



## Transforming Food and Farming, State to State

For the past several years, PAN has been working in four agricultural states to win policy changes that protect rural families, farmworkers and community-scale farmers on the frontlines of chemical-intensive agriculture. We've had some real victories with our coalition partners—from protective buffer zones around schools, to protections for pollinators, bans of brain-harming chlorpyrifos, and more.

Now we're expanding this "key state" strategy with a new state-to-state project that builds on the progress we've made in Iowa, Minnesota, California and Hawai'i. In collaboration with our partners, we'll be bringing lessons, tools and resources to food and farming advocates in other parts of the country. We're very excited.

### Coalitions work!

Each and every victory we've been a part of can be attributed to collaboration with coalition partners. In Iowa, we work with farmer-led organizations to win changes that protect farmers facing crop damage from drifting herbicides. In Hawai'i, we support community-based partners fighting for measures that protect families from exposure to chemicals being applied on test fields for genetically engineered seeds.

In Minnesota, we've worked with beekeepers and advocates to win model policies protecting pollinators from exposure to pesticides, as well as bringing control back to local communities who want to do more to protect pollinators than state policymakers do. We also partner with organizations like the rural Toxic Taters Coalition to press industrial potato producers in the state to reduce their use of the most toxic pesticides.

In California, our work is part of a statewide strategy developed with Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR), a coalition we

helped found more than 20 years ago that now includes 190 organizations across the state. We gather with our CPR partners every year to assess the policy landscape and set priorities for the year ahead.

### And in a pandemic...

Working together toward shared priorities over time builds trust. These relationships become critically important in times of crisis—and the COVID-19 pandemic proves the point.

In Hawai'i, our partners in the Protect Our Keiki coalition worked together to connect Native Hawaiian farmers with communities in need. Our PAN Fellow, Lorilani Keohokālole, organized deliveries of fresh produce to elders at risk on the island of Kauai.

*continued on back page*



### Inside This Issue

**A Global Crisis & Collaborative Solutions p. 2**  
**Meet Zoe, PAN's New Minnesota Organizer p. 3**

# A Global Crisis and Collaborative Solutions

For years now, pesticide industry giants have peddled their genetically engineered technology kits: modified seeds and the herbicides that go with them—and communities on the frontlines of industrial agriculture have born the brunt of this dangerous system.

From Senegal to Iowa, from the Philippines to Hawai'i, farmers explore the origin story of GE seeds, the implications, and how we're fighting for food sovereignty in the animated short, *Seed Keepers and Truth Tellers*. We're thrilled that after two years of work, this video—a collaborative project between PAN North America, our partners at Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA), and PAN Asia/Pacific—is now out in the world.

## A harmful, accelerating pesticide treadmill

Just as farmers, workers, and rural communities predicted when the floodgates first opened wide for GE seeds, weed resistance to the herbicides that these seeds are modified to withstand is accelerating fast. Around the world, agriculture based on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is driving dramatic increases in herbicide use to combat these resistant “superweeds.”

GMOs are yet another technology that furthers the industrialization of agriculture, making farmers and consumers dependent on a limited and expensive range of corporate products.

– BioWatch South Africa

From Bayer spraying pesticides near elementary schools in Hawai'i to farmers in Senegal lacking seed choice as multinational corporations dominate the seed market, the story of GM agriculture varies from place to place. Produced by PAN Asia/Pacific and co-developed by partners across the globe, *Seed Keepers and Truth Tellers* showcases just how connected our struggles for a more just food and farm system are.

In Hawai'i, we see the impact of experimental research facilities developing and testing the seeds modified to withstand pesticides. We see pesticide



drift and runoff. Our coastal ecosystems and communities are impacted, especially those in close proximity to test fields.

– Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action

## Vibrant global solutions

This year's challenges look different around the globe. From contested national elections to the COVID-19 pandemic and a myriad of food-related conflicts and climate-related natural disasters, we're all affected. Thankfully, we can learn from each other. There are many vibrant global conversations underway about solutions toward a healthy, resilient, and justice-oriented future.

Our local organizing is a critically important step toward a more just food and agriculture system. And we know, ultimately, the solutions will take hard work from all of us—on farms and in communities around the world.

We have been promoting and practicing agroecology as a sustainable way of farming and producing environmentally sound and healthy food in abundance—and it's also an organizing tool. Agroecology can help us achieve social justice; we use our agricultural work to maintain relationships, to visit each other, to hold agroecological and solidarity brigades to work on one another's farms.

– Jesús Vázquez, Organización Boricúa de Agricultura Ecológica de Puerto Rico

**To learn more about the origin story of GE seeds, the vast implications of industrial, chemical-intensive agriculture, and how we can build toward food sovereignty and resilience together, watch *Seed Keepers and Truth Tellers: From the Frontlines of GM Agriculture* here: [www.seedsandtruth.com](http://www.seedsandtruth.com).**

## The Science

*for your conversations about pesticides*

### The endless cycle of GE seeds

With the introduction of genetically engineered (GE) crops, the pesticide treadmill has shifted into high gear. Patented GE seeds are designed for use with specific pesticides, leading to increased use of these chemicals. And widespread application of these pesticides leads to the emergence of herbicide-resistant “superweeds,” among other things.

The pesticide treadmill wreaks havoc on farmer livelihoods in several ways, from the expense of patented GE seed (and the accompanying chemicals) to the cost of managing superweeds in the fields, to the constant risk of seed patent lawsuits. Many herbicides also drift from where they're applied to harm neighboring, non-GE crops, causing damage.

# Meet Zoe

## PAN's New Minnesota Organizer



Hello, everyone! I'm very excited to join the PAN team and get to know more of the amazing work that has been building here in Minnesota and across the country.

A bit about me. I am a Black, queer woman in my 40s. I live in Minneapolis with my partner and our dog, Luci. I have been organizing for about 18 years, and in that time I've had the honor of working with youth, farmers, factory workers, immigrants, artists, and so many others to imagine the world we need and deserve, and fight together for it.

I was born in Duluth, Minnesota, but grew up in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo is a beautiful underdog city with a long history of industrial strength exploitation, but also a long legacy of powerful freedom fighters and grassroots activism. After decades of using the land and our labor, big steel, auto and chemical industries left us with a poisoned landscape and a dwindling economy. This ignited my quest to learn about the economic policies, corporate forces, and government actors that exploited my hometown—as well as to discover ways communities have fought in resistance. What excites me most is learning how communities have organized politically, and continue to create their own systems in the face of unacceptable realities.

I came to organize in food justice in 2003, at a grassroots organization in Buffalo called the Massachusetts Avenue Project.



A February meeting of the Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, a new initiative that Zoe (back row, center right) has helped organize.

Their work building deep relationships with youth and community to take the lead in growing food and activating politically was an inspiration. In my 10 years there, we grew a lot of food (and young farmers) for our community, used research to expose systemic oppression, and brought together communities of color, small farmers, and other marginalized folks to build the regional food system we all needed.

In 2012, I moved to the Twin Cities, where I've worked with many grassroots organizations and communities to build and fight for systems that serve them. For the past three years, I've organized the Good Food Purchasing Twin Cities Coalition, working with farmers, labor unions, and environmental justice partners to change the way public institutions buy food and create equitable changes for communities most impacted by industrial agriculture. An exciting new group I'm organizing with is the Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, a network of over 60 Black and brown farmers, working to build social, political, and economic power.

As a social justice activist and person of color, it's important to call out the forces of colonialism, white supremacy and extractive culture that are entrenched in our society, in our food system, and are largely propped up by white-led organizations and institutions. It's critical to have and share tools to talk about this, and to have personal and organizational practices to study how we got to where we are, in order to chart the right path forward and restore what's been taken.

It feels like such a crazy time in the world right now. When I get very worried, I am reminded of the words of a mentor, "This is not the first apocalypse we have gone through or will. We will do what we do, settle in with our community, care for each other, and continue to build power. Take care of yourself and remember we are many, we just need to get connected."

I am so excited to build the future together.

In solidarity,  
Zoe Hollomon

### Sustain PAN's Work Give Monthly

When you join PAN as a Sustainer, you become part of a vital group that donates each month to fund grassroots science, collaboration with frontline communities, and policy change. We rely on consistent support from Sustainers to work towards a healthy, fair and resilient system of food and farming.



**Become a Sustainer today by going to [www.panna.org/give-monthly](http://www.panna.org/give-monthly).**

**ABOUT PAN** PAN works to create a just, thriving food system, working with those on the frontlines to tackle the pesticide problem—and reclaim the future of food and farming. One of five regional centers worldwide, PAN North America links local and international consumer, labor, health, environment and agriculture groups into an international citizens' action network. Together, we challenge the global proliferation of pesticides, defend basic rights to health and environmental quality, and work to ensure the transition to a just and viable food system.

And in California, CPR organizers in the Central Valley coordinated mutual aid payments for farmworkers and rural community members who would otherwise have slipped through the cracks of COVID-19 relief.

This is all work that's based on trust and building relationships with coalition partners and community members over time.

### Our new state policy project

From climate change to biodiversity loss, from hunger to racial injustice, the challenges we face are urgent—and our food and farming system must be part of the solution.

Advocacy at the state and local level is a critically important way to get this done. Decisions at statehouses can make a real difference in people's lives, and policymakers are often (though not always!) willing to listen to affected community members. That's why we'll be developing tools and sharing them with advocates in other states who want to build a better food and farming system too.

As of November 1, Willa Childress (former Minnesota organizer), stepped forward to coordinate this work:

As somebody who grew up in a rural farming community, I know that local solutions are our best shot at tackling the big, overwhelming problems our communities face. But too often, local coalitions are divided and isolated from each other. PAN's new project will help us build strong alliances and share



PAN's Iowa Organizer Carmen Black at the state capitol in February with Iowa Farmers Union (IFU) President Aaron Lehman (left) and Kent Friedrichsen of Boone County Organics.

resources between our communities—and stand up together against corporate power.

We're thrilled about this new project, which will complement and strengthen our ongoing work at the national level as well. Our priorities for the new administration are the priorities we've been working toward all along: a healthy food and farm system that's rooted in justice. 🌱

## PAN supporter Elana Amsterdam advocates for a healthy food system

I've been an environmental activist and writer for many years, and I became involved with PAN more than 20 years ago. When my children were born, I became increasingly alarmed by the toxins intentionally added to

our food supply. Pesticides contaminate our food, as well as the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Transforming our food system requires coordination among scientists, farmers, labor groups, and activists around the globe, and I'm so grateful to PAN for taking on this complex work. I want clean, fair food for all—from those working in the fields to plant, grow, and harvest our crops, to those sitting at the table enjoying a meal. I've always looked at this as both a health issue and an equity issue.



**I'm grateful to PAN for taking a stand for our most basic human rights.**

~ Elana Amsterdam



PAN staff show off the 35th anniversary tote bags Elana PAN donated last year to help PAN and our supporters celebrate the milestone.

### Connect Online

- 🔔 Sign up for action alerts and the GroundTruth blog at [www.panna.org/subscribe](http://www.panna.org/subscribe).
- 📍 Map your Honey Bee Haven at [www.honeybeehaven.org](http://www.honeybeehaven.org). 🐝
- 📱 Join us on Facebook and Twitter @pesticideaction

Donate online at [www.panna.org/donate](http://www.panna.org/donate)



Main Office: 2029 University Ave, Suite 200 • Berkeley, CA 94704 • 510.788.9020  
Midwest Office: 3438 Snelling Ave, 2nd Floor • Minneapolis, MN 55406 • [www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org)