

# ECO

Volume 46, Issue 6

16 October 2013

[www.cbdalliance.org](http://www.cbdalliance.org)

 [biodivcivsoc](#)

 [CBD-Alliance](#)

World Food Sovereignty Day

## Sustain Agricultural Biodiversity

Doing so will address the majority of the Aichi Targets  
and will Feed the World

*Patrick Mulvany, Practical Action*

On World Food Sovereignty Day we salute those who feed us. Using the agricultural biodiversity they have developed over millennia, the world's small-scale women and men peasant farmers, livestock keepers, forest dwellers, fishers, indigenous peoples and other

small-scale food producers, in rural and urban areas, provide food for 70% of the people in the world. As etcGroup points out in their poster "Who Will Feed Us?" ([www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)), it is the biodiversity-enhancing, peasant food webs, working in the framework of food sovereignty, that supply most people with their food, not the biodiversity-destroying industrial food chains.

Yet it is industry that consumes the resources – energy, water, land, labour, research – to produce obesogenic commodities, agrofuels and animal feed. Worse, industry is protected through laws, patents, intellectual property regimes, commercial contracts and technologies which force farmers to buy new seed each season. Indeed, if agribusiness in Brazil is successful today, the courts will overturn the CBD moratorium on

Terminator technologies, which will make it impossible for farmers to save their own seed; Farmers' Rights will be destroyed by the release of these suicide seeds. And, on this auspicious day, the same perpetrators of contamination, scientists from the companies, which hold the Terminator patents, will be awarded the World Food Prize.

Those who sustain agricultural biodiversity deserve better, and all of us need them to continue to feed us. We need to know how they can do this. The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is preparing a report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. National reports will inform the overall synthesis. Governments should ensure that those who sustain biodiversity are closely involved in the preparing these reports. Implementing the necessary changes identified, will help Parties reach the Aichi Targets and realize food sovereignty.



### In this issue

- World food prize contaminated
- Farmers' Rights
- Strengthened resistance to GM maize in Mexico
- Agropoly – launched today

### Seedmap.org web portal launches at CBD

Seedmap.org, a website launched by USC Canada at SBSTTA yesterday, focuses on the role of agricultural biodiversity in these issues, and chronicles the earth's crop genetic wealth, the centres of origin, how biodiversity is threatened, what are the solutions – all laid out in a visually engaging, interactive website.

Seedmap.org comes at a time of heightened global interest in biodiversity issues, as they relate to food sovereignty, agroecology, climate change and sustainable agriculture.

The CBD community -- policymakers, researchers, practitioners, students, food and environmental organizations will find this an indispensable tool they can use in their own work. Seedmap.org pays particular attention to the critical role of women, small holder farmers, indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems in conserving genetic resources and ecosystems.



[www.seedmap.org](http://www.seedmap.org)

## World Food Prize Contaminated

A Monsanto executive is winning this year's 'Nobel Prize of agriculture' – the one-time prestigious World Food Prize – for creating GMOs. Receiving it legitimises the sort of rampant genetic modification Monsanto pioneered, and helps validate a ruthless business model that impoverishes farmers and monopolizes our food. If that wasn't baffling enough, the founder of Syngenta, the same biotech giant joining Bayer in suing Europe to keep selling bee-killing pesticides, will also win the prize. With a cruel twist of fate, the prize will be presented today – World Food Day. - in Iowa, USA.

[www.worldfoodprize.org](http://www.worldfoodprize.org)

### MOO!!!!

*Elias Diaz Peña and Simone Lovera,  
Sobrevivencia, Paraguay*

Last year, almost 600.000 hectares of forest were destroyed in the Paraguayan Chaco. This does not only have devastating impacts on biodiversity, it threatens the survival of Indigenous Peoples, including in particular the survival of a number of groups of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation. By far the main driver of this environmental and human rights disaster is large-scale meat production for export markets. The other big cause of forest and biodiversity loss in Paraguay is massive monoculture soy production to feed European and Chinese pigs and chickens.

The cynical thing is that it is perfectly possible to combine livestock production and biodiversity, provided it takes place on natural grasslands and other unmodified ecosystems, and respects Indigenous territories. Indigenous pastoralists and other small-scale livestock producers have proven all over the world that they can conserve their territories and areas (ICCAs) while addressing food sovereignty, gender, animal welfare, cultural and health concerns.

There is one caution, though. As every pastoralist can tell you, the quantity of production is the key to sustainability in livestock production; Too many animals will destroy the basis for production. And intensification has definitely NOT been the appropriate response in the livestock industry: The production of soy and other crops that serve as fodder for the industrial livestock industry has even more devastating impacts on biodiversity and communities than extensive cattle ranching. On average, for every kilo of meat produced five kilo of fodder is needed, which is a massive form of food and land waste.

So for the sake of the planet, its biodiversity and its people let's go for quality instead of quantity in livestock production and consumption.



## European Seed Laws to Undermine Farmers' Rights?

*Ivan Mammana – Nyéléni Europe*

The EU is debating a seed marketing proposal that will streamline legislation. It is an industry-oriented proposal and the European Seed Association (ESA), the lobby group that represents the Seed Industry, welcomed it as a step towards "improved, modern legislation". When adopted, the European Seed Industry will have achieved their objective of creating a standardised legal framework, valid in all EU Member States and for all seeds.

But seeds need to be diverse and locally-adaptable to support resilient production of food. The proposal has been criticized by organic breeders, seed savers as well as medium- and small-scale farmers' organisations that are working in the framework of food sovereignty.

Since seeds are the starting point of the whole human food chain, the European Food Sovereignty Movement is calling for action in this struggle, and is asking Members of the European Parliament and national governments to amend the proposal to strengthen Farmers' Rights to use, save, exchange and sell their GMO-free seeds.

To help realise food sovereignty, individual growers, peasant farmers and communities must be able to continue to develop and use their local, open pollinated and diverse varieties of seeds from across the EU, without having to register them or submit them to 'plant variety protection'. Commercial seeds developed for monoculture fuel and feedstock production feed industry. Diverse, peasants' seeds will feed us.

[www.nyelenieurope.org](http://www.nyelenieurope.org)

## Food Secure Canada Challenges Harper

MONTREAL –Food Secure Canada is calling on Stephen Harper and all other federal party leaders to mark World Food Day by speaking up about Canada's broken food system and what can be done to fix it. People have responded to the national initiative by posting their own videos on the Throne speech on Youtube They are calling on the government to reduce waste, eliminate hunger, protect farmland, support local food providers and improve labelling and food safety, amongst other ideas.

[www.foodsecurecanada.org](http://www.foodsecurecanada.org)

# Governments Renew Commitment to Implement Farmers' Rights!

*Maedeh Salimi and Ali Razmkhah, CENESTA*

Last month, the Governing Body of the International Seed Treaty (IT PGRFA) met for the fifth time (GB5) in Oman. This isolated location, far from forgotten farmers' fields that grow the biodiverse crops which feed the world, could have derailed the Treaty; it is of course, farmers and peasants who conserve and promote agricultural biodiversity and corporations which reduce and eliminate it.

In the event, the degree of unanimity of the African, Asian and Latin American blocs, with significant support from some European countries, and with united advocacy from farmers' organisations and CSOs present, all contributed to better outcomes than some had predicted:

- a good resolution on Farmers' Rights, which renewed the commitment of governments to implement Farmers' Rights

- a coded call to UPOV and WIPO to report on their impacts on Farmers' Rights
- warm acceptance of the offer by Farmers' Organisations to produce a report for GB6 on the state of implementation of Farmers' Rights
- actions designed to improve the sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, linked to commitments to realise Farmers' Rights
- a request to the Secretary to report on relevant discussions that relate to Farmers' Rights within other UN fora including the Committee on World Food Security.

We appreciate the efforts of Contracting Parties at GB5 to reaffirm, in a new decision, their legally-binding commitment to the realisation of Farmers' Rights.

[www.ukabc.org/gb5.htm](http://www.ukabc.org/gb5.htm)

## Strengthened Resistance to GM Maize in Mexico

*Verónica Villa – etcGroup*

On 11 October, 2013, a federal judge in Mexico City ordered the suspension of permits for experimental planting and commercial release of GM maize in Mexico, arguing that there is potential damage to biodiversity otherwise.

For 10 years, hundreds of peasant, urban, indigenous and other civil society organizations, both Mexican and international, have fought GM corn, since contamination of native maize was discovered in Oaxaca, Mexico. This is a big concern as Mexico is where maize originated, and it is also where there is the highest consumption of locally-grown maize in the world. It is thanks to this collective fight that the court took this positive decision, keeping in mind as well the many national and international repercussions.

Currently there are 14 applications for experimental planting, which would lead to the commercial release of genetically modified corn on nearly six million acres, in six northern Mexican states. Those states are leading suppliers of processed grain, consumed in industrial tortilla, in packaged food and as cattle feed. The corn that is core to people's survival, and directly consumed here, is grown mostly in the southern states, but also across the country. All this corn would inevitably be contaminated if commercialization of transgenic corn is permitted, even in select sites.

The companies involved (Monsanto, DuPont, Dow, Syngenta) are not about to give up their attempt to rob a globally important food crop. After the judge's decision, they stated confidently that the commercialization of transgenic corn in Mexico will go through soon.



The impact of the temporary suspension of permits for experimental planting remains to be seen. Rejecting GM corn is paramount. It shows that there is an understanding of the danger of pollution for the most important agricultural and genetic heritage of the Mesoamericas, and corresponding food sovereignty issues. Native corn grown by Mexican farmers on hillsides, plateaus

and in valleys, with low input and no mechanization, has real adaptation potential to climatic shocks, unlike standard industrial varieties. It is part of the planet's life insurance policy.

We need to convert this temporary suspension into a permanent ban on GM maize in its birthplace. Three or four multinational companies cannot take ownership of maize by transgenic contamination, patents and monopolies, to convert millions of livelihoods into industrial loot.

In the coming days, each forum and organization must welcome this temporary suspension, while pushing for it to become a permanent ban, making it clear to businesses and policy makers that saving Mexican corn from genetic contamination will be a success of historic significance.



## Coming Tomorrow: the Prestigious Dodo Awards!

**At this CBD meeting the CBD Alliance will once again give Dodo Awards to those governments who have failed to evolve, and whose actions at the CBD are contributing to, rather than preventing, biodiversity loss.**

**Watch out!**

## Global Day of Action for Food Sovereignty

**People have the right to land and seeds to produce healthy food, and practice food sovereignty!**

*Via Campesina*

Via Campesina, the International Peasant Movement, affirms that it is only possible to end the global food crisis and hunger through food sovereignty with agro-ecological production.

Current economic policies hinder the development of peasant agriculture and favour agribusiness. Today, the expansion of agribusiness around the world has caused market speculation and food price volatility, destroying people's food sovereignty, increasing insecurity.

In this sense, Via Campesina affirms that the only way out of this food crisis is to end the agribusiness model, and neo-liberal policies which expel peasants from their territories, and drive a process of forced de-peasantisation of the countryside. They also cause land grabs, corporate control of our seeds, destruction of biodiversity, and have generated hunger and misery around the World.

Since 1996, Via Campesina has advocated for food sovereignty as a practice that allows people around the world to design their own food and agriculture policies. Policies that promote peasant agriculture, local markets and focus on feeding local populations first.

The food crisis is the most catastrophic among the multiple crises that neo-liberal policies have generated. At this moment, more than one billion people in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition while multinational companies continue to speculate on food. Agriculture, water, land, food and other public resources have now become central to profit-making for them.

We emphasize that it is urgent to realize the right to food and nutrition, the most basic human right, as mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, peasant women

and men reaffirm our commitment to a healthy, environmentally friendly, food sovereignty with agroecology.

On this Global Day of Action, we should show the strength and diversity of our movements, coordinating actions against transnational agribusinesses like Monsanto, against land grabbing, against the use of pesticides and genetically modified seeds.

For Land and People's Sovereignty. Solidarity and Struggle!

[www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)

## Agropoly – Launched Today

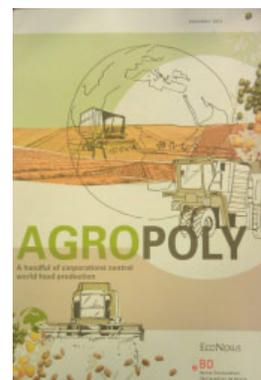
*EcoNexus*

Agribusiness is rapidly increasing its monopoly control over the food system. Agropoly shows how a handful of companies now dominate:

- animal feed production – one third of agricultural land goes to produce animal feed;
- livestock breeding – for example in chicken breeding, the top 4 companies have 99% market share of the genetics;
- seed production – the top 10 seed corporations have a 75% market share of the commercial market.
- commodity production, processing, trade and retail – the revenues of each of the three biggest supermarket corporations are larger than the GNP of many states;
- fertiliser and pesticide manufacture – the latter also controlled by seed corporations.

One result is that many local breeds and food crop varieties have already been lost and the decline continues.

This consolidation is relentless, with government policies shaped to suit corporations and their investors, not citizens. Agropoly highlights the pressing need to act now to develop inclusive and just food regimes providing nutritious food for all.



[www.econexus.net](http://www.econexus.net)

### **CBD Alliance would like to thank SwedBio for their continued and ongoing support**

*The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed.*

**Submissions are welcome from all civil society organisations.**

**Email:** [veenago@gmail.com](mailto:veenago@gmail.com)