Despite Neil Young’s blather, Monsanto Years would be a boon to the malnourished in the third world

By ACSH Staff — June 19, 2015

In today’s New York Post, an op-ed entitled [1] How Neil Young, Greenpeace work to starve the world’s poor says volumes about what’s wrong with the environmentalist fringe element, given voice by songsmith Young and the lethally destructive activist group Greenpeace.

The author, Owen Paterson, is an MP from North Shropshire, UK, and was recently the UK’s secretary of state for the environment, food, and rural affairs. He notes that Neil Young’s upcoming CD release will be entitled Monsanto Years, and in essence is a rant against that ag-chemical company and its alleged oppression of farmers ability to self-determine what they want to grow, in servitude to the toxic GMO technologies made and marketed by Monsanto.

Mr. Paterson discusses the actual situation: GMO agricultural yields are even higher now than with traditional methods, which explains why farmers with the option to do so are utilizing this biotechnology at an accelerating rate. (We say who have the option to do so, because many nations have banned ag-biotech out of superstitious fears fomented by activists like Young and especially Greenpeace).

He focuses on one specific biotech product, perhaps the poster child for the harm that Greenpeace and its minions and misguided advocates like Neil Young have done and will continue to do, unless real environmentalists who actually want to help both humans and the world around us supervene and hold them to account. That’s Golden Rice.

This product was developed over a decade ago, in private research labs having nothing to do with Monsanto nor any ag-chemical company, by a small group led by Prof. Ingo Potrykus, also including Prof. Peter Beyer, and Dr Adrian Dubock, working at the International Rice Research Institute. This modified rice has precursors to vitamin A, whose lack is causative in about 500,000 premature deaths among impoverished children in the third world. Yet, its marketing has been prevented by the political, ideological activities of scare-mongering groups led by Greenpeace and promoted by Young et al.

The author says, Many of those lives could be saved if Golden Rice were in their diets. But the ongoing opposition of anti-GMO activist groups and their lavish scare campaign with its combined global war chest estimated to exceed $500 million a year have kept Golden Rice off the global
market. Deploying highly sophisticated PR and unscientific scaremongering, Greenpeace has led that opposition.

Last year, to Greenpeace’s loud cheers, MASIPAG, a closely allied organization, violently attacked and destroyed a Golden Rice field trial in the Philippines. The group claimed to be a farmer-led network, but local officials reported that its thugs had been bused in from a nearby city.

Patrick Moore, one of the founders of Greenpeace in the 1970s, broke with his creation and now works to expose Greenpeace’s actions in the developing world. He’s joined with Golden Rice inventor Ingo Potrykus in calling for putting Greenpeace on trial for crimes against humanity. ACSH’s Dr. Gil Ross had this comment: We have all too often come across Greenpeace’s anti-science, anti-human tactics as they pose in the guise of crusaders for public health. In fact, the opposite is the case. As another example, they are in the forefront of opposing the use of DDT in tiny, indoor amounts to help to repel malarial mosquitoes, when malaria still accounts for hundreds of thousands of dead African and Asian children. They simply do not care in fact, they seem to believe that helping eradicate people is part of their mission and I fully agree that in a sane world, this group would be brought up on charges as Patrick Moore (whom we have praised here [2]), Ingo Potrykus and Mr. Paterson have called for. For a bit more perspective, my op-ed on Golden Rice can be found here [3]."