

Argentina: Government Shows Signs of Siding with Farmers in Dispute with Monsanto

The world's third largest soy exporter may have just dealt another blow to the multi-national agricultural company Monsanto.

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A [simple decree by the Argentine government](#) regarding food inspection may signal an even bigger step in the right direction for the South American country in the future.

The issue surrounds the fact that Monsanto has been demanding that exporters inspect cargo to determine whether or not farmers had paid the requisite royalties to produce the company's genetically modified soybeans. Monsanto is claiming that Argentine farmers have benefited immensely from the Intacta technology and is demanding that everyone pay to use it.

For about a year, Monsanto has been pressuring shipping companies and demanding that the companies notify it when crops produced with Intacta technology are scheduled to be exported without corresponding documentation proving that royalties had been paid to Monsanto.



Image credit: truthalerts.com

The Intacta soybeans in question are genetically engineered to have a gene that protects them against worms that target the plant. Monsanto is demanding royalties for grains produced even by second generation seeds. Farmers, however, argue that Argentinian law does not require that they pay for second generation production and are asking the government to stop private companies from acting as food inspectors.

The Argentine Rural Society (SRA) an organization that represents medium and large scale producers said the inspections were unwarranted. "These methods were not only not authorized, but furthermore, we saw them as an abusive power for a company to be acting like the police," SRA president Luis Etchevehere said.

In an official bulletin that was issued on Thursday, April 14th, Argentina's Agricultural Ministry stated that any inspection needs prior government authorization.

While it did not mention Monsanto or the dispute between the farmers and the company, it appears that the Argentinian government is asserting itself in the face of a company that is essentially strong-arming exporters into acting as the company's own private inspection service.

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