

Anti-biotech activists still trying to hold back the tide

By ACSH Staff — March 23, 2011

Over the past few years, the biotech agriculture industry has been navigating a perilous road of frivolous, obstructionist litigation as companies and farmers waste time and resources protecting themselves in court against agenda-driven environmental activists. In the latest such [lawsuit](#) [1], Bayer AG CropScience has been ordered by a court in Arkansas to pay \$136.8 million to Riceland Foods over the “contamination” of U.S. long grain rice stocks with their genetically modified (GM) strain.

And over on the West coast — while Bayer is considering pursuing other legal options following the Arkansas judgment — attorneys for the Center for Food Safety and Earthjustice filed a federal lawsuit Friday in San Francisco, [claiming](#) [2] that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s approval of Roundup Ready alfalfa in January is unlawful. The group alleges that GM alfalfa — the crop has a gene rendering it resistant to the Roundup herbicide, glyphosate — threatens the nation’s organic industry and causes significant harm to conventional crops.

“What harm are they referring to, exactly?” asks bewildered ACSH staffer Cheryl Martin.

“In a nutshell, there is no reasonable, scientific response to this question,” responds ACSH’s Dr. Gilbert Ross. “This is fear-mongering at its worst. It’s just another ploy by chemophobic, activist organizations to stem the march of progress when it comes to biotech agriculture, which is already making great strides in many parts of the world. Genetically-improved agriculture is our best hope for increasing the food supply and feeding malnourished, indeed starving populations — a veritable new Green Revolution, as our late lamented Nobel Peace Laureate and founding ACSH trustee Dr. Norman Borlaug would say. So while the third-world is once again in the midst of a food crisis with rising costs and food shortages, these luddites decide to lie down on the ground in front of the wheels of progress and sue over nothing.”

When the organic industry claims that GM crop seeds will cross-contaminate their crops what they mean is, they fear airborne seeds will assimilate into their so called “organically grown” purebred crops, leading importers in Europe to halt purchases. Dr. Ross emphasizes that there is no scientific rationale against GM food other than an unfounded fear of pesticides and genetic engineering. “While countries around the world, including Egypt, South Africa, Russia, Brazil and China adopt GM agriculture, Europe still refers to it as ‘ Frankenfood ’ even though there has never been a single confirmed case of any kind of harm to humans, animals or the environment relating to GM crops in the 15 years this technology has been in widespread use worldwide.”

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