

LWVSJ GMO's – Pro/Con  
January 11, 2014

Con Notes

- Slow Food – International chapter based grassroots organization founded in Italy 25 years ago to advocate for good, clean, and fair food. **Good** because it is healthy and tasty; **clean** because it is produced with low environmental impact and with animal welfare in mind; and **fair** because it respects the work of those who produce, process, and distribute it.
- Charity Kenyon – –UCD Law Graduate 1977, LWV Sacramento President 1987-88. Slow Food USA Governor Central Valley California, International Councilor **We need a chapter in Stockton/Lodi**
  - *The World According to Monsanto* Marie Monique Robin, French journalist awarded the Rachel Carson prize. Also a film.
  - Proposition 37 – lost by a slim margin – with fully 20% of people who voted against saying that they wanted a stricter law.
- Slow Food and GMO's – In a nutshell, GMOs are **scientifically unreliable**, economically inefficient and **environmentally unsustainable**. Little is known about them from a health perspective and they have severe social impacts, threatening **traditional food cultures** and the livelihoods of **small-scale farmers**. Slow Food has launched a global campaign against GMOs, with grassroots actions taking place across the worldwide network.  
<http://www.slowfood.com/international/22/gmos>

\*\*\* #1 - **First and foremost** – GMO's are not the way to feed the world

- 2014 is the United Nations Year of the Family Farm.
- Rigorous research has demonstrated that "the high on-farm biodiversity associated with smallholder agro-ecological practices has been . . . tied to greater **stability in income** and recovery from environmental disaster (i.e., **resilience**), greater **food security**, and generally positive effects for associated **biodiversity**. While the predominant trend has turned to staples produced by industrial agriculture . . . threatens biodiversity, the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and diet quality. It also promotes chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and obesity." Chappell MJ, Wittman H, Bacon CM *et al.* (2013) *Food sovereignty: an alternative paradigm for poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation in Latin America*

- **UN Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** report titled "*Trade and Environment Review 2013: Wake Up Before It's Too Late*," including contributions from more than 60 experts around the world. The United Nations is urging return to (and development of) a **more sustainable, natural and organic system**.

- We are currently growing more than enough calories to feed the world's population yet we are wasting fully 40% of what is grown and some 2 billion people are starving or at risk of starving. This is a problem of mal-distribution.  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/world-hunger\\_b\\_1463429.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/world-hunger_b_1463429.html)

Slow Food believes that we should **recognize a Human Right to Food just as we recognize a Human Right to Clean Water**. The USA is a primary opponent to recognition of this universal right.

<http://www.worldhunger.org/articles/global/foodashumrgt/special.htm>

(Sound familiar? The LWV has experience with this type of situation having worked unsuccessfully on US ratification of the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women).

**With that background** – top reasons to oppose spread of GMO's

# 2 – Corporate control of patented seeds and requirement to use associated herbicides strips farmers and consumers of their rights – to food security, to save seeds, to choose what they eat.

Despite high demand for non-GMO seed, supplies are insufficient. [http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/jul08/non-gmo\\_soybean\\_seed.php](http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/jul08/non-gmo_soybean_seed.php); <http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/january2013/Demand-growing-for-non-GMO-corn-seed.php>

Monsanto and a small handful of companies are dominating seed supplies worldwide.

<http://www.cornucopia.org/2013/09/seed-industry-structure-dr-phil-howard-2/>

#3 – Contamination – there is no way to protect farmers of conventional non-GMO or organic crops from contamination by GMO pollen. GMO contamination has been found worldwide <http://www.gmcontaminationregister.org/> – local examples were contamination of alfalfa in Solano County before GMO alfalfa was deregulated (<http://www.projectcensored.org/24-widespread-gmo-contamination-monsanto-plant-gmos-usda-approval/>), unintentional release of GMO RR canola in Yolo County (<http://westernfarmpress.com/management/rr-canola-evolves-vexing-weed>), and contamination of wheat in Oregon (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2013/07/17/202684064/in-oregon-the-gmo-wheat-mystery-deepens>).

There is no prevention and no cure.

#4 – *Increased* use of herbicides, stronger herbicides, and emergence of herbicide resistant super-weeds.  
<http://gmoinside.org/superweeds-frightening-reality/>

Overall herbicide use decreased only in the first few years GE crops were used (42 percent between 1998 and 2001) and has since then risen by 26 percent from 2001 to 2010. (Food & Water Watch July 2013). And now stronger herbicides are required, leading to 2-4-D resistant crops.  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/bethhoffman/2013/07/02/gmo-crops-mean-more-herbicide-not-less/>

- exposure to Roundup has been associated with cancer and birth defects in farm workers and farm neighbors

<http://www.organicconsumers.org/monsanto/roundup.cfm>  
<http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2013/15047-glyphosate-destroyer-of-human-health-and-biodiversity>

# 5 – Emergence of superbugs resistant to Bt – corn root worm is an example -- and unknown impact of Bt on beneficial insects.

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424053111904009304576532742267732046>  
<http://www.rodalenews.com/gmo-corn>

# 6 – Impact on soil health – not as clear as it should be. There is emerging evidence that beneficial soil micro-organisms are being affected both by uptake of the Bt toxin and by transfer of genes from the GMO crop to the soil bacteria.

<http://www.psrast.org/soilecolart.htm>  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/node/21209>  
<http://www.i-sis.org.uk/horizontalGeneTransfer.php>

# 7 – Lack of long-term human health studies – scientists who support biotech crops and those who oppose find common ground – more research is needed. A UK study found emerging evidence of health problems in cows and pigs fed GMO feed in contrast to conventional feed.

<http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/>  
<http://www.usnews.com/debate-club/should-consumers-be-worried-about-genetically-modified-food/until-proven-otherwise-gmos-arent-safe>

**#8 – Lack of transparency and therefore choice** – the corporations that control GMO seed and related pesticides and herbicides have spent millions to defeat labeling campaigns supported by 93% of Americans. <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/19853-monsanto-and-junk-food-companies-also-spend-millions-to-fight-gmo-labeling-in-congress> This does not inspire confidence. What are they trying to hide? Why are the debates about the benefits and risks of GMO's so contentious? Why do we hear that those who oppose GMO's are anti-science or well-meaning but ignorant or in over their heads? <http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2013/15194-a-scientist-responds-to-criticism-of-the-seralini-study> Why another don't ask, don't tell campaign?

No matter what you conclude about the economic, environmental, social, or human health costs of GMO's, there is no scientific or any other basis for denying consumers the right to vote with their forks.

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Some facts – some 70% of products in American supermarkets contain GMO's: canola (90%), corn (88%), soy (93%), cotton seed, Hawai`in papaya, sugar beets, crook neck squash, zucchini. GMO salmon under consideration

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/how-to-avoid-genetically-modified-food-zmgz12onzphe.aspx>

How to avoid: 100% USDA Certified Organic or Non-GMO Project Verified

<http://www.nongmoshoppingguide.com/tips-for-avoiding-gmos.html>

### **In the news:**

**Chipotle** stock rose 72% for the year on announcement that it will move to 100% non-GMO ingredients

<http://blogs.prevention.com/inspired-bites/2013/10/21/wall-street-falls-in-love-with-a-non-gmo-burrito/>

We all heard the news about GMO free Cheerios

<http://rt.com/usa/cheerios-gmo-free-monsanto-383/>

**Whole Foods Market** will have all GMO products labeled by 2018

<http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/blog/three-month-update-gmo-labeling>

**Yesterday January 10, 2014 Maine's Governor** signed the second state law mandating GMO labeling – (Connecticut is the first)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2014/01/10/maine-becomes-second-state-to-require-gmo-labels/>

New York and Oregon have labeling campaigns underway

BUT – the delayed farm bill by early February may include the so-called King Amendment, which would, among other things, preempt all state labeling laws.

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/professors-oppose-king-amend/>