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Hello, my name is Rachel Major and I am here to present information and concerns about the dangers of development and release of GMOS's in New Zealand. My information sources are the documentaries 'The World According to Monsanto' and 'Seeds of Death' and 'What in the World are they Spraying?'. In these documentaries information is given about the roots of the Monsanto company. It was originally operating as a producer in the chemical industry. One of the first products that it produced for agricultural use was 'Roundup', a weed killer. They have now moved on to genetically modifying seeds that are resistant to Roundup and other herbicides and pesticides. These seeds that are genetically modified will only produce one crop as they are sterile. This places farmers in a position that they must buy seed annually and cannot save seed for their next crop. One enticement of Monsanto is that of a higher yield of crops per acre being achieved using GE modified seed. This may be attainable but, as has been researched, the safety of the food for human and animal consumption needs to be debated. There is growing evidence that GMO foods cause a wide range of potential health risks. In the documentaries mentioned above there was a situation where research was being done in the mid 1990's at the Rowet Institute in Scotland by a leading scientist called Arpad Pusztai. At this time the company Monsanto wanted to introduce the development of GMO foods in Europe and the research was done to provide evidence of the safety of GMO foods. The results of the research actually gave evidence that lab rats who were tested eating GMO potatoes showed increased activity in the intestinal area which would be an alert of potential growth of cancerous tumours. Also the results showed that almost immediately the rats' immune system went to high alert after eating the GMO food as it would if a poisonous or foreign element was consumed. Arpad Pusztai was invited to speak on 'World in Action', a BBC programme. During his interview he aired his concerns about the dangers of GMO foods and that it was unethical that people should be used as guinea pigs with the introduction of GMO's to the European food market. Within a day Arpad had lost his job and the research was discontinued. Many of the other scientists that were working with Arpad were also discredited and lost their jobs.

Regardless of growing evidence of the dangers of consuming GMO foods, by the turn of this century about 70% of foods in the American food market contained GMO foods and this percentage has only increased in the last decade or more.

James Maryanski who was an official with the FDA (Federal Drugs Agency) defended the lack of GMO labelling in foods and claimed that

because Monsanto had produced research that showed the safety of GMO foods that GMO's were approved through the FDA. Over a period of time it was then made clear that the research that Monsanto produced to the FDA was biased and falsified. Ian Pryne who scrutinized the research done through Monsanto funded researchers found many examples of faulty research practices that gave far from clear and accurate results. Unfortunately the results from these and other falsified reports have led to confidence from the public and regulatory bodies for the release of GMO foods into the food market. There are many instances of people holding important positions in the FDA and other regulatory bodies who have also held high positions for companies such as Monsanto. Michael Taylor is one such example and was employed by various companies in what has been labelled the 'revolving door' in corporate circles. Again this creates opportunities for biases that influence very important decisions and in this case the safety and health of the general public.

As mentioned beforehand GMO seeds are sterile and therefore seeds cannot be saved to grow from one harvest to the next. This prevents the self sustaining practice of seed saving that has operated down the ages. A major concern for those that practice seed saving of conventional and heirloom organic seed is that GMO crops can cross pollinate and contaminate conventional crops over a vast area. In America Monsanto has sued many farmers that wanted nothing to do with GMO seeds because of this cross contamination. Many farmers have gone out of business because of these legal cases against them. At this point I would also like to tie in the practice of spraying airily and in thus doing changing the PH of the soils and depositing high quantities of aluminum. Conventional and organic seeds do not grow readily in these soils but GMO seeds that are aluminum resistant grow readily. An example of the effect of aerial spraying is shown in the documentary 'What in the World are they Spraying?' and specifically what had occurred on an organically farmed cooperative in Hawaii. A little girl was suffering from poor health and through tests done on her it was found that she had high levels of Aluminum in her system. As she had only lived on the organic farm the community did tests on the soil and found high levels of these poisonous chemicals there. Chemtrails had been sprayed extensively over this property and surrounding areas and therefore it appeared that this had caused the deposits in the soil. The question needs to be asked whether there is an agenda from wealthy and influential companies, such as Monsanto, that are working towards the control of the food markets across the world.

Another monopolising approach that Monsanto has taken has been buying up a large amount of seed companies. An example of this was in India in 1999 when Monsanto purchased the largest cotton seed company, 'Majico Bollard' and proceeded to introduce their G.E modified cotton seed. Farmers were forced to buy Monsanto's seed which was often 4 times the price that they had previously paid. Because the seed was sterile the farmers had no choice but to go back year by year and purchase the cotton seed. In 2006 transgenic cotton crops were ravaged by disease and many small farmers lost their entire crops. There were many suicides of these farmers who had been assured that it was viable for them to grow GMO cotton on small farms. Another side to this story is that traditionally animals in India have grazed the left over cotton plants after harvest. The farmers now found that their animals were falling dead very suddenly after grazing on these crops. Because the government refused to investigate these claims a corporation of farmers joined together and did tests themselves. They found that animals grazing in conventional crop paddocks showed no signs of ill health but all the animals that grazed on GMO crops died within a short time. The government would not recognise this research as they said that it wasn't done by an approved research group.

When looking at the process of an organism or plant being genetically modified a completely foreign gene is spliced into the plant. This changes the DNA of the plant. When the plant is consumed by an animal or human being this foreign gene is absorbed in the intestines and in turn changes the DNA of the animal or human being that has consumed it. There has been more recent studies that proves that GMO modified foods damage organs, cause infertility, diminish the immune system, create holes in the G.I tract and cause organ system failure. It is our right to know what is in the foods that we eat and that these foods should be clearly labelled so that the public know if there are any GMO's in the food that they consume. The public also have the right to know about the potential dangers of consuming these foods and safe, sustainable food alternatives that encourage good health. Personally I am very concerned that Roundup is now being sprayed on crops such as potatoes and wheat before harvest thus poisoning them. One of the main ingredients in Roundup, glyphosate, is very poisonous and readily absorbed by that which it is sprayed on.

As a community it is our responsibility to ensure that the future generations have access to healthy foods and that we, as a community, have the freedom to save conventional and heirloom organic seeds that

are viable and self sustaining. We have a God given right to grow our own food and to eat organic, spray free foods that nurture and encourage our good health. It would be unwise to open the floodgates to GMO food that will affect our image in the world market of being 'clean and green'. Already compromises have been made and GMO's have flooded the mainline food markets as we follow in the footsteps of countries such as America. This is contributing to the decline in health in the general public. As a nation we need to stand our ground and demand our rights to grow our own foods in healthy, safe soils that have not been contaminated by aerial spraying. Please consider my submission and those that have similar concerns and put a stop to the floodgate of GMO foods grown in New Zealand. I understand that there is an opinion that GMO's can be grown safely in New Zealand without jeopardising our organic heirloom seed store but GMO cross contamination is very aggressive and cannot be controlled in open environments. There is no safe way to entertain GMO experiments or crop growing in New Zealand. We , as a nation, would be wise not to open the Pandora box with all it's potential problems. What ever perceived gain is not worth the risks. Thank-you for your attention and time.

