



South Africa and Worldwide: The Anti-GMO March and Protest Movement against Monsanto

500 Cities Worldwide

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On 21 May 2016, South Africans will once again unite, in numerous cities throughout the country, to protest Monsanto's aggressive attempts to force genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, and their chemical Herbicides, onto South African consumers and farmers.

The March Against Monsanto, is a part of a global, mass, pro-organic, anti-transgenic GMO campaign being held in over 500 cities worldwide in a bid to spread awareness about the harmful effects of genetically-modified foods, the toxic chemical herbicides that are used with them and the monopoly and ownership of our seeds, to demand the right to natural medicines and to support and promote small and organic farmers and local food webs.

The FDA has placed the interest of a handful of biotechnology companies ahead of their responsibility to protect public health. By failing to require testing and labelling of genetically engineered foods, the agency has made consumers unknowing guinea-pigs for potentially harmful, unregulated food substances.

- Andrew Kimbrell, Executive Director of the International Center for Technology Assessment.

GMOs are organisms whose genetic material have been artificially manipulated in a lab through genetic engineering, creating unstable combinations of genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding methods. GMO's are engineered to withstand direct application of herbicide &/or to produce an insecticide. Despite biotech industry promises, GMOs have not produced increased yield, drought tolerance, enhanced nutrition, or any other consumer benefit, while scientific evidence connects GMO's with health problems, environmental damage and violation of farmers' and consumers' rights.

Now in its fourth year, the March against Monsanto has continued to grow in momentum, as new research highlighting the negative impacts of GMOs and the associated chemicals is emerging. Most recently the WHO has classified Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup®, as a Category 2A "Probable Human Carcinogen". This is the chemical herbicide used on all Roundup-ready crops, as well as on sports-fields, parks, playgrounds and domestic gardens. It is readily available to all consumers (including children) at retail outlets and family stores.

Amidst rising global concern for human and environmental health, GMO's are increasingly

being banned in many countries, including Russia and China. South Africa remains the ONLY country with a whole GM crop as its the staple diet. There is poison in our pap

Why Monsanto

U.S. Agrochemical giant, Monsanto is the world's largest agricultural seed company, owning a massive share of the global seed market. Monsanto operates in 80 countries, including 9 African countries.

In South Africa, Monsanto controls the majority of the maize seed market and dominates the GM maize market. There is only one GM maize variety that does not contain a Monsanto owned trait. Every GM variety sold is either directly by or under license from, Monsanto.

86% of maize hectares, 100% of cotton and 92% of soybean hectares are planted to GM crops.

Furthermore, Monsanto controls 60% of that glyphosate market in South Africa. Its highly toxic herbicide - Roundup® - is used extensively on our food crops and is imposed on farmers who forfeit any right to compensation, in the event of crop failure, if not using Monsanto's Roundup® brand of glyphosate.

In recent Nation Wide protests communities, concerned citizens and environmental activists questioned the selling of Roundup in family stores, without sufficient warning labels or age restrictions, calling for its removal from the shelves.

South Africa is a country where one in four people go hungry, even though the country as a whole is food secure. We find it unacceptable that our government supports a corporatist, profiteering model of food production, spearheaded by Monsanto's patented GMO seeds, that lends itself solely to large-scale industrialized farming.

Various organizations supporting the March against Monsanto have the following to say

Sonia Mountford from EATegrity states

We must reverse to progress.

Is meddling with the genetic make-up of our food the answer? Before you say we have been modifying our food sources for decades, let me say yes we have and that is why we have an increase in food intolerances and chronic health issues caused by the way food is produced. For example, 50 years or so ago, wheat contained only five percent gluten, today it has risen to up to 50 percent gluten content. It's only been since World War II, that wartime chemicals and technologies have found new uses in agriculture.

Traditional and Natural Health Alliance

The Traditional & Natural Health Alliance supports the March Against Monsanto Campaign and invites all it's supporters in the form of natural health product manufacturers, retailers, practitioners and consumers to say No to GMO and toxic agro-chemicals.

African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)

It is very encouraging to see people taking a stand against Monsanto and demanding a just, nutritious and democratic food system.

Transkei Animal Welfare Initiative (TAWI):

The damage being done to animals, wildlife and ecosystems by chemical herbicides and pesticides is devastating. TAWI fully supports this campaign and it's work towards a glyphosate free South Africa.

Our Demands

We demand an end to the food fascism in this country, where people are being force-fed genetically modified foods without their knowledge or consent.

We demand a food system that is just and equitable, which makes food accessible to all people.

We demand an inclusive farming system that recognizes indigenous and local knowledge, as well as age old traditions of seed-saving and sharing.

We demand the democratization of our food systems.

We demand training and support for farmers who are practicing agro-ecological farming.

We demand the right traditional and natural medicines, free from patents.

We demand that the toxic pesticide, Glyphosate be removed from our food crops, in the form of dissipation and in conjunction with GM crops

We demand that the herbicide Roundup (and other formulations containing the active ingredient glyphosate), be regulated in family stores , properly labeled (to stipulate the dangers), age restricted and a license required to use it

We demand that the South African government stops ignoring and enforces the SA labelling law for foods containing over 5% GMOs

We demand that the South African Police Service, based on the precautionary principle, suspend the aerial spraying of Glyphosate based herbicides, as a method of law enforcement in the former Transkei

This year protests will take place in the Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pilgrims Rest, Port Elizabeth, Malmsebury, Port St Johns, Nelspruit, East London, Bloemfontein on the 21st of May.

Living Seeds, Heirloom organic Seed company, has kindly sponsored FREE organic seeds to the participants of the March, to promote home gardens and the importance of protecting and cherishing our seed varieties.

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For More Information:

Monsanto Factsheet from African Centre for Biosafety

http://www.acbio.org.za/.../02/ACB-factsheet_Monsanto.pdf

Glyphosate in South Africa

<http://acbio.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Roundup-Environmental-impacts-SA.pdf>

<http://acbio.org.za/.../2015/06/Glyphosate-report-2015.pdf>

The Dark History of Monsanto

<http://www.seattleorganicrestaurants.com/vegan-whole-foods/dark-history-monsanto/>

Monsanto's Dirty Dozen

<http://gmo-awareness.com/2011/05/12/monsanto-dirty-dozen/>

March Against Monsanto South Africa <https://www.facebook.com/MAMSouthAfrica>

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