

Now or never

Why you should make your area GM free



**Friends of
the Earth**



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Foreword

Britain's farmers are in their most precarious economic position for 50 years. Farm businesses across many sectors receive less for their produce than it costs to grow. The economic power of supermarkets, cheap imports, a strong pound and the perverse production subsidies of the EU Common Agricultural Policy have combined to cause this crisis.

For decades UK farmers have been exhorted to adopt new technology to “increase efficiency”. The same case is being made by the biotechnology industry for GM crops. What sort of “efficiency” do we need from modern farming? We need farmers to use natural resources efficiently to minimise pollution. We need them to restore and manage our landscape and wildlife effectively. We need them to produce the best quality and safest food. We also need them to make a profit – otherwise their vital role in managing the countryside and natural resources will be lost and the entire rural economy will suffer.

What part might GM crops play in this? In the view of Friends of the Earth, the practical problems and uncertainties of growing and processing these new crops far outweigh any benefits at present. These problems are summarised in this booklet.

The case for keeping Britain GM free is overwhelming. Britain's farmers should be the foundation of robust local food economies to help roll back the tide of a globalised food economy dominated by conglomerates and destructive of natural environments and rural communities alike. A farming sector that can distinguish itself from its competition in this way, with consumer, retailer and policy-maker support, could become a shining example of what sustainable farming should be like.

Charles Secrett
Executive Director, Friends of the Earth



GM crops: the decision we face

Decisions will soon be made about whether genetically-modified (GM) crops are to be grown commercially in Britain. The UK Government is under pressure to give the go-ahead for commercial planting, and to approve the import of GM foods from the United States and elsewhere.

The Government says it will base its decision on the results of highly controversial farm-scale trials, on a scientific and economic review, and on a public consultation. It is vital that the Government hears people's genuine concerns about this new and unproven technology and that local areas state the benefits for health, the environment and livelihoods of remaining GM free.

This booklet sets out why Friends of the Earth believes introducing GM crops on a commercial scale in the foreseeable future would be a mistake, and why you should declare your area to be part of GM-Free Britain.

It is intended to help authorities, individuals and organisations, particularly at local level, identify the practical and economic problems that commercialisation would bring, and to clarify the argument for staying GM free. The case studies reflect the voices and experience of people already facing up to problems of GM – from farmers to retailers, scientists and local authority officials – whose stories and expert opinions need to be heard.

The time for people to decide whether they want to live in a GM-free area is now because the commercial introduction of GM crops would take that choice away.

To find out more about the GM-Free Britain campaign, and how you can get involved:

visit: www.GMFreeBritain.com

tel: **Friends of the Earth Information Service on 020 7490 1555**

write to: **GM-Free Britain, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ**

GM in your area – the bad news

The commercial introduction of GM crops and foods could have widespread impacts in your area.

- The growing of GM crops in your area could affect your local environment and wildlife.
- GM crops are living organisms and, once released, they can spread in the environment via insect- and air-borne pollen and seeds. Once your area becomes GM it will be extremely difficult to turn back.
- Contamination from locally-grown GM crops could affect the sale of crops and foods from your area.
- People in your area will eat GM food even though its effects on health are unknown.
- Biotechnology companies have no legal obligation to clean up your local environment or compensate people affected in your area if a GM crop or food is found to be unsafe. Local authorities may find that they have to clean up and dispose of GM mistakes.
- International biotech companies, not farmers, will be the ultimate power behind food production in your area.

How will it help to be GM free?

By going GM free:

- Local authorities can avoid the practical difficulties and drain on resources that GM crops and food might bring.
- Businesses in the food chain — from farmers to food manufacturers and retailers — will be able to safeguard the reputation and quality of their produce.
- The public can be confident that their environment and wildlife are protected, and that they have a real choice to buy non-GM food.



Why GM and non-GM crops can't co-exist

GM crops, like any other, can spread by pollen and seeds. In Mexico widespread contamination of indigenous maize varieties has been discovered.¹ GM-contaminated seeds have turned up in the UK, Sweden, France, Italy, Spain and Greece even though GM crops are not yet widely grown in Europe.

If commercial-scale planting of GM goes ahead in Britain the situation will get more difficult. A recent European Union report² concluded that if GM crops are grown at the same rate as in the US, the background levels of GM pollen will mean that even farmers who are not growing GM crops might have to label their crops as GM. As organic crops are not allowed to contain any GM contamination, it is likely that production of some organic crops could quickly be lost.

It will become increasingly difficult to ensure that seed stocks remain GM free. It has been estimated that in countries with widespread growing of GM crops, virtually all of the non-GM seeds being sold to farmers contain some GM material.³

The public is concerned about GM foods. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents in a recent poll⁴ said they wanted GM-free honey, and in numerous local referenda people have voted against having GM crops grown in their area. The history of the farm-scale trials points to the conflict that they could bring to the countryside. In 2001 around 30 community action groups were formed to oppose farm-scale test sites of GM crops.

What will happen to non-GM farmers, retailers, food producers and manufacturers in GM areas? The chair of the Government's GM watchdog, the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Committee, has warned that "the potential is there for rural conflict".⁵

Without a clear legal and enforcement framework, how will the presence of GM farmers in an area be reconciled with the rights of non-GM farmers, beekeepers and food producers? Who will be held responsible if something goes wrong? How will the wishes of local communities be respected? How will shoppers be sure of what they are buying? There is a raft of unanswered questions.

1 "Mexico confirms massive contamination of its maize", *The Guardian*, 19 April 2002

2 European Commission Joint Research Centre, *Scenarios for co-existence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops in European agriculture*, May 2002

3 "Troubles with thresholds" Canadian Seed Trade Association Position Statement, November 2000

4 NOP World survey, 30 August-1 September 2002

5 "GM crops decision may cause rural conflict", *Financial Times*, 30 April 2002

“ Case studies

1 “Those who favour GM and those who oppose it could be in conflict. Our district is a microcosm of that conflict – a conventional or organic farmer’s business could be massively affected by a neighbour’s GM crop. As a council we represent both sides – we are in a cleft stick.”
Local authority official, South West England

2 “As a council we have concerns about the lack of consultation over farm-scale trials. I believe we should commit to protecting the organic farmers’ and beekeepers’ interests. The right to choose is being withdrawn. It is like passive smoking. Society now accepts that people should not be subjected to passive smoking, so why GM?”
Gary Fenwick, councillor, West Lindsey, Lincolnshire

3 Corky’s story: “I am a family farmer from Brownville, Nebraska. We planted GM soya beans four years in a row and the yields were down and we were now having more and more problems controlling [weeds]. There has been an increase in chemicals, but we have seen no increase in income – plus, we have contaminated the soil and everyone else looks down on us and says: ‘Well, you can no longer furnish us with any type of product that has GM.’ Two years ago, Monsanto came to us and said that they were not liable if there is contamination. That, they said, is on the farmers’ backs. Monsanto has taken 11 of my neighbours to court in Nebraska for saving our seed like we have always done and planting our own seed.”
US farmer, interviewed by Adrian Arbib, *The Guardian*, 28 August 2002

4 “Adventitious presence of transgenic varieties may require farmers to change agricultural practice, especially when such varieties contain pesticide tolerance traits. Changes in agricultural practice (for example to control GM volunteer plants) could result in adverse impacts on farmland biodiversity and could prevent some farmers being eligible for agri-environment schemes.”⁶
Response by British Statutory Nature Conservation Agencies to the DEFRA consultation on Commission proposals on thresholds for the adventitious presence of approved GMOs in seeds, August 2002



In 2000 it was found that a GM maize called StarLink, which was not approved for human consumption, had contaminated foods across the US. Suspected allergic reactions were reported and more than 300 brands of taco shells, crisps and other maize products had to be withdrawn from shops. The US Government was forced to buy up stocks and Kelloggs closed production lines for two weeks. The cost to the US economy has been estimated at billions of dollars.

⁶ “Starlink fallout could cost billions” *Toronto Star*, 9 January 2001



The economic impact of GM

The Government and biotechnology industry have pushed the idea that GM crops will bring economic benefits. But there is more evidence that GM crops will cost money and damage local and regional economies.

There will be direct costs to farmers. An EU study concluded that, once GM crops are being grown commercially, non-GM farmers' costs could rise by up to 40 per cent of the value of their crops.⁷ The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors has said that growing GM crops could adversely affect land values.⁸

There will be costs to consumers. If non-GM crops cost more to produce, they will inevitably cost more in the shops. People on low incomes may find they can no longer afford to buy non-GM food.

There could be costs to local food economies. Contamination of local or speciality foods could seriously damage markets for such products. In a recent lawsuit, farmers from Iowa claimed the StarLink contamination meant that they had to accept lower prices for their crops because of the loss of confidence in US maize.⁹ Similarly, the Taco Bell company claimed that it suffered losses after some of its products were found to be contaminated with Starlink.¹⁰

There may also be costs to the wider economy. The impact of foot and mouth disease has shown how closely industries such as tourism are linked to farming and the countryside. GM contamination of crops in an area could damage not only the local environment but also the image of an area as a tourist destination. Even without accidents, the GM crops so far developed may actually increase the intensity of agriculture, harming wildlife and making the countryside less attractive to visitors.

7 European Commission Joint Research Centre, **Scenarios for co-existence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops in European agriculture**, May 2002

8 Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, *Rural land managers on GMO*, press release, 9 June 1999.

9 "Iowa farmers sue over biotech corn", *Associated Press*, 6 February 2001

10 "Taco Bell sues over Starlink corn fiasco", *Associated Press*, 19 September 2001

“ Case studies

1 “The UK wholefoods trade is worth more than £2 billion, and is growing. We could be talking about millions of pounds worth of costs to keep its products GM-free in the face of GM commercialisation. The total value of the UK honey market is £200 million – and as pollinators bees are worth about £100 million to UK agriculture. So the cost to beekeepers and neighbouring farmers of staying GM-free would also be high. But we suspect the Government will try to ignore such costs and the issue of compensation in its economic review of GM crops.”

Robert Vint, Co-ordinator, Genetic Food Alert (a national alliance of wholefood businesses)

2 “We believe that GM technology is unlikely to contribute to our aim of encouraging sustainable farming. The opportunities which sustainability can offer in both financial and environmental terms should be important elements in the emerging debate on the future of farming in Britain. This should not be prejudiced by premature decisions on the commercial introduction of genetically modified crops.”

Dorset Agenda 21 Forum GMO Working Group Report, October 2001

3 “We must sell Wales, not on the basis of price but on the basis that it produces the highest quality produce, that it is clean and that it is green”.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM, plenary session debating the motion on Release of Genetically Modified Organisms in Wales, 24 May 2000

4 Within a few years of the introduction of GM crops, almost the entire US\$300 million annual US maize exports to the EU and the US\$300 million annual Canadian rape exports to the EU had disappeared, and the US share of the world soya market had decreased. In total GM crops may have cost the US economy at least US\$12 billion net from 1999 to 2001.

Seeds of Doubt, Soil Association briefing, September 2002



Liability

EU law on GM crops does not require biotech companies to pay compensation for, or clear up, damage caused by their crops. In contrast, under European product liability legislation farmers, manufacturers and suppliers of food could be sued for the harm caused by GM foods that they have grown or supplied.¹¹ Insurance companies are refusing to provide liability cover against damage caused by GM crops¹² and it is unlikely that the biotech companies will voluntarily pick up the bill. Aventis, which produced Starlink, agreed to pay compensation for the contamination of US food supplies only after farmers, consumers, restaurants, retailers, manufacturers and grain dealers took it to court.^{13 14}

¹¹ *Legal Update* February 2001, Mills & Reeve, Solicitors

¹² “Farmers told GM crops are ‘too dangerous to insure’” *Scottish Herald*, 10 March 2002

¹³ “Taco Bell sues over Starlink corn fiasco” *Associated Press*, 19 September 2001

¹⁴ “Aventis inks Starlink settlement, farmers, elevators to get millions” *Associated Press*, 24 January 2001



How GM will affect your area

The commercial growing of GM crops is likely to cause environmental, social, economic and practical problems across the whole country. But worst affected will be the areas where they are grown.

The environment in your area

Because the safety of GM crops has not been proven, we don't yet know what impact they could have on the environment. English Nature, the Government's wildlife adviser, has said that GM crops could threaten wildlife such as farmland birds.¹⁵ In the US researchers have found that GM crops can pass genes to related plants, making stronger weeds,¹⁶ and in Canada GM oilseed rape weeds have appeared that are resistant to three herbicides.¹⁷

Problems and pollution from GM crops could be difficult to deal with, and responsibilities remain unclear. For example, if GM weeds started to appear on roadsides and in gardens and parks, it is not clear whether the responsibility and liability would fall to the biotech companies or to national government, local authorities, or the affected landowners.

Case studies

1 "Current regulation in the UK appears so far to have protected the public from any potential hazards of GM foods. However, we do not know what we may have missed. The presumption of safety of novel GM plants on the basis of substantial equivalence lacks scientific credibility, given modern expectations of standards of evidence."

Professor Janet Bainbridge, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes, evidence to the Royal Society, 16 May 2001

2 "GM is a big unknown. There's been no research on the effects of GM pollen pollution on bees or of GM honey on people. It's a big gamble with our health. Pollen is so vital for the economic system and bees are a key species for all sorts of crops. Something which renders them infertile or distorts their biology could be disastrous. That's where the precautionary principle should come in. I think a GM-free Devon would be a valuable asset for the local food economy."

Phil Chandler, beekeeper, Devon

3 "What we don't know is the implications of what that one foreign gene might have on other proteins in the recipient plant material."

Professor Howard Dalton, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, BBC, July 2002

¹⁵ English Nature Position Statement, *Genetically modified organisms*, 1 February 2000

¹⁶ Ohio State University press release, 8 August 2002. *Genetically modified crops may pass helpful traits to weeds, study finds*

¹⁷ *Gene-stacking in herbicide-tolerant oilseed rape: lessons from the North American experience* English Nature research report No. 443

Food in your area

After commercialisation, people would inevitably be more exposed to GM foods. The effects on health of GM foods are unknown, but the head of the Government's GM safety committee has admitted that potential hazards from GM foods could have been missed.¹⁸

Shops, restaurants, caterers and other food businesses would have increasing difficulty in maintaining non-GM supplies. Contamination could drive up the cost of non-GM food, making it less affordable for people on low incomes. Local authorities would have to devote more resources to enforcing GM labelling and checking for unapproved GM foods. They might also have to step in if a GM food were found to be unsafe, or if there was widespread contamination of the food supply with an unapproved GM organism, as happened with 'Starlink' in the US (see page 5).

“ Case studies

1 “Once people realise they can't get what they want – and have had for decades – there will be a huge outcry. It could wipe out our business. It almost makes you want to leave this country.”

Jamie Sermon, Greenlife wholefoods shop, Totnes

2 “If the problem arose of adventitious contamination by unapproved GM material in one of our products, it is highly likely that we will still be liable.”

Marks and Spencer, letter to Food Standards Agency, 3 September 2001

3 “The food I try to sell is what you see is what you get. I look to see what's in the products I'm buying. You don't know what's in stuff in the supermarkets. If the GM content is below a certain level they don't have to declare it on the label. I'm in the food business and if I can't understand what's in the food, how are ordinary consumers supposed to? I don't know what the implications of GM are and it bothers me.”

Tom Innes, independent food retailer, Monmouth

¹⁸ Written submission of Professor Janet Bainbridge to the Royal Society, 16 May 2001. *The use of substantial equivalence in the risk assessment of GM food*

Food from your area

Many people are now choosing to buy locally-produced foods, which can depend on an area's reputation and distinctiveness. Many local authorities have been actively promoting local food economies.

Large-scale production of GM crops, or the contamination of locally produced foods, could undermine an area's reputation and damage local food businesses.

At the moment, food businesses can reasonably guarantee that their food is non GM by buying locally grown ingredients, but with commercialisation of GM this would no longer be a guarantee.

“ Case studies

1

“People perceive local as good but what makes locality good is because ingredients are traceable, farms are visitable and the product is fresher.”

[Oliver Watson, Riverford Farm, Devon](#)

2

“Nearly half (45 per cent) of shoppers at farmers markets want to be able to buy locally produced organic food. In a sector with great growth potential, commercial scale GM represents a threat. Shoppers may not be able to find the local organic produce they want.”

[James Pavitt, National Association of Farmers Markets](#)

3

“Everyone in Dorset should have access to safe, nutritious, unadulterated and affordable food, locally produced as far as possible by an independent, viable industry within a healthy and sustainable environment.”

[Dorset County Council Local Agenda 21 target](#)

Non-GM farmers in your area

If GM crops are grown in your area, other farmers could struggle. Under EU law a maximum of 1 per cent GM material is allowed in non-GM food. Most retailers and manufacturers are working to 0.1 per cent, and organic produce has a zero limit.

Pollen and seeds from commercial GM crops could be spread by bees or the wind into surrounding areas, and local farmers could find that their food can no longer be sold as non GM. The biotech industry uses voluntary separation distances between GM and non-GM crops, but these are inadequate. In fact a report from the European Environment Agency concluded that, in the case of oilseed rape, if farmers use these rules “local contamination between crops is inevitable”.¹⁹

“ Case studies

1 Organic farmer John Turner decided in 2002 to reduce his planting of maize by about 80 per cent to avoid the risk of contamination from a nearby farm-scale trial of GM maize. “We felt a duty of care to our end users. We aren’t in a position to guarantee no contamination. There is no form of underwriting from anyone – neither government nor biotech companies. We took the decision not to plant as the only way of maintaining the integrity of trust with the people buying from us.”

2 “I don’t want GM crops to be grown at the moment. There are good intellectual reasons for questioning the safety of GM crops; the commercial benefits to agriculture and consumers are insignificant. And from a business point of view people don’t want to buy it.”

Guy Watson, Riverford Farm, Devon

3 “If it went to free growing of GM crops I would have to move my hives away from commercial crops. I can’t sell honey produced within 6 miles of a GM crop. Any honey I produce within that radius is rubbish. The public won’t buy it — and why should they? It costs me £20-£30 to move one hive. It upsets the bees. I lose production, and I get no benefits.”

Roger Holdy, beekeeper

¹⁹ Sweet, J and Eastham K, 2002. *Genetically modified organisms (GMOs): The significance of gene flow through pollen transfer*. European Environment Agency Environmental issue report No 28



How GM will affect you

Local authorities

Local authorities will have to devote increased resources to food monitoring and food safety, such as the enforcement of labelling, monitoring for contamination with unapproved GM material and action in the event of contamination or the withdrawal of an approved GM food.

The local authority may be liable if problems arise, such as GM weeds appearing on land for which the authority is responsible. Responsibility for the clean-up of GM pollution remains unclear, so it may fall to the local authority.

GM material from experimental trials could be transported to local authority-approved landfill sites. This is already a means of disposing of material from the farm-scale trials of GM crops.²⁰

Farmers

Farmers adjacent to GM crops may experience problems with GM contamination and so could have difficulty in selling their produce as non-GM or organic. GM farmers could lower the value of land and could be liable for problems such as GM weeds.

Non-GM farmers will face increased costs or may be unable to grow particular crops, such as maize or oilseed rape.

Livestock farmers may find it increasingly difficult and costly to meet consumer and retail demands that their animals are not fed GM feed

Farmers may find it increasingly difficult to source certified non-GM seed. Because of contamination, farmers may find it hard to sell crops grown from farm-saved seed.

²⁰ Application for consent to release GM oilseed rape, DETR reference 00/R33/9, para 31

Food businesses

Local contamination, or a GM pollution incident, could harm the reputation of locally produced or processed food.

It will become increasingly difficult to find non-GM suppliers, and the cost of non-GM products could rise.

There is no specific liability regime for GM foods but, because strict product liability laws apply to foods, companies may find themselves liable for harm caused by GM foods that they have produced or supplied.

Public

GM crops could be grown nearby, whether the public wants them or not.

People could find that they are liable for problems, such as GM weeds, appearing on private land.

It will become increasingly difficult and possibly costly to choose non-GM foods.





How you can create a GM-free area

The best way to avoid the problems of GM crops is to make your area GM free. GM-free areas are being declared around the world, including in parts of Austria, Germany, France, Australia, New Zealand and the whole of Wales and Switzerland.

Local authorities can help to make Britain GM-free

Friends of the Earth considers that GM-free areas can be provided with legal protection under new EU legislation on GM crops. Article 19 of the EU GMO Directive (2001/18) specifically mentions the protection of 'geographical areas'. Friends of the Earth suggests that local authorities ask the Government to use this provision to protect self-declared GM-free areas against future releases of GM crops and foods.

- A local authority can adopt a resolution (see draft, page 16) declaring its territory to be a GM-free area. It can ensure that no GM crops are grown on land over which it has control (for example through tenancy agreements) and adopt a GM-free policy for all goods and services for which it is responsible (for example school meals).
- Local authorities can write to the Secretary of State, DEFRA, and ask that the government provide their area with protection against future releases of GM crops and food (see draft text, page 16).

Organisations and businesses can help to make Britain GM free

- Write to the Secretary of State, DEFRA, making it clear that you want to be able to choose not to have GM crops in your area and that you oppose the commercial introduction of GM crops at this time.
- Write to your local authority making it clear that you want it both to declare your area to be GM free and to lobby the government for legal protection for your area.
- Adopt and publicise a GM-free policy for the goods and services your organisation provides.



Marketing consent

Before GM organisms can be experimentally released at test sites, they must have consent under Part B of Directive 2001/18/EC. This is issued by the Secretary of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), who can attach conditions to the consent. If a company wishes to start marketing a GM crop or food, it must apply for European-wide consent under Part C of Directive 2001/18/EC. If the member states all agree to it, approval is given for the GM crop or food to be marketed for 10 years. Article 19(3) of the Directive allows for conditions to be placed on such an approval, including the protection of 'geographical areas'.

Individuals can help to make Britain GM free

- Write to your parish, town and county council making it clear that you want them to declare your area to be GM free, and lobby the government for legal protection for your area.
- Write to the Secretary of State, DEFRA, making it clear that you want to be able to choose not to have GM crops in your area and that you oppose the commercial introduction of GM crops at this time.
- Get involved with your local GM-Free Britain campaign (visit www.GMFreeBritain.com for actions and resources).

“ Case studies

1 “We are acting practically to support our agriculture and food industry by protecting our image of developing natural, safe and environmentally friendly products. Introducing GM products when they are viewed with suspicion would only undermine these efforts.”

Jocelyn Davies Welsh Assembly Member, plenary session debating the motion on Release of Genetically Modified Organisms in Wales, 24 May 2000

2 “The GM-free status of Wales means security of our markets. If Wales were not GM free it would raise question marks over our organic status, and our livelihood is dependent on that. If we were to lose it, our 85-acre farm, which supports our family and several others, could be threatened.”

Dot James, farmer, South West Wales

3 “Enhancing the green and wholesome image of Welsh food both at home and abroad should be the aim, particularly during the difficult days ahead when all marketing opportunities must be seized to overcome the foot-and-mouth setback.”

Farmers Union of Wales Commodities Officer Sion Aron, Western Mail, 10 April 2001

4 Dorset County Council aims to avoid serving food containing GM ingredients on Education and Social Services premises. New County Farm tenancy agreements have conditions attached requiring tenants not to grow GM crops, and existing tenants are asked not to grow GM crops. The County Council has written to the Local Government Association (LGA) urging it to promote the precautionary principle in respect of GM issues.

Dorset County Council report of the Director of Environmental Services, 12 July 2001



GM-free Wales

In May 2000 the Welsh Assembly adopted a policy to approve releases of experimental GM crops into the Welsh environment only if it can be confident that they are not capable of causing damage. Since then no experimental GM crops have come to the Welsh Assembly for approval. Assembly members themselves eat GM-free meals thanks to their caterer's policy.



Draft resolution for local authorities

Friends of the Earth's legal team is happy to help Local Authorities draft resolutions, and to work with them regarding writing to DEFRA and the European Commission. Contact us on 020 7490 1555 or info@foe.co.uk.

For more information on the legal situation and using Article 19 see our briefing *GM-free local areas - a guide to using the law to protect your area from GM crops* www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/gmfree_local_areas.pdf

Suggested text for resolution

“This council recognises that

- genetic modification of crop plants is a relatively new branch of science and technology;
- that there is still scientific debate about the safety of GM crops;
- that the commercial growing of GM crops presents legal, economic, social and ethical problems that have not yet been properly addressed.

The Council therefore declares that this County/District/Parish will, so far as is possible, be kept free of GM crops and GM food and feed.

Further, this council recognises that the following issues are of particular concern to the people of *[name of County/District/Parish etc]* and are of particular importance to the protection of the environment of *[name of County/District/Parish etc]*.”

[Insert specific areas of concern in relation to your area.]

“The Council therefore commits:

- to ensuring that no GM crops are grown on land over which it has control;
- to adopting a GM-free policy for all goods and services for which the council is responsible;
- to declaring *[name of area]* to be a GM Free Zone;
- to considering each prospective GMO Marketing Consent and, where appropriate, writing to both the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and to the European Commission requesting that a condition under Article 19(3)(c) be added to such marketing consent so as to exempt *[name of area]* from the scope of such consent.”

Resources

Luke Anderson, *Genetic engineering, food and our environment*, Green Books 1999

Sue Dibb and Tim Lobstein, *GM: a shopper's guide to genetically modified food*, Virgin, 1999

Sue Dibb and Sue Mayer, *Biotech - the next generation. Good for whose health?* Food Commission/GeneWatch UK, 2000

Friends of the Earth

Get real about food and farming. Friends of the Earth's vision for the future of farming in the UK, October 2001

The great food gamble, May 2001

Genetically modified crops and food, July 2001

Visit www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food for these resources, plus campaign materials, fact sheets, fliers, stickers, and technical briefings on:

Pollen flow

Liability

Farm-scale trials

Market forces

Herbicides used on GM

GM food and food safety

The regulatory process

Seed purity

Economic impact

Feeding the world

Bayer's T25 maize

GM politics in the EU

GeneWatch UK, detailed website, including database of GM crops and foods. www.genewatch.org

For more information

To find out more about the GM-Free Britain campaign, and how you can get involved:

Visit www.GMFreeBritain.com

Tel [Friends of the Earth Information Service on 020 7490 1555](tel:02074901555)

Write to **GM-Free Britain, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ**

Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems which make life better for people

Friends of the Earth is:

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost one million supporters across five continents and 68 national organisations worldwide
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.

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