

Hundreds of Farmers Block Roads in Protest of Monsanto's GMO Crops: Poland's Largest Farmer Uprising

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Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#)

Poland's largest farmer uprising ever has occurred as convoys of tractors took to the roads recently in protest of GMO infiltration and land grabs by biotech and Big Ag corporations.

More than 150 farmers [blocked roadways](#) and held numerous demonstrations in order to bring attention to the important issue of food sovereignty in Poland. Their focus is a ban on GMOs and a restoration of small farmer's rights after decades of oppressive health and safety regulations which take rights away from small farms and give them to mono-cropping, poisoning Big Ag mega-companies.

The farmers have been stalwart - refusing to call off their demonstrations until their demands are met. Rallies and demonstrations have littered the country - in over 50 locations. Hundreds are picketing government offices in addition to the road blockades.

In the largest organized farmer's protest the country has likely ever seen, the farmers are demanding that legislators protect the small farmer from exploitation by monopolizing companies and refuse the sell off of their country's land to these behemoths. As the farmers point out, once the land is sold, the Big Ag model can't be stopped, and the land is forever lost.

Read: [Record GMO Farmers Switching to NON-GMO Crops in 2015](#)

Until government officials agree to talk with the farming unions, they have vowed to keep up their efforts. Edward Kosmal, chairman of the farmers protest committee for West-Pomeranian Region said:

"We are ready for dialogue. We look forward to meeting with you, Prime Minister, and beginning a comprehensive government commitment to solving the problems of Polish agriculture. If you do not enter into a dialogue with the Union, we will be forced to step up our protests."

There are 4 simple key demands the farmers would like to be heard:

- **Regulation of land grabs by primarily Western companies** (translation - biotech and Big Ag) to prevent small farmers from losing their livelihoods.

- **The legalization of direct sale of produce and other foods from farms to the people.** This cuts out the middle man and allows the higher quality produce of many farms to reach its customers directly. Poland currently has some of the most extreme policies of all of Europe in this regard, making it nearly impossible for small farmers to compete with big food companies who are notorious for selling us fake and highly processed foods.
- **Change inheritance laws** so that families can rightly leave land under lease to their heirs.
- **BAN THE CULTIVATION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS!**

One farmer stated:

“We demand the introduction of legislation that will protect Polish land from exploitation by foreign capital! Agricultural land cannot be sold to commercial companies. It’s part of Polish territory. Once sold it will be lost.

An Intense Escalation of Events

The farmer’s protests represent a dramatic increase in activist fervor that has been boiling to the surface for over a year, with marked unrest in the northern provinces.

These provinces are especially upset about not being able to sell their (mostly) organic produce, though uncertified. It is usually of higher quality than the food grown on modern industrial farms. Poland is one of the last places in Europe where ‘peasant’ farmers still use traditional agricultural methods, without the use of chemicals and very low mechanization, so the soil is healthier, and so are the plants grown there. The large majority of small farms are no larger than 5 hectares.

Industrial-bent foreign corporations are keen to expand their operations in Poland, and many small farmers see the increasingly ridiculous regulations as an attempt to force families off their land.

Furthermore, one of Poland’s biggest industrial producers, in the form of Smithfield (the world’s biggest pig producer which bought Poland’s Animex SA in 1999) is influencing the largely right-wing government. They own a string of 16 hog farms where conditions have been called “[*horrendous*](#),” so you know they are not interested in protecting small farmer’s land rights or producing high-quality, no-GMO, organic food.

The triad of government and corporate interests in Poland along with EU pressure is causing the protests to reach a more fevered pitch.

“[These protests are](#) touching the raw nerve of what’s wrong with the inhuman, neo-liberal and profit obsessed practices of today. Practices which ignore the real needs of farmers and consumers alike.”

Read: [Brazil’s Farmers Rise up in Protest Against Big Ag’s Policies](#)

Polish farmers are joined with millions of others who have been protesting against Monsanto, Cargill, and other biotech and Big Ag interests who have little concern for the quality of our food supply. [Over 50 countries have marched](#) against Monsanto, so the [thousands marching in Poland](#) are not alone. Almost all states in the US have marched against Monsanto and Big Ag, and Vermont recently staged a protest at the US Canadian border which involved more than 79 Vermont towns.

Hillary Martin, a farmer from Burlington, Vermont states the internationally-shared aims against these bullies clearly:

“We are here at the border to demonstrate the global solidarity of farmers in the face of corporate globalization. The corporate takeover of agriculture has impoverished farmers, starved communities, and force-fed us hazardous genetically engineered crops, only to line the pockets of a handful of multinational corporations like Monsanto at the expense of farmers who are struggling for land and livelihood around the world!”

You can [read more about](#) land grabs by multinationals at Pesticide Action Network, as well other sites. The actions of these companies keeps the world hungry and sick, not well fed. As the Global Policy Forum explains, unfair distribution of land, and unfair access to ownership explain much of the poverty and hunger in the world – NOT – as biotech would have us believe, the inability to grow enough food. Its all about distribution.

It is the one- percent-ers, owning most of the multinational companies, not rural farmers who commandeer the land. Even when small farmers do own land, they still suffer from inequality due to government regulations that favor these enormous companies.

“The struggle for land reform, which would shift the balance of power in favor of marginalized landless farmers, has been going on for many decades. However the food and financial crises contribute to worsening the trend towards land concentration, in which governments, agro-industrial corporations and private investors buy up fertile land in poor countries, [largely to spread GMOs] depriving small farmers of their ability to grow their own food.”

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