

Samuel Kaymen, 12:10 2/6/2001 -0, Organic Gold Rush



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✓ To: "EARTH University-Salzburg Seminar series" <earth@lyris.salzburgseminar.org>

✓ Subject: Organic Gold Rush

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Dear Friend,

This is the best article on Organic I have come across in recent years. Thus I am forwarding it to you because it is well researched and important. I hope you get a lot out of it. Best Regards. Since it is a "pdf" file I have added a link to download Adobe Acrobat Reader in case you do not have it.
Samuel Kaymen

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From: "Samuel Kaymen" <kaymen@worldnet.att.net>

To:

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Subject: Fw: Nature refuses to allow evidence on GM crops

Date: Fri, 31 Aug 2001 08:27:27 -0400

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Subject: Nature refuses to allow evidence on GM crops

> Nature Rejects Scientific Debate on UK Farmscale Field Trials

>

> The following commentary on an article published in last week's Nature

> describing UK's farmscale field trials was rejected by the

> correspondence editor, "following discussion with our editorial team".

> This is not the first time that Nature has refused to allow real

> scientific debate on GM crops to take place in its pages.

>

> Sir- Your report1 states, "The scientists behind Britain's farm-scale

> field trials accept that they cannot answer all the questions

> surrounding the ecological effects of herbicide-tolerant GM crops - much

> less GM technology in general." Yet, like other previous reports in

> Nature, it persists in giving the impression that the battle is between

> "environmental group and organic farming movement" on one side and

> "science" on the other. There are at least two problems with GM

> technology that have been debated among scientists, genetic instability

> of GMOs, and their propensity for horizontal gene transfer due to the

> structural instability of GM constructs and their homologies with a wide

> range of bacteria and viruses.2,3

> We have insisted that molecular data documenting genetic stability of

> transgenic lines must be provided before any environmental release.4

> Unless a transgenic line is stable, one might as well forget about

mm 11/9/01 q

- > studying its long term environmental or health impacts. Unfortunately,
- > none of the GM crops undergoing farm-scale field trials, or indeed, in
- > commercial release elsewhere in the world, has been documented to be
- > stable. And no studies on horizontal gene transfer are included in UK
- > field trials.
- > The instability of GMOs is now generally recognised. Even the top
- > 'success', Roundup Ready soya, is showing every sign of breakdown:
- > reduced yield, non-germination, diseases and infestation by new pests.⁵
- > Molecular genetic characterisation, the first ever done on any
- > commercially grown GM crop so far, has failed to confirm the structure
- > of the insert originally reported. Instead, both the GM construct and
- > the host genome have been scrambled (rearranged), and hundreds of
- > basepairs of unknown DNA has got in as well.⁶
- > A risk assessment study funded by the European Commission (EC) concludes:⁷
- > "Biotechnology relies to a large extent on our ability to introduce
- > foreign genes into cells. A major problem with present day technology
- > is the non-predictability of the integration of such transgenes. DNA
- > introduced into plant cells mostly integrates at random, i.e. at
- > non-predetermined positions of the genome....DNA integrated at random
- > frequently contains multiply copies and often copies are scrambled.
- > Multiple copies also often induce gene silencing and hence instability
- > in the expression of the introduced genes. In addition, the DNA
- > integrates at loci of unknown stability and capacity for expression of
- > randomly integrated copies may induce unpredictable and undesirable
- > mutations in the host genome....we still lack the knowledge for precision
- > engineering of plants' genes."
- > The EC also funded research evaluating horizontal gene transfer from
- > GMOs to the microflora and in animal gut.⁸ It notes that the risks of
- > "horizontal gene transfer cannot be excluded", and, "Free DNA persists
- > in some materials for weeks, and furthermore, some bacteria develop
- > natural/chemical competence to take up DNA from the environment. In
- > addition, in the gastrointestinal tract of man and husbandry animals,
- > DNA may remain stable for some time, particularly in the colon."
- > Finally, the new European Directive 2001/18 /EC on deliberate release of
- > GMOs has now been agreed. Apart from the stricter requirements for long
- > term ecological and health impact assessments, it also stipulates
- > molecular data documenting that the GMO is genetically and
- > phenotypically stable. These criteria, if strictly implemented, will
- > disqualify most, if not all current GMOs, for environmental release,
- > including those undergoing UK farm-scale field trials.
- >
- > 1.
- > Gura, T. Nature 412, 760-3 (2001).
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- > Ho, M.W, et al. Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease 10, 33-59, 1998.
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- > Ho, M.W., Ryan, A., Cummins, J. Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease
- > 12, 6-11, 2000.
- > 4.
- > Ho, M.W., Steinbrecher, R. Environmental and Nutritional Interactions 2,

> 51-84, 1998.
> 5.
> "Bad news beans - A year of challenges confronts soybean growers" Duane
> Daily, Extension & Ag. Information, University of Missouri, July 27,
> 2001 DailyF@missouri.edu
> 6.
> Windels, P. et al. Eur Food Res Technol DOI 10.1007/ s002170100336,
(2001).
> 7.
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<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/quality-of-life/gmo/01-plants/01-14-project.html>
> 8.
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<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/quality-of-life/gmo/04-food/04-07-project.html>
>
> Mae-Wan Ho
> Angela Ryan
> Institute of Science in Society
> PO Box 32097,
> London NW1 0XR, UK
> e-mail: m.w.ho@I-sis.org
>
> Joseph Cummins
> Department of Plant Sciences
> University of Western Ontario,
> London , Ontario N6A5B7
> Canada
> e-mail: jcummins@uwo.ca

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