

U.S. Court Defeats Monsanto's Genetically Modified Alfalfa, For Now

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Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p>Monsanto's Plans in Canada Likely Delayed</p><p>**July 2, 2009:** AU .S. appeals court has rejected an appeal by Monsanto to overturn a ruling that prohibits plantings of genetically modified (GM) alfalfa in the country until the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) completes an Environmental Impact Statement.</p><p>Monsanto and Forage Genetics lost their appeal of the May 2007 decision of District Judge Charles Breyer of San Francisco who warned that Monsanto's GM alfalfa would contaminate conventional and organic alfalfa. He ordered the USDA to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement before any GM alfalfa could be legally planted.</p><p>Monsanto's plans for GM alfalfa are delayed in Canada now because of this ruling, said Arnold Taylor of the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate, "But, just like we see with GM wheat, Monsanto will not give up and we need to stop GM alfalfa. GM alfalfa is a major threat to the organic sector."</p><p>86 groups from across Canada endorse the "No to GMO Alfalfa Campaign" which was initiated by the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate and the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.</p><p>In 2005 the Canadian government approved Monsanto's GM herbicide tolerant alfalfa but the company cannot sell these seeds until it receives Variety Registration in Canada. Monsanto has not yet applied for this Variety Registration and is unlikely to do so while the US courts prohibit plantings in that country.</p><p>The Canadian Government must refuse any request from Monsanto for variety registration of GM alfalfa, said Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, "The Canadian Food Inspection Agency should reevaluate their approval of GM alfalfa as the risk of contamination is a grave one."</p><p>This is a great victory for farmers and democracy over Monsanto's tactics to force genetically modified crops, said Terry Boehm, Vice-President of the National Farmers Union, "GM crops are threatening farmers' markets in Canada and the US but our governments are ignoring these critical concerns."</p><p>The initial suit against GM alfalfa in the US was brought by the Center for Food Safety and filed in February 2006 with the Dakota Resource Council, Western Organization of Resource Councils, National Family Farm Coalition, Sierra Club, Beyond Pesticides, Cornucopia Institute, Task Family Seeds and Geertson Seed Farms.</p><p>-30-</p><p>For more information: Arnold Taylor, Saskatchewan Organic Directorate, cell: 306-241-6126 or 306-252-2783; Terry Boehm, National Farmers Union, Canada 306 255 2880; Lucy Sharratt, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, 613 241 2267 ext 5. See www.cban.ca/press or www.cban.ca/NoGMOalfalfa</p>