

Corporate Wealth versus People's Health: "Food Safety" Used to Increase Corporate Control over Food and Agriculture

By [Grain](#)

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Briefing: Food safety for whom?

A new briefing by GRAIN looks at how "food safety" is being used as a tool to increase corporate control over food and agriculture and what people are doing about it.

School children in the US were served 200,000 kilos of meat contaminated with a deadly antibiotic-resistant bacteria before the nation's second largest meat packer issued a recall in 2009. A year earlier, six babies died and 300,000 others got horribly sick with kidney problems in China when one of the country's top dairy producers knowingly allowed an industrial chemical into its milk supply. Across the world, people are getting sick and dying from food like never before.

Governments and corporations are responding with all kinds of rules and regulations, but few have anything to do with public health. The trade agreements, laws and private standards used to impose their version of "food safety" only entrench corporate food systems that make us sick and devastate those that truly feed and care for people, those based on biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and local markets.

"Corporations are increasingly in the drivers seat because they set the standards and implement them while governments merely frame the rules and clean up the mess," says GRAIN Director Henk Hobbelink. "These food and agriculture standards are spreading everywhere and are being used by Walmart and other corporations to organise markets according to their interests."

"Small-scale food producers, processors and vendors are getting shut out of markets or criminalised for their traditional practices, even though the corporate food system is the central problem," says Hobbelink.

People are resisting, however, whether its movements against GMOs in Benin and "mad cow" beef in Korea or campaigns to defend street hawkers in India and raw milk in Colombia. The question of who defines "food safety" is increasingly central to the struggle over the future of food and agriculture.

"Real food safety and food quality comes from balances, not extreme hygiene through industrial technologies," says Hobbelink.

For a copy of the synopsis or the full briefing, *Food safety for whom? Corporate wealth versus people's health*, please visit:

<http://www.grain.org/briefings/?id=222>

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