



# THE RAM'S HORN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOOD SYSTEM ANALYSIS

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## Political Thinking Like a $\wedge$ Movement

by Brewster Kneen

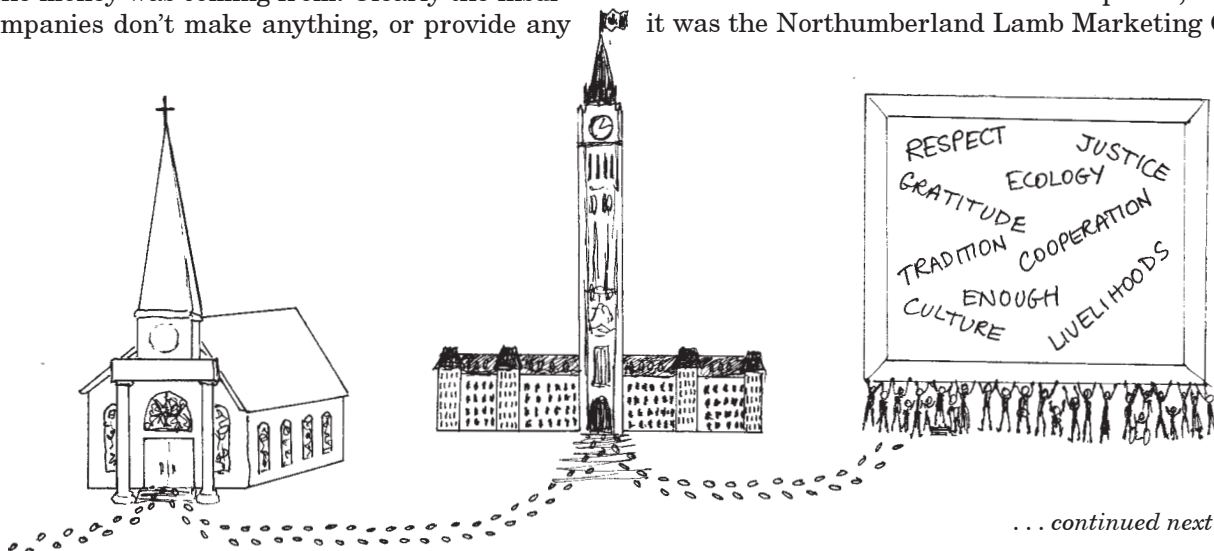
When we pulled out of Toronto as the developers moved in, back in 1971, and took up farming in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, we found ourselves among a number of back-to-the-land families, a number of them from the USA. They were a good bunch, appropriately romantic and, I would say, looking for some integrity to their lives. But their quest was personal, not political. It wasn't based on a Big Picture, a bold critique of capitalism.

Our move was for very different reasons. We had a good life in Toronto, politically engaged in issues big and small, from Stop the Spadina Expressway to saving local parks and playgrounds from developers destruction and organizing parent-run co-op day cares. I was also the hired hand/mind for the Centre for the Study of Institutions and Theology, the first group in Canada to denounce Trudeau's invocation of the War Measures Act in 1970 to put down, as forcefully as he thought required, the 'insurrection' in Quebec.

Watching the destruction and rebuilding of the city's core by the development industry, backed by the insurance industry, I could not help but think about where the money was coming from. Clearly the insurance companies don't make anything, or provide any

valuable social services. Could it be that the metropolis was sucking the blood out of the hinterland? As a student of development economics, I needed to understand this first-hand, but it was too late to go to the Third World. The problem, I felt (and still do) is here, not there, the wealthy, not the deprived. So we headed for Canada's own 'Third World' hinterland in central Nova Scotia to be involved in some primary economic activity, which turned out to be a marginal farm with a dozen beef cows in the gravelly hills left by the glaciers.

All of which is to say that unlike our other friends 'from away', we started with a Big Picture and a political motivation, although I have to hastily add that I deeply enjoyed the hard physical labour and our life on the land. We raised beef cattle, then sheep, most of our own food, and two children, who learned to speak for themselves, as many of you know. When our back-to-the-land neighbours began to face the prospect of their kids attending the local schools, with all the cultural trappings that implies, they began to reconsider their location and by and large moved back to more 'civilized' places. We stayed, farmed, agitated and organized. For Cathleen the organizing included the Pictou County Women's Centre and the annual Sheep Fair; for me it was the Northumberland Lamb Marketing Coop



... continued next page

and the Brookside Cooperative Abattoir, both owned and operated by sheep farmers and supplying the major food retailer in the province, Sobey's, with fresh lamb year round.

When our children deserted us for university and we could no longer count on their labour (we have often facetiously, though not inaccurately, referred to them as our 'indentured' labour), we moved back to Toronto to carry on the political program. That's when I wrote *From Land to Mouth - Understanding the Food System*, which is all about the visible parts of the system and the larger picture they compose.

Many years later (embarrassingly many) I got to wondering why I had studied theology in the late 1950s. I had never intended to become a priest or pastor, but I wanted, as I thought about it at the time, the discipline. But 50 years later I realized that it was really that theology, particularly with Reinhold Niebuhr, the dean of 'Christian realism', at Union Theological Seminary in New York, was where global politics were being taken most seriously. The Cold War was at its height, and nuclear deterrence – Mutually Assured Destruction, MAD) – was a top subject of debate, which encouraged my pacifism.

Now, as readers of The Ram's Horn know, I'm still preoccupied with putting the pieces of the puzzle together to see, and question, the composition that emerges.

Where does the food movement fit in? Is it just a larger and more complex version of the 1970s back-to-the-land individualism and romanticism (or idealism)? or is it – or might it become – a political movement with a vision – and even hope – for society based on equity, sufficiency, and respect? Might the food movement even revive a 1960s-style utopian vision?

In the early 1960s there was a strong international peace movement and a very strong New Left political movement. Socialism was not a bad word and there were many dynamic and creative movements in a number of communist states (Czechoslovakia, Cuba, and Yugoslavia come to mind). But the Soviets got scared and forcefully smashed the 'Prague Spring' in 1968. The utopian dreams dissolved into disillusion – rightly or wrongly – and individualism replaced a social identity as the focus of activism. The founding document of the New Left in the USA, the Port Huron Statement of 1962, states:

*“ . . . we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage*

*independence in men [sic] and provide the media for their common participation . . . “*

As Tony Judt put it, “The politics of the '60s thus devolved into an aggregation of individual claims upon society and the state.” (*Ill Fares the Land*, Penguin Press, 2010) Judt wrote very much as an American, but his analysis – with which I agree – about what was happening at that time really defines the challenge we face today if the food movement is going to become a political movement.

*“ . . . the example of the anti-politics of the '70s, together with the emphasis on human rights, has perhaps misled a generation of young activists into believing that, conventional avenues of change being hopelessly clogged, they should forsake political organization for single-issue, non-governmental groups unsullied by compromise. Consequently, the first thought of that occurs to a young person seeking a way to 'get involved' is to sign up with Amnesty International or Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch or Doctors without Borders.”*

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet empire and its constituent states left, for a while, a unipolar world dominated by the USA and its military might. Capitalism, it was proclaimed, had won. There was no longer any place in the world for utopian visions. In the words of British PM Margaret Thatcher, There Is No Alternative. Now Stephen Harper wants us to believe this as well, so he can carry on with his right-wing agenda, systematically eroding and privatizing the public realm, without undue resistance. Jail and exile will await those who resist. Needless to say, we find this unacceptable.

So, what of the food movement? Just as in the '70s, the runaway growth of the food movement derives from a deep personal commitment to change. The characteristics of the contemporary industrial food system that I described in *From Land to Mouth* – distancing, monoculture/uniformity, and linearity – are being challenged by a raft of initiatives to reduce the distance between food providers and eaters and to encourage diversity in every aspect of the system. These are the seeds of a different model of a food system.

The food movement is clearly a cultural phenomenon of great significance. With the publication in April of the People's Food Policy (*Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada* – available at [www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca)) it has now become a political phenomenon as well, as more than 3,500 people participated over two years in the framing of their work – and their frustrations – in policy proposals to support resilience, ecological and economic sustainability, and social justice in the food system. These policies, and the

multitude of interventions, comments and ongoing debates on which they are based, are rooted in the concepts of food sovereignty, a concept brought to international forums by the global peasant movement La Via Campesina. Food sovereignty *“puts those who produce, distribute and need wholesome, local food at the heart of food, agricultural, livestock and fisheries systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations that reduce food to internationally tradable commodities and components”* (Nyéléni, 2007).

In adopting the People’s Food Policy process, Food Secure Canada recognizes that the food movement needs a political program in addition to the practical work of building diversity and resilience. At some point, though, this needs to make the connections between the food system and the increasing inequity in our society, corporate definition and control of the economy, and the criminalization and militarization of society as a whole. The People’s Food Policy calls for a political program committed to the public good and equity for all, both within Canada and globally. Are we ready to call for a restructured economy of enough, not growth; equitable and progressive taxation, including of corporations; a revived democracy? Do we dare to talk about a new socialism with a global policy of peace and social justice?

## What’s wrong with this picture?

The April issue of the Toronto Globe&Mail’s glossy “Report on Business” carried a 10-page feature on agriculture. The first page looked like this:



The article says, “we asked 18 of the world’s foremost thinkers on food .. for their ideas on how to solve the food crisis.” Their 18 ‘thinkers’ could certainly do with a lot more thinking, but the choice, and their comments, explain quite well why far too many people are going hungry. There is not a hint that there might be structural reasons – such as control by giant agribusiness – or financial reasons – such as extreme speculation through hedge funds and derivatives trading – behind the real hunger (for food, not profits).

But most profoundly, it is the question asked by the title of the item that expresses the real problem: How do WE feed seven billion people?” The answer, of course, is that WE can’t – and won’t.

WE will have to develop a very different attitude than that of Tom Eisenhauer of Bennefield Financial who is gathering investors in Prairie farmland: “Treat Canadian agriculture as a national priority business, not as a lifestyle-based cottage industry, and regulate it accordingly.” Such contempt for small diversified farms is the same attitude that is out to destroy the small-scale subsistence agriculture by which most people actually feed themselves.

Other advice offered by the Globe’s ‘thinkers’: open borders and increase trade; improve farming practices and seed technology; increase investment; scale up (‘with greater volume you get more efficient’- Gary Hirshberg, Stoneyfield Farm); and, Howard Buffett’s surprising advice, ‘big donors need to pull back and devote resources to asking farmers what is actually crippling them’. Can we hope that it will be the smaller, biodiverse farmers rather than the industrial ones whose vision they will be seeking?

## Organic Forced Labour

A lawsuit against Whole Foods Market claims that the company is engaged in deceptive trade practices by selling frozen vegetables grown in a polluted region of China by prisoners and certified as organic.

The suit claims that Whole Foods knew that its Silver River supplier was actually a front company for a network of farms where Chinese prisoners are forced to work and that the farms are irrigated from a highly polluted river. The suit also claims that Whole Foods knew the company providing the initial certification is owned by the Chinese government, which also owns the farms.

– GM, 22/4/11

# Issues concerning the Future of the Canadian Wheat Board

by Laura Rance

The allure of the U.S. market has perhaps been the biggest driver in the campaign to end the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly. But unless they tread lightly, it could be one of the first markets Canadian farmers lose after the federal Conservatives make good on their election promise.

Southern Prairie farmers have fumed for years over the difference between U.S. spot market prices and the CWB pool prices, which are an average of sales made to customers in 70 or so countries throughout the year. As things are now, farmers can't legally haul to a U.S. elevator. They must sell their wheat through the board, which does the marketing direct to U.S. processors as it does with customers elsewhere. Farmers have the option of buying their grain back from the pool and then selling into the United States, but most find doing the paperwork too bothersome.

U.S. exports, currently at two million tonnes for wheat and durum and 600,000 tonnes for malting barley, are about one-tenth of Canada's total sales. Not surprisingly, spot prices on a given day are often higher than average prices from all sales to all customers over a year. Many farmers think that if freed of the pooling system, they could simply sell everything to the United States. In an open market, they would be free to try.

Here's the catch. Long lines of Canadian grain trucks at northern U.S. grain elevators will be about as welcome as a snowstorm in May — especially if those deliveries plug up the pipeline or have an effect on prices, either real or perceived. Just ask softwood lumber, cattle and hog producers. A trade backlash that makes crossing the border prohibitively expensive is almost inevitable.

The Canadian Wheat Board has spent nearly \$18 million fighting 14 trade cases with the United States since the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement, which supposedly secured Canadian access. Under a voluntary CWB, the task of taking on U.S. trade law will fall to commodity groups and taxpayers through federal and provincial governments.

The unfortunate reality about the so-called "Canadian Wheat Board debate" is that virtually all of the rhetoric has centred on the merits of the single desk. The often-bitter arguments have waffled between the economics, whether farmers do better by pooling their

grain and sharing the average proceeds, and the philosophical, whether private entrepreneurs should be forced to market collectively.

Very little discussion has taken place over the board's other roles and who will step into them once the board no longer represents all wheat, durum and barley growers. Many assume a voluntary board will continue to carry out the same market development, research and customer-service functions, but with little consideration as to how it would do that, or why. Farmers, through the Canadian Wheat Board, are the biggest private-sector investors in wheat and barley research in Canada. They pay a checkoff on sales that raises about \$6 million annually for varietal development through the Western Grains Research Foundation. That will change, perhaps even disappear, under a voluntary board. Why would remaining board supporters continue to shoulder the costs of research that also benefits their competition in an open market?

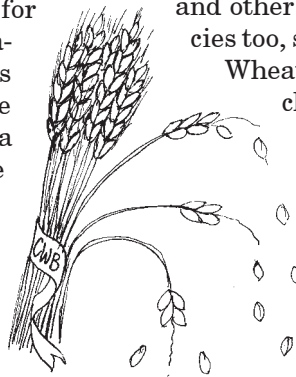
The Canadian Wheat Board is one of the founders and major clients of the Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI), which offers technical support and training to Canada's customers. Other commodities and other countries have market development agencies too, such as the largely government-funded U.S.

Wheat Associates. But while it travels the world cheerleading for U.S. wheat, it has no direct relationship with customers. The Canadian approach for wheat, durum and barley is customer specific and unparalleled. It has played a key role in branding Canadian wheat as the best in the world. And it's cheap, costing about half of one per cent of the CWB's total sales. If CIGI, which is financed through matching contributions from industry and government, loses the CWB's contribution, it loses 60 per cent of its funding. Who fills the gap and how?

For as long as it exists, a voluntary board will only be working for the farmers who continue to use it. With no physical assets, its access to capital will be limited. So will its ability to provide initial payments in pool accounts. It's not reasonable for the federal government to continue guaranteeing initial prices, because the board will be in direct competition with private trade. This has implications, not only for farmers but for its 400 employees, and downtown Winnipeg.

The debate over the future of the Canadian Wheat Board ended with the election of a Harper majority on May 2. Farmers will be freed from single-desk selling. But ending the monopoly is the easy part. It's what comes afterwards that gets complicated.

— *This article originally appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press.*



## . . . And Waiting in the Wings

Cargill reported \$763 million in earnings from continuing operations in the fiscal 2011 third quarter ended Feb. 28, up 30% from \$588 million in the same period a year ago. Consolidated revenues excluding Mosaic rose 21% to \$30.5 billion in the third quarter, bringing the total through the first nine months to \$84.7 billion.

“Cargill posted solid earnings in a period of volatile commodity markets and geopolitical change,” said Greg Page, Cargill chairman and chief executive officer. “All of us in agriculture are living with high levels of price volatility, in which small changes in the quantity of production are having dramatic impacts on price. Cargill’s ability to focus on the factors of supply and demand, while gauging external events that can uproot market fundamentals temporarily, is critical to the risk management services we provide to our customers and to our own financial performance.”

“Four of Cargill’s five business segments increased earnings in the third quarter. Results were led by the origination and processing segment, which used its global sourcing and risk management capabilities to fulfill customers’ supply needs in spite of market disruptions. Food ingredients and applications, a segment that connects 40 food ingredient and meat businesses, increased earnings moderately.” – *Cargill.com, 13/4/11*

As reported in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, “Cargill isn’t alone among the globe’s big grain players in capitalizing on the current pricing environment. . . Bunge reported that its agribusiness profits before taxes and interest more than quintupled (5x) over a year ago. . . ADM said its agricultural services operating profits nearly tripled, the product of strong results in global grain merchandising and record ADM export volumes from the USA.” – *ST 14/4/11*

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## Who Commands the Economy?

It is common folk knowledge, generated by the capitalist class, that a command economy cannot work. This was – and still is – cited as the reason for the collapse of the Soviet Union. Capitalism prefers a ‘market economy’ where the commanders are hidden behind the facade of an all-powerful and mysterious ‘market’ and the commands are relayed to the public through massive advertising. We all know about expressions of a command economy such as corporate tax cuts and the need to cut public services and health care budgets for the sake of ‘the economy’. Now we find the command economy principle applied to publicly funded scientific research.

In late March the new president of the National Research Council of Canada ordered all staff to direct research toward boosting economic development and technology, with less time for pure science. NRC president John McDougall has announced to all staff that he wants research that is “successfully deployed and used to benefit our customers and partners in industry and government.” NRC officials issued a brief e-mail saying that “the goal is to advance Canada’s position in the innovation landscape. . . The NRC will support innovation by Canadian industry and economic development overall.”

– *GM, 20/3/11*

Next, we hear that senior NRC management is telling its researchers and other staff that its long-term strategy, according to a leaked copy of the plan, is to become a “market-driven organization whose primary goal is to develop and deploy technology.” ‘Market-driven’, of course, means corporate-driven.

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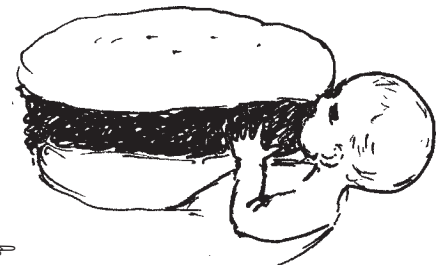
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## How to read the newspaper

Two articles on the same page of the *Globe & Mail Report on Business*: One says that Bill Gates now owns slightly more than 10% of Canadian National Railway, one of two major haulers of potash from the mines of Saskatchewan to the West Coast ports for delivery around the world (Canadian Pacific being the other).

The second article says “Potash Corp reaps benefits of rising demand for fertilizer”. As the article describes it, “growing populations in emerging countries [emerging – what a curious term – emerging from what into what?] such as China and India drive increased food production. Further fuelling demand is the effect of rising incomes in emerging regions. A growing middle class is changing its diet, shifting to greater meat consumption” reaching 63kg per person by 2025 according to one report. (Reminds me of an Ag Canada report back in the late 70s that projected beef consumption as rising to something like 220 lbs per capita. Apparently the authors never stopped to ask themselves if they were going to ever eat that much beef, much less every baby.)

The article then quotes some ‘expert’ saying, “this rapid change in dietary habits is putting significant pressure on feed grain producers as they attempt to keep up with demand for



livestock. This is translating into a sustained increase in demand for fertilizers.”  
 – GM, 25/4/11

And as we pointed out above, CN, 10% owned by Bill Gates will be a major beneficiary of this scenario. This is the same Bill Gates who is trying to command a new Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA). It all goes round and round for those on top.

## African Opposition to AGRA

Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity (TABio), an alliance of civil society and private sector organizations concerned with the conservation of agricultural biodiversity for livelihood security and food sovereignty, is urging government regulators to resist pressure to remove safety legislation protecting Tanzanian farmers and consumers.

Previously officially free of genetically modified organisms, Tanzania is progressively opening the door to GM biotechnology. Biosafety regulations and guidelines have been approved and GM research has started in preparation for commercialisation. Legislators are under extreme pressure from the GM biotechnology industry and stakeholders to relax the regulations, abandon the precautionary principle, and reduce the liability of seed companies in case of harm to people, loss to farmers, or damage to the environment.

TABio members believe that biosafety regulations should be based on the precautionary principle and are convinced that introduction of GM crops or animals is not the right solution to fight poverty and hunger. The Alliance cites evidence from the World Agriculture Report (IAASTD) 2009. TABio also calls for active citizen involvement in the decision-making processes which guide the development of GM biotechnology, and a moratorium on GMOs pending a widespread and consultative review of the risks and benefits.

– Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity, 18/5/11

## Concentrated yogurt

General Mills plans to buy a controlling interest in Yoplait for \$1.15 billion. General Mills has held distribution rights to for Yoplait in the USA since 1977. Yoplait is the world's second best-selling yogurt after Danone. The public/consumer benefit? None apparent!

## Genome Not The Solution

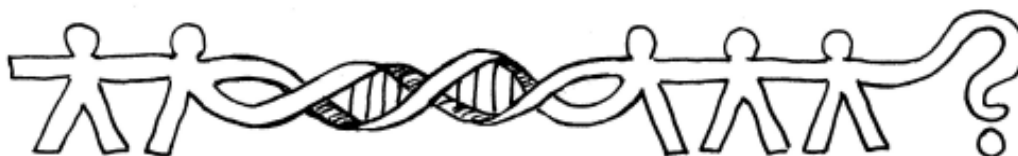
Since the human genome was sequenced more than a decade ago, hardly a week has gone by without some new genetic ‘breakthrough’ being reported, even though only a handful are of genuine significance for human health and ‘faulty’ genes rarely cause, or even mildly predispose us, to disease.

The human genome sequencing project was based on a huge, but calculated, gamble that faulty genes inherited from our parents were probably the cause of most disease. There was, however, a problem with the basis for their confidence. The best scientific evidence in humans for genes as causes of common disease was based on comparing disease rates in genetically identical twins against rates in non-identical twins. Although extremely widely used and cited, these studies were considered worthless by some geneticists. Richard Lewontin of Harvard University, for instance, called in 1974 for “an end to the measurement of useless quantities”.

In 2009, one of the few remaining scientifically active leaders of the original genome project, Francis Collins, published a review paper in the scientific journal *Nature*, along with 26 other prominent geneticists, in which the authors acknowledged that, despite more than 700 genome-scanning publications and nearly \$100bn spent, geneticists still had not found more than a fractional genetic basis for human disease.

Not only has the most expensive scientific project ever conceived failed to reach a goal it assured the world it would achieve, but there is also the ticklish problem of why the headlines have been so consistently discrepant with reality. As the failures to find significant genes have accumulated, geneticists have remained silent.

Nevertheless, the hype – or is it simply lies? – continues: “*Scientists have discovered five gene variants that raise the risk of Alzheimer’s disease in work that casts fresh light on the devastating condition. The research brings the known number of genes associated with Alzheimer’s to 10. . . . Genes account for 60 to 80% of our chance of developing late-onset Alzheimer’s, the rest coming from lifestyle and environmental factors. If we could eliminate the detrimental effects of all 10 variants, we would eliminate 60% of Alzheimer’s disease.*”  
 – GW, 29/4/11



## Agrotoxins Kill Farmers

*The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU Law School has released a report called "Every Thirty Minutes: Farmer Suicides, Human Rights and the Agrarian Crisis in India." Following is a slightly edited excerpt from an interview by Amy Goodman with Smita Narula, faculty director of the Center.*

... that's been going on for years and years. And what these intense numbers don't reveal are two things. One is that the numbers themselves are failing to capture the enormity of the problem. In what we call a failure of information on the part of the Indian government, entire categories of farmers are completely left out of the purview of farm suicide statistics, because they don't formally own title to land. This includes women farmers, Dalit, or so-called lower caste farmers, as well as Adivasi, or tribal community farmers. In addition, the government's programs and the relief programs that they've offered fail to capture not only this broad category, but also fail to provide timely debt relief and compensation or address broader structural issues that are leading to these suicides in the country.

The proximate cause for a number of these suicides is farmer indebtedness. What lies behind that indebtedness is two decades of market liberalization in India, which have resulted in two simultaneous processes. First, the government has withdrawn significantly from the agricultural sector. It has reduced subsidies. It has decreased access to rural credit. Irrigation is insufficient and doesn't reach most farmers who need it. And at the same time, it has encouraged a switch over to cash crop cultivation, of which cotton is one example.

Simultaneously, the market has been opened up to global competitors, which makes Indian farmers extremely vulnerable. And at the same time, foreign multinationals now dominate industries, such as the cotton industry, including dominating the key inputs that are needed for cotton. In the case of cotton, in particular, the genetically modified Bt cottonseed dominates the cotton industry, marketed by Monsanto, among other multinationals. It requires two resources that are already scarce for most Indian smallholder farmers. That's money and water. Bt cottonseeds cost anywhere from two times to 10 times as much as regular cottonseed, and they also require a great deal more water in order to yield successful crops. The farmers often go to private moneylenders, who charge exorbitant interest rates, to purchase the seeds, on the promises and based on

aggressive marketing that they will bring greater financial security.

But then, because 65% of cotton farms in India are rain-fed and don't have access to irrigation, the crops inevitably fail. And also, increasing drought has made that the case for many farmers. So they've gone into insurmountable debt to purchase the inputs. They don't have the yields. They repeat this cycle for a couple of seasons. And by the end of it, they're simply trapped in a cycle that they can't get out of, and many of them, ironically, are actually consuming the very pesticide that they went into debt to purchase, to kill themselves when they can't escape that cycle of debt.

— *Democracy Now*, 11/5/11

## Centralized Seed

Monsanto now holds seeds for 4,000 vegetable and fruit varieties across 20 species, though in the mid-1990s Monsanto had largely sold off its vegetable seed interests (remember the 'ageless' Flavr Savr tomato?). It bought its way back in during the mid-2000s when it spent a combined \$2.2 billion to purchase seed companies Seminis and De Ruiter.

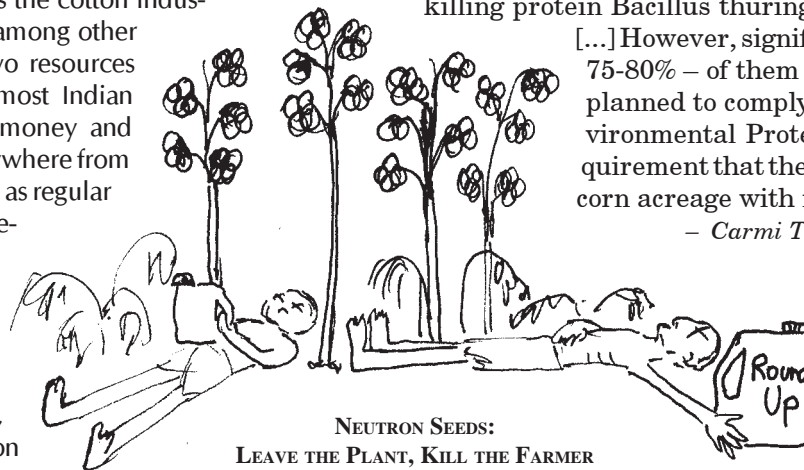
Now company researchers and executives say the potential to replicate desired traits goes well beyond what it could do in the past, citing, for examples, the EverMild 'tearless' onion and SweetPeak melon that turns light orange when it's ripe. To get a return on its investment Monsanto's revenue plan leans heavily on seed sales to farmers and royalty fees from retailers.

— *Harvest Public Media, USA*, 8/4/11

## Ignoring refuge requirement

"More than 90% of Illinois corn producers polled at the University of Illinois Extension Corn and Soybean Classic meetings indicated that they planned to plant corn that was genetically modified with the insect-killing protein *Bacillus thuringiensis* this spring. [...] However, significantly fewer – just 75-80% – of them said that they also planned to comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's requirement that they plant 20% of their corn acreage with non-Bt seed."

— *Carmi Times, USA* 13/5/11



NEUTRON SEEDS:  
LEAVE THE PLANT, KILL THE FARMER

## Monsanto Melon 'Invention'

In May 2011, Monsanto was awarded a European patent on conventionally bred melons. Melons have a natural resistance to certain plant viruses, as is evident in melons grown in India. Using conventional breeding methods, Monsanto introduced this type of resistance to other melons and has now been granted a patent on its 'invention'.

"This patent is an abuse of patent law because it is not a real invention. It contravenes European law excluding patents on conventional breeding. Further, it is a case of bio-piracy, since the original and most relevant plants come from India," says Christoph Then, a spokesperson for the coalition No Patents on Seeds!. "Patents like this are blocking access to the genetic resources necessary for further breeding, and basic resources needed for daily life are subordinated to monopolisation and financial speculation."

In a precedent decision, the European Patent Office (EPO) decided in December 2010, that conventional breeding could not be patented. However, in the Monsanto patent case, the EPO just excluded the process for melon breeding. The plants and all parts of the plant, such as the seeds and the melon fruit, have been patented as an invention. Therefore, the patent was only changed cosmetically but not in substance.

The actual plant disease, *Cucurbit yellow stunting disorder virus (CYSDV)*, has been spreading through North America, Europe and North Africa for several years. Monsanto can now block access to breeding material inheriting genetic conditions that confer resistance. DeRuiter, a well known seed company in the Netherlands, originally developed the melons. DeRuiter used plants designated PI 313970 - a non-sweet melon from India. Monsanto acquired the seed company in 2008, and now also owns the patent.

No Patents on Seeds! are calling for a revision of European Patent Law to exclude breeding material, plants and animals and food derived thereof from patentability. –*No Patents on Seeds, Germany, 17/5/11*

### Land and land grabbing: Reflections and Questions

by Brewster Kneen

posted for comment at

<http://farmlandgrab.org/post/view/18633>

and available for download (PDF) at

[www.ramshorn.ca](http://www.ramshorn.ca)

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