

# 10 reasons why we don't need GM foods

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

With the cost of food recently skyrocketing – hitting not just shoppers but the poor and hungry in the developing world – genetically modified (GM) foods are once again being promoted as the way to feed the world. But this is little short of a confidence trick. Far from needing more GM foods, there are urgent reasons why we need to ban them altogether.

## 1. GM foods won't solve the food crisis

A 2008 World Bank report concluded that increased biofuel production is the major cause of the increase in food prices. GM giant Monsanto has been at the heart of the lobbying for biofuels – while profiting enormously from the resulting food crisis and using it as a PR opportunity to promote GM foods!

“The climate crisis was used to boost biofuels, helping to create the food crisis; and now the food crisis is being used to revive the fortunes of the GM industry.”

– Daniel Howden, Africa correspondent of The Independent

“The cynic in me thinks that they're just using the current food crisis and the fuel crisis as a springboard to push GM crops back on to the public agenda. I understand why they're doing it, but the danger is that if they're making these claims about GM crops solving the problem of drought or feeding the world, that's bullshit.”

– Prof Denis Murphy, head of biotechnology at the University of Glamorgan in Wales

## 2. GM crops do not increase yield potential

Despite the promises, GM has not increased the yield potential of any commercialised crops. In fact, studies show the most widely grown GM crop, GM soya, has suffered reduced yields.

“Let's be clear. As of this year [2008], there are no commercialized GM crops that inherently increase yield. Similarly, there are no GM crops on the market that were engineered to resist drought, reduce fertilizer pollution or save soil. Not one.”

– Dr Doug Gurian-Sherman, former biotech specialist for the US Environmental Protection Agency and former advisor on GM to the US Food and Drug Administration

## 3. GM crops increase pesticide use

Official data shows that in the US, GM crops have produced an overall average increase, not decrease, in pesticide use compared to conventional crops.

“The promise was that you could use less chemicals and produce a greater yield. But let me tell you none of this is true.”

– Bill Christison, President of the US National Family Farm Coalition

## 4. There are better ways to feed the world

A major recent UN/World Bank-sponsored report compiled by 400 scientists, and endorsed by 58 countries, concluded that GM crops have little to offer global agriculture and the challenges of poverty, hunger and climate change, because better alternatives are available.

## 5. Other farm technologies are more successful

Integrated Pest Management and other innovative low-input or organic methods of controlling pests and boosting yields have proven highly effective, particularly in the developing world. Other plant breeding technologies, such as Marker Assisted Selection (non-GM genetic mapping), are widely expected to boost global agricultural productivity more effectively and safely than GM.

“The quiet revolution is happening in gene mapping, helping us understand crops better. That is up and running and could have a far greater impact on agriculture [than GM].”

– Prof John Snape, head of the department of crop genetics, John Innes Centre

## 6. GM foods have not been shown to be safe to eat

Genetic modification is a crude and imprecise way of incorporating foreign genetic material (e.g. from viruses, bacteria) into crops, with unpredictable consequences. The resulting GM foods have undergone little rigorous and no long-term safety testing, but animal feeding tests have shown worrying health effects. Only one study has been published on the direct effects on humans of eating a GM food. It found unexpected effects on gut bacteria, but was never followed up.

“We are confronted with the most powerful technology the world has ever known, and it is being rapidly deployed with almost no thought whatsoever to its consequences.” – Dr Suzanne Wuerthele, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) toxicologist

## 7. Stealth GMOs in animal feed – without consumers’ consent

Meat, eggs and dairy products from animals raised on the millions of tons of GM feed imported into Europe do not have to be labelled. Studies have shown that if GM crops are fed to animals, GM material can appear in the resulting products. As GM foods have been shown to affect animals’ health, eating such “stealth GMOs” may affect the health of consumers.

## 8. No one is monitoring the impact of GM foods on health

It is claimed that Americans have eaten GM foods for years with no ill effects. But these foods are unlabelled in the US and no one has monitored the consequences. With other novel foods like trans fats, it has taken decades to realise that they caused millions of premature deaths.

## 9. GM and non-GM cannot co-exist

GM contamination of conventional and organic food is increasing. An unapproved GM rice that was grown for only one year in field trials was found to have extensively contaminated the US rice supply and seed stocks. In Canada, the organic oilseed rape industry has been destroyed by contamination from GM rape. In Spain, a study found that GM maize “has caused a drastic reduction in organic cultivations of this grain and is making their coexistence practically impossible”. The time has come to choose between a GM-based, or a non-GM-based, world food supply.

“If some people are allowed to choose to grow, sell and consume GM foods, soon nobody will be able to choose food, or a biosphere, free of GM. It’s a one way choice, like the introduction of rabbits or cane toads to Australia; once it’s made, it can’t be reversed.”

– Roger Levett, specialist in sustainable development

## 10. We can’t trust GM companies

The big biotech firms pushing their GM foods have a terrible history of toxic contamination and public deception. GM is attractive to them because it gives them patents that allow monopoly control over the world’s food supply. They have taken to harassing and intimidating farmers for the “crime” of saving patented seed or “stealing” patented genes – even if those genes got into the farmer’s fields through accidental contamination by wind or insects.

“Farmers are being sued for having GMOs on their property that they did not buy, do not want, will not use and cannot sell.” – Tom Wiley, North Dakota farmer

*Scientific references and sources for the information in this leaflet can be found at [www.banGMfood.org](http://www.banGMfood.org)*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE VITAL ISSUES AND THE MUST-SEE FILM, “THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MONSANTO”, VISIT [www.banGMfood.org](http://www.banGMfood.org)**

“The charge sheet is horrifying, inexorable and convincing. The multinational firm Monsanto, which sells 90 per cent of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), lies on a massive scale to many people and even the whole planet with great success. That’s the power that money and the apparently unlimited support of the United States government bestows. You already know all that if you’ve watched Marie-Monique Robin’s extraordinary documentary, ‘The World According to Monsanto.’” – Le Monde

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**In the face of the renewed campaign to force-feed us GMOs, it’s vital that we tell the big supermarkets and our MPs and MEPs that we do not want GM foods. We also need to ask all our friends and contacts to do the same. Find out how to take action at [www.banGMfood.org](http://www.banGMfood.org)**