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FRANKENFOOD

Is it part of
your diet?



Date: Tues. Nov. 21, 2000
7 p.m.

Seminar Location:
Room 102, Tilley Hall, UNB, Fredericton, NB

Parking available at the Student Union Building

Hosted by the Biotechnology Action Group of the New Brunswick Environmental Network and the UNB/STU Student Environmental Society

Come and hear Brewster Kneen, author of *Farmageddon*

Brewster Kneen is an internationally recognized expert on the food system and **BIOTECHNOLOGY**.

He is the author of six books and has written extensively on biotechnology, with articles appearing in *Utne Reader*, *Adbusters*, and *The Ecologist*.

Kneen co-publishes *The Ram's Horn*, an international monthly magazine of food system analysis. He is the author of *Farmageddon*, a well-researched critique of genetic engineering and its effect on the food system and our health. Kneen lives in Sorrento, British Columbia.

Are You Eating Genetically Engineered Foods?

The biotechnology industry is making severe changes to our food and environment by transferring the genes of one organism to another. Molecular biologists are using viruses and gene guns to insert foreign genes into the food we eat. Genetically engineered canola, corn, potatoes and soy have been approved by the Canadian government for human consumption.

These genetically engineered ingredients are in many foods we eat, including baby foods and formulas, french fries, soda, and cookies.

These foods are not labelled

Increasingly, genetically engineered foods are finding their way onto Canadian supermarket shelves. They are not adequately tested for their effects on human health or the environment, and they are not labelled. Canadians are not given the choice of which foods they want to feed their families. Without mandatory labelling, we cannot trace problems back to their source

The Precautionary Principle

Many scientists around the world have expressed their concerns with genetic engineering, calling it an imprecise and unstable technology. Genetic engineering is dangerous because of its possible side effects on human health and the environment. These side effects cannot be reversed or corrected and threaten the health and security of future generations.

Human Health Risks

Inadequate testing

There has been no long term testing of the health effects of eating genetically engineered foods. Without long term, cumulative testing, we cannot know if these foods are safe to eat. Many scientists argue that we do not have enough knowledge to find the answers we need.

New toxins and allergens in food

Genetic engineering could result in unexpected mutations in organisms and the creation unforeseen toxins and allergens in food.

No accountability

Large multinational corporations cannot be held accountable for future, unforeseen problems due to their genetically engineered products.

Side effects can kill

37 people died, 1500 were partially paralyzed and 5000 more were temporarily disabled by a

syndrome that was finally attributed to a batch of tryptophan that was produced using a genetically engineered bacteria

Risks to the environment

Increased use of herbicides

Over 50% of all genetically engineered crops are herbicide resistant, allowing for more frequent and more intensive applications of herbicides. These crops are designed to be resistant to specific brand name herbicides and therefore secure a market for the chemical manufacturer. Scientists estimate that some herbicide use will triple due to genetic engineering.

Harm to insect populations

A study from Cornell University found that corn engineered to be insect resistant was also poisonous to monarch butterflies. Many insects including bees and ladybugs are harmed.

Genetic pollution

Cross-pollination or crossbreeding of genetically engineered plants with wild plants is inevitable and threatens ecosystems and food chains. Weeds that cross-pollinate with herbicide resistant crops, for example, could become superweeds, resistant to chemical herbicides.

Once genetically engineered organisms are released into the environment they cannot be controlled and they cannot be recalled

The technique for inserting a DNA fragment is imprecise and unpredictable.

The effects of the insertion of foreign genes on the biochemistry of a host organism are unknown.

The effects of releasing genetically engineered organisms into the environment are unknown.

The effects if eating genetically engineered foods are unknown.

There is no basis for meaningful risk assessment.

It is not clear who will be legally liable for negative consequences.

Demand to know the answers to these key questions

- *Who is making the decision to release genetically engineered organisms into our environment and food system?*
- *Do the benefits of genetic engineering meet the needs of farmers and society at large?*

- *Why has there been no democratic deliberation over the introduction of these new technologies?*
- *What resources are being spent on the research, development, and commercialization of genetic engineering that could be spent on the development of sustainable agricultural practices?*
- *Why does the biotechnology industry so adamantly oppose labelling foods that have been genetically engineered?*

**Contact the
NBEN Biotechnology Action Group
1-506-433-6101
nben@nbnet.nb.ca**

Simultaneous translation will be provided