published 10 times a year by
Brewster and Cathleen Kneen
2746 Cassels Street
Ottawa ON, K2B 6N7, Canada
phone: (613) 828-6047

Subscriptions:
Canada, \$24 (regular), \$50 (patron)
United States: US\$25
outside North America: €30 (airmail)
cheques payable to *The Ram's Horn*

If you would like a paper copy of *The Ram's Horn*, please subscribe (see rates and address above). You are also invited to support our work through a donation to help cover costs of research, writing, and circulation of the print version for free to people who cannot afford it, especially those in the 'global south'.

The publishers of *The Ram's Horn* do not claim copyright 'protection' for this material. It is in the public domain to be freely used and built upon. We appreciate mention of the source. Line drawings not otherwise identified are the work of Cathleen Kneen.