

# Monsanto Agritech Lobbying for the TTIP: Britain Spearheads Campaign to Make European GMO Regulation Meaningless

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*As Washington's trusted lapdog, the UK is spearheading US agritech's drive to get genetically modified (GM) food into Europe. Officials, politicians, academics and media outlets have been co-opted by and are colluding with the GMO agritech industry [1-6]. These people and institutions have been spewing out falsehoods, ignoring evidence pertaining to GMOs and are putting a one-sided positive spin on GM food with the aim of forcing it onto a public that does not want it [7].*

Monsanto and other agritech companies are lobbying hard for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) [8], which aims to throw Europe's door wide open to GM food [9]. The same companies are also behind the drive to weaken the pan-European regulatory framework currently in place by attempting to push through legislation that will allow them to pick off each state one by one and force their GMOs onto people [10,11]. They have all options covered.

Now the industry and its mouthpieces and proxies are pushing to do away with European process-based regulation [12], which would effectively side-step any effective process for assessing and regulating GMOs. Process-based regulation concerns the techniques used to create a new crop variety. For example, if a new crop variety is developed through GM, it must be assessed for safety and labelled.

However, technologies have been developed that are intended to target GM gene insertion to a predetermined site within the plant's DNA. Although the GMO industry claims these techniques are precise, studies have found that they cause unintended genomic modifications in off-target sites (the part of the plant not being targeted), potentially causing a range of harmful side-effects [13].

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is the UK's main public science funding body. It is using the supposed precision of genome editing to lobby for process-based GMO regulation to be abolished. The alternative is product-based regulation, where the regulator looks at the trait the crop is engineered to express and regulates it on that basis. Writing on the GMWatch site, Claire Robinson says that if a crop were engineered to produce a pesticide, it would be regulated as a pesticide. If it were engineered to contain higher levels of a nutrient, it would probably escape regulation, or it may be regulated as a natural food or drug, depending on the country and the product. Safety assessments specific to GM crops would not be triggered [12]. They would be treated the same as non-GMOs.

The US and Canada currently have product-based regulation and thus have minimal oversight of GMO crops and foods. The US, for example, only regulates GMOs if they are pesticides or plant pests and assumes that GMO Bt pesticidal plants are equivalent and thus harmless to humans and animals because natural Bt is allegedly harmless to humans and animals. Claire Robinson argues that this completely ignores the fact that the GMO Bt toxin is different from natural Bt in structure and mode of action, thus losing its specificity to insect pests and opening up the possibility that it is toxic or allergenic to humans and animals.

It is impossible to label GMO products if the process by which they were created is ignored. If Europe opts for product-based regulation, there will be no labelling of GMO products. The TTIP aims to force Europe to drop its GMO regulatory standards. If this occurs, Claire Robinson argues that Europe will adopt the type of worthless product-based regulatory assessments that occurs in the US. The push for product-based regulation is yet another devious tactic being used by the GMO biotech lobby to muddy the waters and erode Europe's regulatory framework.

GMOs are not needed to feed the world [14-18]. The push to force GM food into Europe is based on lies, deceptions and falsehoods. It is part of a strategy to place the global control of agriculture into the hands of a few corporations for commercial gain. These corporations with their control of seeds and technologies via patents intend to suck massive amounts of money from agriculture [19]. Given their impacts on health and the environment and also taking into account the track records of the players who are furthering the global GM strategy (Monsanto, Gates Foundation, Rockefeller, US State Department, etc), GMOs must ultimately be regarded as a tool of imperialism and a form of biological warfare [20,21,22].

The GMO biotech lobby attempts to disguise its intentions behind the mask of altruism and tries to drive its message with a cynical dose of emotional blackmail about critics of GMOs robbing food from the mouths of the hungry [23]. Such a pity that the UK public is (unknowingly) funding the GMO agenda, not least because the BBSRC and government departments are using British taxpayers' money to promote the industry's lobbying messages.

## Notes

- 1] <http://gmwatch.eu/index.php/news/archive/2014/15308-eu-chief-science-adviser-s-gmo--safety-claims-are-a-lie>
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- 10] <http://www.gmfreeze.org/actions/42/>
- 11] <http://corporateeurope.org/food-and-agriculture/2014/05/biotech-lobbys--fingerprints-over-new-eu-proposal-allow-national-gmo>
- 12] <http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2014/15722-uk-gmo-lobby-wants-genome--edited-products-to-escape-gmo-regulation-and-labelling>
- 13] <http://earthopensource.org/gmomythsandtruths/sample-page/1-genetic-engineering--technique/1-2-myth-genetic-engineering-precise-results-predictable/>
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