

## **Farmers & Allies to USDA: Deny Approval of Genetically Engineered Crops**

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Today in Washington D.C., Pesticide Action Network and National Family Farm Coalition representatives delivered nearly 20,000 petition signatures to U.S. Department of Agriculture. The petition urges Secretary Tom Vilsack to stop the approval of a new suite of genetically engineered (GE) corn and soy crops designed to be used with older and more toxic herbicides. The continued public outcry about these seeds comes nearly one year to the date after over 370,000 individuals and 150 farm, fishery, labor, consumer and environmental groups [petitioned](#) Secretary Vilsack to reject Dow AgroScience's application for approval of its 2,4-D resistant corn seed.

Representing farmers and farming supporters from across the country, PAN and NFFC warned USDA of the dramatic increase in pesticide use that will result from new herbicide-resistant crops. More widespread use will lead to more pesticide drift, destroying neighboring crops and placing the burden of increased costs and health risks on farmers and rural communities.

#### **Pesticide Action Network senior scientist, Marcia Ishii-Eiteman explained:**

"It's become patently clear that GE, herbicide-resistant seeds are the primary growth engines of the pesticide industry's marketing strategy. These seeds are part of a technology package explicitly designed to facilitate increased herbicide use. Among the 19 new GE seeds awaiting USDA approval are 14 herbicide-resistant products, including corn and soy seeds that have been engineered by Dow and Monsanto respectively to be used with the highly toxic 2,4-D herbicide and its closely related cousin, dicamba.

Dow is marketing 2,4-D corn as a response to a problem created by first-generation GE herbicide-resistant crops — specifically Monsanto's "RoundUp-Ready" varieties. Over the past decade, "RoundUp-Ready" crops have triggered a massive use of the herbicide glyphosate and an ever-expanding epidemic of glyphosate-resistant "superweeds." This has created a golden opportunity for Dow to bring its own proprietary herbicide-GE seed packages into the fray. Even Dow's own scientist, John Jachetta, called this explosion of RoundUp-resistant weeds "a very significant opportunity for chemical companies."

But American farmers are not fooled. They know that a surge in 2,4-D and dicamba use will follow the introduction of these new GE seeds, and that this almost certainly means direct crop damage by herbicide drift, more weed resistance developing on farms across the country, and more stress on family farmers. Additionally, Monsanto and Dow's increasing monopoly control of the seed sector has drastically reduced farmers' access to non-GE seeds and limited their ability to make choices appropriate to their farming needs.

This is why many farmers — along with tens of thousands of other Americans — are urging USDA to reject Dow and Monsanto's requests for approval of their newest batch of GE herbicide-resistant seeds. PAN joins these farmers in calling on USDA to instead devote more attention to research and development of safe and smart 21st century ecological approaches

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to weed management. These approaches can protect public health, conserve the environment and assure sustainable crop production by America's farmers for generations to come."

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