

## **Monsanto's Seed Imperialism Halted in Canada Thanks to Massive Protests**

*By: Ethan A. Huff, Natural News*

Grassroots activism against transgenic encroachment has paid off in Canada, where licenses for genetically modified (GM) alfalfa have been put on hold, according to new reports. Massive protests in Montreal, Levis, Quebec City, Toronto and as many as 35 other towns and cities across Canada caused U.S.-based Monsanto and Forage Genetics International, the company responsible for creating GM alfalfa using Monsanto's technology, to have the issuance of their growing licenses delayed in accordance with the will of the people.

*The Montreal Gazette* explains that, besides widespread farmer resistance to the crop -- which is completely unnecessary, as natural alfalfa already grows heartily and steadily without the need for pesticides -- tens of thousands of Canadians have repeatedly expressed their disapproval of it. Even Quebec's union of agricultural producers, known as the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) of Quebec, has expressed strong disapproval of the crop.

"The UPA isn't against genetically modified seeds in general, but we voted unanimously -- for two years in a row -- that commercialization of GM alfalfa should be prohibited," stated Marcel Groleau, a UPA member and farmer who, along with his brother, raises 100 dairy cows in Quebec. Like many other farmers throughout the region, Groleau is concerned that GM alfalfa will contaminate conventional and organic alfalfa, as alfalfa is a perennial crop pollinated by bees that spreads easily.

"Organic farms are very much against it, because [GM alfalfa](#) might spread, and it's a perennial, too," admitted Victor Lefebvre, director of Quebec-based Pickseed, a company that had planned to sell GM alfalfa.

### **Organic dairy, meat to be forever lost as a result of GM alfalfa**

Dairy and livestock farmers in particular rely on alfalfa to feed their animals year-round. In fact, it is probably the most important staple crop currently grown in Quebec, which is why many farmers are speaking their mind about this potentially irreversible change to the agricultural process. Canada's organic market has tripled since 2006, topping \$3.7 billion annually, but this entire market is threatened with elimination by GM [alfalfa](#).

"We've developed this niche here. That's why the issue is more important here than in other provinces," explained Groleau to *The Montreal Gazette*. "Organic farmers will suffer significant commercial losses because GM contamination means they won't comply with Canadian Organic Standards."

As you may recall, Australian wheat and oat farmer Steve Marsh had his organic [farm](#) contaminated by nearby GM canola crops, the contaminated pollen of which blew over onto his land. Marsh lost his organic certification as a result and is now in the process of suing the farmer responsible for the contamination, which led to major financial losses.

### **Preventing GM cross-contamination is impossible, experts agree**

Industry officials have repeatedly tried to coddle regulatory bodies into approving the crop on the basis that a mitigatory plan can be put in place to prevent cross-contamination. But those in the organic industry, not to mention the millions of consumers that rely on organic food for health and sustenance, recognize this as an empty lobbying ploy that simply won't work.

"The industry is pretending it can stop GM alfalfa from contaminating our fields but that's pure fiction," stated Gilbert Halde, President of the Union of Organic Milk Producers of Quebec, last year at a protest. "GM alfalfa cannot be contained by any type of 'plan.' Will the bees read the industry's plan?"

Groleau agrees, having told reporters that, no matter what [Monsanto](#) says, GM alfalfa will spread if it is eventually planted commercially. Canada has already suffered the consequences of GM flax, which spread to non-GM fields back in 2009, causing millions of dollars in losses for both farmers and taxpayers.

"What I've heard from specialists is that it will spread because of bees and water," opined Groleau. "Also, in Quebec, we have small farms, which means you can't easily isolate one farm from another. It would be almost impossible to prevent any cross-contamination and cross-pollination."

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