

Can Our Food Commit Suicide?

Concerned local citizens join the fight against Terminator Technology.

Halifax, NS – February 8, 2006 – On Thursday, February 16th 2006, the Food Action Committee (FAC) of the Ecology Action Centre will present a public screening of the 2002 documentary *Seeds of Change*. The film, which discusses the disturbing implications of recent developments in agricultural biotechnology, will be shown at 7pm in Dalhousie University's Marion McCain building. It will be followed by a public talk from Dr. Av Singh, an organic agriculture and rural infrastructure specialist for agricultural consulting agency AgraPoint. The film and talk are part of a larger campaign to raise public awareness about the dangers of Terminator Technology. On Monday, February 13th, FAC members will be staffing an information booth between 9am and 4pm in the lobby of the Student Union building, where the Raging Grannies will also perform at noon and 1pm. A similar booth will be set up in the lobby of the Marion McCain building on Thursday, February 16th.

Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURT), also commonly referred to as Terminator Technology and Suicide Seeds, produces plants which have been genetically modified to yield sterile seeds at harvest. Although 188 countries (Canada included) have signed the UN Convention of Biological Diversity's *de facto* moratorium on their use, several large biotechnology companies, including Syngenta, Monsanto, and Delta Pine and Land, as well as the USDA, currently own Terminator patents and are currently developing this technology. The Canadian government, although it has ratified the moratorium, continues to undermine the ban and to lobby in support of seed companies' interests.

Terminator Technology is economically and socially unsustainable, and potentially disastrous for farmers and indigenous people the world over. The National Farmers Union, and other farmers' organizations around the world, have spoken out against Terminator Technology, because they see its development as a move by transnationals to gain complete control of the food system. If this technology is made legal, new seeds will have to be purchased year after year, as the plants do not produce viable seeds that can be saved. Many farmers in Canada and elsewhere, who already make little or no money, would not be able to afford this increased cost. For indigenous peoples in the developing world, who rely on seed saving to feed their families, this technology could result in starvation. Furthermore, Terminator Technology may have ecological implications. The biotech companies which own Terminator patents claim that this technology was developed to prevent GM contamination. There is, however, concern among scientists that Terminator Technology may in fact pose a biosafety risk.

The Ecology Action Centre's Food Action Committee aims to promote the social, economic, and environmental benefits of locally-produced food; and to promote socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable ways of growing, processing, and distributing food.

For more information about Terminator Technology go to: www.banterminator.org or contact:
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