



# THE RAM'S HORN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOOD SYSTEM ANALYSIS

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## Signs of Spring

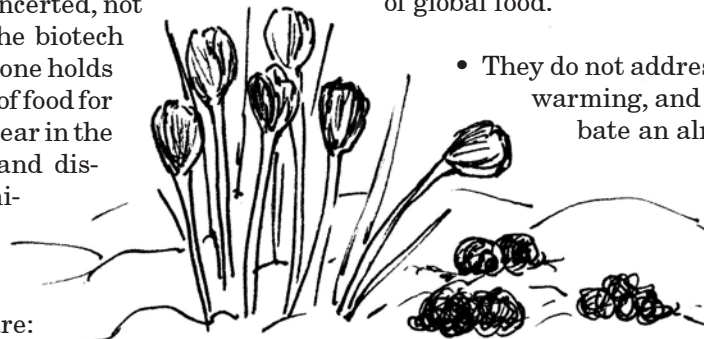
Yes, we missed March – slipping a little, what with Cathleen away out west for almost two weeks, and Brewster trying to finish his book, *The Tyranny of Rights*. Now the promise of Spring is giving the lie to those who think that the meltdown of Capital means the end of the world. Maybe the World As We Know It, but that model is due for a trade-in, anyway.

Most prominent among the signs of Spring in food-related matters is the incredible proliferation of local/regional/organic/holistic foodie activities and projects. Of course as the snow melts we get not just crocuses and returning songbirds, but uncovered dog turds too; and so we also see a concerted, not to say frantic, effort by the biotech industry to claim that it alone holds the keys to the storehouse of food for all. The messages that appear in the press in various guises (and disguises) bear a striking similarity to one another, as if they were emanating from a central bureau – which they more or less are: the closely-knit ISAAA, BioEuropa, BioteCanada, CropLife, etc. With the wealth of the Rockefeller-Gates-Bufferet collegium (philanthropy oligopoly) behind it, the biotech-agrotoxin-drug industry can well afford to commission and encourage letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, ‘scientific’ statements and so on. This industry campaign bears a striking resemblance to past tobacco industry campaigning in defense of its toxic products, a fact of which they are probably as aware as we are. The spectre of defeat looms large, thanks to the emergence of a public consciousness, around the world, about what is important and necessary – and genetic engineering of food crops accompanied by increased agrotoxin requirements of corporate seeds is not.

Nevertheless, that is the panacea being touted to fix the food crisis, the economic crisis, and global warming or climate chaos. When food prices began to skyrocket last year, this was variously attributed to drought

in Africa, speculation in food commodities, using foodlands to grow crops for fuel, or an increase in meat consumption in Asia. In addition to the genetic engineering of food crops, the proposed ‘fixes’ include an increase in food aid, increasing food production and bailout of the financial system. None of these, or all of them together, will actually resolve the ‘crisis’ because:

- They do not address the corruption and plunder of capitalism and the failure of capitalism to function according to its own ‘immutable’ laws.
- They do not eliminate or diminish corporate control of global food.
- They do not address climate change and global warming, and will therefore surely exacerbate an already perilous situation.
- They do not put an end to the ideology and pursuit of economic growth that is going to kill us all unless we halt it. An economy of enough – a ‘subsistence perspective’ as Maria Mies put it – must become the rule, personally and politically.



Underlying each of these is energy consumption – and the need to reduce it. Industrial agriculture requires high energy consumption. Economic growth requires increased energy. Corporate control requires high energy consumption due to its high degree of centralization and global sourcing and distribution. Energy consumption causes climate change and global warming.

“Nobody has really thought yet about how and if we can mitigate climate change in agriculture,” admitted Dr Josef Schmidhuber, head of the global perspectives study unit at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), indicating that although there is a lot of talk about averting the impact of climate



change, no policies have been implemented yet to solve the problem.

“It starts and ends with governance, with convincing key decision makers to change strategy,” said Hans Herren, president of the Washington DC-based Millennium Institute. “We know what the solutions to climate change are, but they are not put into practice because governments are in bed with the biotechnology industry. They are more interested in making a quick buck than in the long-term benefits of farmers.” Herren believes industrial agriculture is “bankrupt by definition” because it costs too much energy to produce: “For every calorie you produce you have to put in ten, if you look at fuel, fertilizer and labour needed.” Chemical-heavy agriculture has been systematically destroying soils, says Herren, by causing mineral depletion, erosion and reducing soils’ ability to retain water. “For small-scale farmers, water is far more important than having a pest-resistant, genetically modified plant, which is only resistant to one particular type of pest anyway,” he said. – *IPS, 26/2/09, www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews3D45905*

None of which seems to deter the cartel bent on solving the world’s problems by increasing their own control and profit – always couched in the language of sustainability, of course. You could call it *The White Man’s Burden* version 2.1.

For example, at the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Germany: “CropLife International’s aim is to assist the Parties in implementing the Biosafety Protocol in a way that carefully balances the need for beneficial technology being available to those wishing to use it while avoiding any adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. . . Farmers choose biotech seeds for a wide variety of reasons, from increased production and yield, to improved food quality from crops that are resistant to pests and viruses; from increased income, to reductions in the environmental impacts of agriculture; as well as more predictability and stability in crop production.” – *CropLife International Press Release, 12/3/08*

Meanwhile, Swiss-based Syngenta, with more than 24,000 employees in over 90 countries “dedicated to our purpose: Bringing plant potential to life”, has crawled right up there with Monsanto in its pursuit of control of seeds and food. The company’s CEO, Mike Mack, laid out Syngenta’s corporate philosophy recently: “Our innovative products allow us to unlock the potential of plants, enabling us to do more with less – feed more people, produce more fuel and fibre, while using less water and decreasing the carbon footprint of agriculture,” he claims. Syngenta has, according to Mack, “technology that can provide the solution to the persistent and

growing problems in food security and environmental sustainability . . . for us at Syngenta, technology means an entire portfolio of products, techniques and expertise that bring out the best in biotechnology, crop protection products and seed care. . .

“Now is the time to stand firmly behind corn and corn ethanol. . . We simply must keep supporting this crop as corn provides many answers to global agricultural problems. Investing in future corn yields creates healthy markets, successful farmers and food security. . . Plants can be an efficient and truly renewable way of translating the sun’s energy into our gas tanks, and with technology we don’t have to be forced into a no-win choice between growing more food or producing more fuel. . . A great part of the solution isn’t confined to biotech per se, but must include . . . crop protection technologies. This is especially pertinent when discussing climate change, as the application of effective herbicides will be an essential component in a growing trend of conservation tillage agriculture. . .

“There is only one major problem on the horizon: That’s the hostility of regulators in some parts of the world to both biotech and crop protection products . . . This is particularly true in Europe, where governments are beholden to non-governmental organizations and where the discussion of genetically-modified plants is more often based on superstition rather than science. . . If we embrace science, however, we can have a future of bounty – we can feed a growing population and fuel an energy-hungry world economy while protecting the environment.” – *Syngenta Press Release 27/2/09*

The insistence that GE is essential for growth of crop productivity (whether fact or fiction matters little) is the big stick used to drive farmers to GE seeds. Corporate control and profit are not mentioned as the primary reason, of course. The fetish of growth will kill us all – whether it’s economic growth or cancer.

“Economists say declining wealth is prompting more Canadians to save money, marking a profound shift in the psyche of a generation that has never seen such a major *market correction*. . . The concern is that *consumers will hamper growth* as they cut spending.”

– *G&M, 17/3/09, emphasis added.*

## Promises and Propaganda

According to EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries whose mission is “to promote an innovative and dynamic biotechnology-based industry in Eu-

rope,” “agriculture accounts for 70% of all human water use and, if current trends continue, water shortages will be the single most significant constraint on crop production over the next 50 years.

“Worldwide, agricultural biotechnology could play a significant role in providing farmers yield stability during periods when water supply is scarce by mitigating the effects of drought – or water stress – within a plant. We already know that areas of high water stress in Europe are likely to dramatically increase in the coming years. Yet what is less certain, is if and when EU farmers, whose land is currently 80% rain-fed, will be offered the choice of growing crops which can reduce water loss and improve drought tolerance.”

“GM crops could play a crucial role, both in the EU and Worldwide, in promoting sustainable water use whilst increasing agricultural output, but the only way to tap into this resource is if new GM crops are approved for cultivation. In the EU today, farmers don’t have the choice about what they grow because new GM crops are not being approved.”

– *EuropaBio press release 20/3/09*

Needless to say, GM crops “which can reduce water loss and improve drought tolerance” remain in the familiar biotech realm of promises.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, Monsanto India Ltd has kicked off Sustainable Yield Initiative, a project covering 10,000 farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan over a four-year period. “It will be an intensive, handholding programme where we will benchmark and communicate the best agronomic practices in cotton and corn (maize), along with forging better

market linkages by hooking the farmers directly with ginners and feed millers,” said Mr Sekhar Natarajan, Chairman, Monsanto India. “This is an India-specific project that is parallel to our global initiative that targets a doubling of existing yields in corn, cotton and soyabean by 2030 while using one-third less resources (water, fertilisers, energy).”

– *Hindu Business Line, India, 17/3/09*

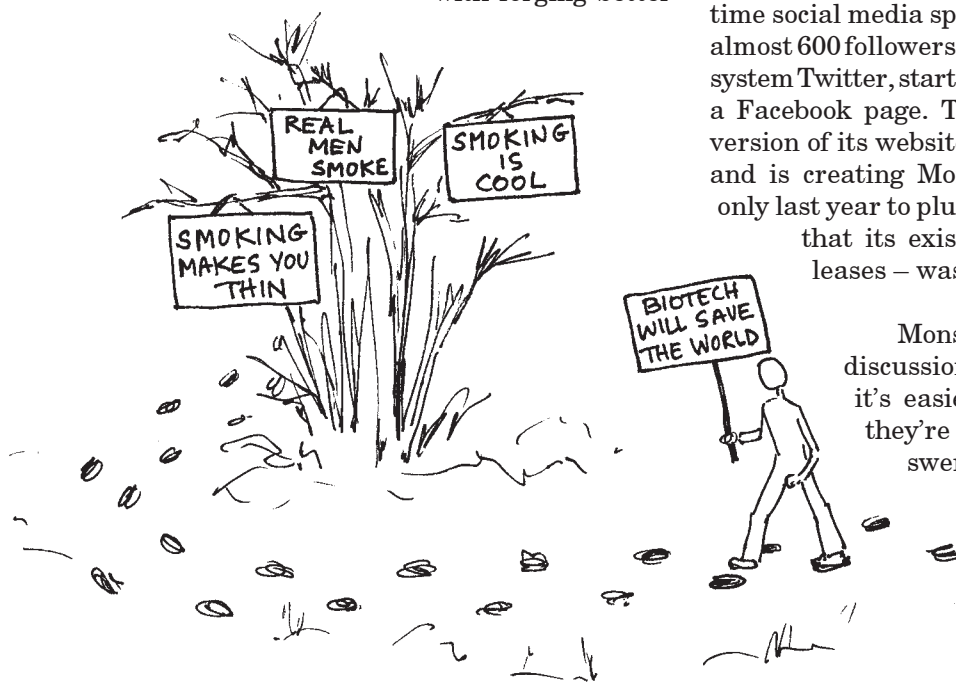
### ***Following the Footsteps of Tobacco***

A recent joint study from Yale University and the University of Michigan has compared the food industry’s marketing strategies to those of the tobacco industry in the 1950s. While there is evidence that the food and beverage industry has been making efforts to reformulate towards healthier products, “is this evidence of industry shouldering its share of the obesity burden, or is it simply reacting to market trends so it can continue to make a profit?” The authors suggest that the food industry emphasizes consumers’ personal choice as the cause of obesity, playing on deep-seated values of personal responsibility and freedom, and ask, “Does the food industry take enough responsibility for the potential health impacts of its products, or is it guilty of ‘framing’ obesity as an issue of individual accountability?” The authors claim that food manufacturers “plant doubt when concerns are raised about the industry” and “criticize studies that hurt industry as ‘junk science’.” As *Ram’s Horn* readers are well aware, the biotech industry has long described any research it doesn’t like as ‘junk science.’

### ***The complete propaganda machine***

Monsanto has launched its own blog and hired a full-time social media specialist, Kathleen Manning. It has almost 600 followers on the Web-based short messaging system Twitter, started a YouTube channel and launched a Facebook page. The company is also developing a version of its website for cell phones and Blackberries and is creating MonsantoTV. The company decided only last year to plunge into social media as it realized that its existing outreach vehicle – news releases – wasn’t enough.

Monsanto appears to be trying to steer discussion about critical issues to its blog so it’s easier to influence the debate. “Now they’re controlling the posts, they’re answering the questions, they’re directing them to different places within Monsanto and maybe another site. They’ve taken control of the situation,” says Manning.



There are six dedicated bloggers at Monsanto. But any employee is allowed – even encouraged – to participate. A frequent contributor is Daniel Goldstein, a pediatrician who works as Monsanto’s senior scientist in residence.

– *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 29/3/09;  
see <http://blog.monsantoblog.com>

Another aggressive move by Monsanto is a \$10 million program, which, according to Monsanto, “will help identify and support young scientists interested in improving research and production in rice and wheat. The establishment of Monsanto’s Beachell-Borlaug International Scholars Program is part of Monsanto’s three-point commitment to help increase global food production in the face of growing demand, limited natural resources and a changing climate.”

– *Monsanto press release* 25/3/09, see [www.ProduceMoreConserveMore.com](http://www.ProduceMoreConserveMore.com)

The University of California at Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism has received a two-year \$767,800 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop an intensive training program to promote high quality media coverage of agricultural development issues in Africa. The project’s chief goal is to produce compelling narratives in all media formats about the roles of small farmers in Africa – most of whom are women. A year-long intensive background course will explore topics ranging from the effects of western aid and trade policies on African development, to the role of genetically modified food in addressing global hunger and poverty, to the geopolitical factors contributing to hunger.

– [journalism.berkeley.edu/press/](http://journalism.berkeley.edu/press/)

In Canada, the Harper regime has dictated that all Federal agencies associated with higher education are to focus on promoting ‘business.’ In this context, Sylvain Charlebois, associate dean of the Graduate School of Business, University of Regina, should get the Ingo Potrykus prize for the most sweeping generalizations while offering nothing to back them up. In an op-ed article, Charlebois says,

“... Given the prospect of growing populations and unpredictable markets, developing countries are seeking ways to produce more commodities with fewer resources. For a growing number of farmers [suggesting lots of them, but could be a mere handful] in the southern hemisphere,

particularly Africa, genetically engineered crops may provide the best possible solution to increasing food costs. . . evidence supporting the use of genetically engineered crops to cope with climate change and economic challenges is now overwhelming. [he cites none]

. . . Science has improved our quality of life, and developing countries should benefit as well. There is a growing need to address the problems of the developing world through funding for technical support to set up regulatory systems and bio-safety measures, and to develop agribiotech research and development suitable to those countries’ needs. [This is the agenda of AGRA, with Gates and Rockefeller funding.] Canada has valuable expertise in biotechnology and can make a difference. . . genetically engineered foods must be allowed to develop so our globalized economy can flourish.”

– *Sylvain Charlebois, G&M*, 26/3/09, *emphasis added*

### How does he know?

The delay in the release of provitamin A rich Golden Rice for mass cultivation in India has led to an avoidable loss of 240,000 lives, says Potrykus. – *The Financial Express, India*, 22/11/06

Ingo Potrykus, “co-inventor of the fortified Golden Rice technology,” is still trying to get the Vatican to bless biotech, this time organizing a five day event at the Vatican in May for the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, with the help of Peter Raven, director of the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, aggressive promoter of genetic engineering and an Academy member. This is the second attempt by Potrykus and Raven to get the Vatican on side for biotech. In an introduction to the booklet which outlines the topics and speakers for the Study Week, Potrykus states, “Changing societal attitudes, including the regulatory processes involved, is extremely important if we are to save biotechnology.” [emphasis added]

– *Nature Biotechnology*, 1/3/09 (from an editorial misleadingly titled *Vatican Cheers GM*)

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# Growing Resistance

## *An African perspective*

Gathuru Mburu from Kenya writes: "Our leadership must resist being induced into placing our national hopes on maize, genetically modified seeds, fertilizers, chemical sprays and agro-fuels. We must diversify, but in the right manner! We must turn to what is available locally to revitalize our dead soils and use local seeds. We must recognize the space for indigenous knowledge in creating local resilience against the climate challenge. ...We must decolonize our minds, 45 years after political independence, and realize that we have a country to protect. By failing to take charge of our food agenda we are offering ourselves to be recolonized. For there is no freedom in hunger – we will dance to the tune of those who feed us." – *The East African*, 2/6/08

## *Mexico City to protect historic maize varieties*

Just days before the Mexican Government said that it would allow the experimental cultivation of genetically modified maize in other parts of the country, Marcelo Ebrard, mayor of Mexico City, announced that the city will take steps to protect more than 60 maize breeds known to grow in its territory, also known as the Mexican Altiplano. The regulations are titled 'Declaration of Protection of the Maize Breeds of the Mexico Altiplano.' The Altiplano is one of the centres of maize domestication, says the decree. "There the Teotihuacan, Tolteca and Mexica cultures have their splendor and contributed to the integration of Mesoamerican agriculture." Maize is Mexico's staple food. Half of Mexico City territory is agricultural and around 3,000 hectares are cultivated with maize every year. The declaration says that a research programme will be established with the aim of improving local maize breeds. There will also be funds to support farmers who sow only native seeds and to promote the use of organic fertiliser and pesticides. The purchase and distribution of transgenic maize in Mexico City is now banned.

The declaration came just a few days before an executive decree by the president of Mexico, Felipe Calderon, that effectively lifts the country's ban on experimental cultivation of transgenic maize. Commercial planting remains banned. The crops resulting will not be commercialised," says the decree.

Experimental sowing will be performed exclusively in authorised places, outside the origin and diversity zones of traditional maize, and it can be done only in some regions in the north of the country, where hybrid maize varieties are cultivated in commercial form. – *SciDev.Net*, 3/4/09

Corn was first planted in Mexico some 9,000 years ago and the country is now home to more than 10,000 varieties. The grain was adopted by Spanish conquistadors in the early 1500s and eventually spread to the rest of the world. On Jan 1, 2008, Mexico, the United States and Canada lifted all corn tariffs under the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement. Mexico now imports between 8 million and 9 million tonnes of U.S. yellow corn a year, close to 35 percent of local consumption.

## *Brazil Soy State loses taste for GMO seed*

Farmers in Brazil's Mato Grosso, the country's top soy state, are shunning once-heralded genetically modified soy varieties in favor of conventional seeds after the hi-tech type showed poor yields.

"We're seeing less and less planting of GMO soy around here. It doesn't give consistent performance," said Jeferson Bif, who grows soy and corn on a large 1,800 hectare farm in Ipiranga do Norte, near the key Mato Grosso soy town of Sorriso. He said he obtained average yields of 58 bags (60 kg) per hectare with conventional soy last season while fields planted with GMO soy in the same year yielded 10 bags less.

Growers began illegally using genetically modified varieties of soy even before Brazil passed a biosafety law around four years ago permitting their use, in the hope of gaining higher yields and reducing production costs.



SOYBEAN HARVEST IN MATO GROSSO



Around half of Mato Grosso's soy is estimated to be genetically modified but the tide is turning against it. Part of farmers' disappointment over the performance of the modified soy may stem from misunderstanding of the specific conditions in which its altered characteristics can bring rewards. Uptake of GMO soy was fast in the state Rio Grande do Sul because of its resistance to glyphosate, which is used to kill the weeds that flourish there. But this feature is much less useful in Mato Grosso, where weeds grow much less thickly. Farmers in Mato Grosso also benefit from better support from cooperatives and state government bodies which provide advice and technical assistance and help them maximize yields even with conventional soy.

Another reason for Mato Grosso's ongoing shift away from GMO-soy is that trading houses and meat processors, conscious that some consumers strive to avoid GMO foods, prefer conventional soy and will pay a premium for it. *— Reuters, 13/3/09 via GENET-news*

### **Non-GE Soy Demand Growing North and South**

Ontario food-grade soybeans are a big hit in Japan for processing into products such as tofu, miso and soy milk, and high quality food grade soybeans now make up about 30 per cent of the Ontario crop. Food-grade soybeans have a higher protein and sugar content than

the soybeans used for animal feed. Growers get a premium price for the food-grade soybeans, ranging from \$1 to \$3 extra a bushel. David Sippell, president of GE seed major Syngenta Seeds Canada, has said "The Japanese have come into our market to fill their needs because there is a shrinking supply in other parts of the world." *— London Free Press 3/4/09*

Soybean farmers in Arkansas and other states may be planting more conventional (non-transgenic) varieties in 2009. Soybean specialists at the University of Arkansas say they have had many more calls than in previous years about conventional varieties. Orders for foundation seed of conventional soybean varieties doubled this year compared to last year.

The vast majority of soybeans planted will still be transgenic herbicide-resistant varieties, but demand for conventional varieties may be higher due to: lower cost seed compared to transgenic varieties; the right to save seed from conventional varieties developed in public breeding programs; an increase in Roundup-resistant weeds, which means some farmers need additional herbicides with Roundup Ready varieties; and, a premium of up to \$1 per bushel paid by some buyers who produce non-transgenic soy products. *— Stuttgart (Arkansas) Daily Leader, 20/3/09*

Ohio growers are expected to increase their non-GM soybean acreage by about 10 percent, but there isn't enough seed to supply a further increase this year. Seed companies with non-GM varieties are expected to increase their seed production 100-200% this year. *— Farm and Dairy, 7/4/09*



GROWING RESISTANCE

### **Sweet Treats Industrial Gelato**

Danish ingredients company Danisco has developed a new emulsifier and stabiliser system to help food manufacturers create artisan-style ice cream on an industrial level without compromising on texture.

Danisco says that Gelato is the original Italian concept where they don't homogenise the mix and produce the ice cream in the back room of their stores and sell it within a few days. "We have modified the recipe and made an emulsifier and stabiliser especially for this ice cream so now, by using industrial equipment,

you will get the same sort of texture you get for gelato in Italy.” The raw materials used for gelato are the same as ice cream but the recipes and equipment used tend to be a little different and they are freezing the ice cream in a batch freezer instead of a continuous one.

Danisco also claims that Cremodan Gelato 11 ensures the gelato texture is maintained during storage and distribution, so that consumers get a smooth and fresh product. The system is also said to help achieve a fast melting, refreshing product without stickiness and improve shelf life quality. Plus, no Italian mama is required. The target shelf life for the gelato is 24 months.

The global volume of artisan ice cream is nine per cent, however, the value of the artisan market represents 21 per cent of the total ice cream market, according to Euromonitor. –*Foodproductiondaily.com, 2/4/09*

## Industrial ice cream

In the growing move from national brands to private label, Metro stores has improved some products by reformulating them. It added real cream to its Irresistables ice cream instead of using a cream substitute, but kept the price the same. It offset the upgrade costs by getting suppliers to lower their prices.

“Prices for private label goods are as much as 50% lower than name brands, while the products’ gross margins can be as much as 10-12% higher than on national brands.” –*G&M, 21/3/09*

Chapman’s, a large ice cream maker in Ontario, has ‘improved’ its ice ‘cream’ in a similar way. It is now using real milk rather than ‘milk ingredients’ (which are imported from the USA as milk solids mixed with sugar to get around quota restrictions on imported milk), but to cut costs they are supplementing the milk with palm oil so that the ‘nutrition facts’ label ends up looking good.

Europe’s largest dairy producer, Campina, is the first food manufacturer to use Germany’s still-new law to make a positive claim of “ohne Gentechnik” (German for “without biotechnology”) on a major brand. Since last October, all of its milk on retailer shelves carries this claim.

The company kicked off a major advertising campaign last night on its Landliebe® brand website. A nifty little commercial has authentic dairy farmers talk about the authentic and traditional feed plants used for their cows’ feed rations. For authentic everything is: The Campina concept avoids any soy ingredient in the

compound feed; the cows eat primarily feed that has been cultivated in Germany traditionally, e.g., grass, rapeseed or lupine. This way not even the risk of any GMO contamination of soy meal can arise.

Nevertheless, this bold move is likely to have an impact on the many dairy producers in and around Germany. Most do use soy meal in the feed for their cows. Campina has found its own way to claim “GM-free”, but many smaller dairy producers (as well as producers of poultry and other animal products), for years, have made use of the conveniently certified Non-GMO soy meal from Brazil and also from India. IP systems with fully documented traceability enable batch certification that allows for the same “GM-free” claim the Campina concept uses.

–*TraceConsult, Switzerland, 2/3/09*

## Farm workers

Wisconsin organic dairy farmer Jim Goodman was part of a Food Justice delegation, organized by Just Harvest USA, to Immokalee, Florida – where your out of season and canned tomatoes come from. He says, “I’ll have to tell you about it sometime, what a connection between cheap food, worker abuse, the environment, globalization – it was all there in the fields of South Florida.” What follows is a bit of the text accompanying the photos of the day on the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) website ([www.ciw-online.org/food\\_justice\\_del.html](http://www.ciw-online.org/food_justice_del.html)):

Gerardo Reyes of the CIW kicked off the discussion with a reflection on why society has mobilized to eradicate food-borne illness while food-borne injustice, like the plague of modern-day slavery in Florida’s fields, is largely ignored. He was followed by Josh Viertel of Slow Food USA, who framed the day’s message by describing the many accomplishments of the growing sustainable food movement before concluding, “But we have completely missed the boat on work. Farmworkers need to be a part of this movement.”

Raj Patel spoke briefly of his work, part of which is spent in research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, and then raised many an eyebrow in the crowd when he said, “Walking around here I am reminded by the living conditions of some of the conditions in South Africa under apartheid... except, of course, in South Africa the conditions were better.” He went on to explain that perhaps the most striking similarity between South Africa and Southwest Florida was how both societies made such an effort at “separating rich from poor, and trying to forget that we live in one world.”



Jim also wrote to us, "We just lost our hired man, but have a hired woman joining us mid April. She just finished the Dairy Short Course at the UW and is working on her PhD dissertation (anthropology). She asked me whether we pasteurized the milk we fed our calves. I told her that the raw milk was good enough for

us to drink so I guess the calves would be OK with it too. I'm sure she will be drinking it as well. Having just finished the Dairy Short course which relentlessly drummed conventional ideas into their heads, it was a conditioned response."

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## "Changing the Vocation of the Land"

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez ordered the nationalization of at least some of Cargill's Venezuelan operations and threatened to do the same with the Caracas-based food maker Polar. He began the expropriation process with Cargill, accusing the company of growing specialized forms of rice in an attempt to evade price controls.

Mark Klein, a spokesman for Cargill, said the Minneapolis, Minnesota-based company "is committed to the production of food in Venezuela that complies with all laws and regulations." He said a rice mill cited by Chavez "was designed exclusively to manufacture parboiled rice, which the company has done at this site for the last seven years and elsewhere in the country for

13 years." Cargill has been doing business in Venezuela since 1986, with 2,000 employees in 22 locations in Venezuela, according to its Web site. – CNN, 4/3/09

Venezuela also took over a 3700 acre eucalyptus farm owned by cardboard packaging manufacturer Smurfit Kappa of Ireland. Chavez said the government had taken over the El Pinal eucalyptus plantation because the water-hungry trees were drying out local rivers. He said the government would replant the farm. "We are going to use this wood in a rational manner and then we will change the vocation of the land. We are going to plant other things that are not eucalyptus." Smurfit Kappa owns 74,000 acres in Venezuela, 35% of the company's Latin American landholdings.

– Reuters/WP, 26/3/09



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