



Dear Friend,

Today there are a huge number of environmental issues demanding our attention. One of the most pressing and vast in scale is the release of engineered plants and animals into our food supply and the environment. Biotech companies profess that their interspecies genetic concoctions will allow us to, among other things, feed the hungry and reduce pesticide use. Yet overwhelming evidence shows not only that these claims are false, but that the engineering of life might actually have the opposite effects. This technology is virtually impossible to contain. Once released into the food supply, even in small amounts, genetically altered organisms have the potential, through cross-pollination and other ways of moving and multiplying, to alter all of life as we know it. At this crucial time when decisions for the approval of these products are being made without adequate safety testing, consumer labeling or environmental impact assessment, it is critical that we do our part to keep biotechnology from staking its claim on life.

Genetically Engineered Food Alert is a coalition of seven organizations representing consumers, environmentalists, and farmers dedicated to preserving the health and diversity of the planet for future generations. Our coalition demands an outright GE moratorium unless all three of the following needs are met: Comprehensive mandatory labeling of all GE food and fiber products, mandatory and stringent pre-market safety-testing of all GE products as well as mandatory long-term liability insurance for GE corporations and labs.

The enclosed activist toolkit prepared by Genetically Engineered Food Alert is a collection of ideas, resources, and support to assist in guiding you to be an effective organizer and activist. We hope you find the toolkit useful in expressing your deep concern for health and for the environment. Inside, you will find smart strategies, drawn from a variety of organizations that will give you the edge in influencing decisions to benefit the health of our planet. You will find:

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Getting Started!

Step 1: Educate yourself

Like many people, you are probably moved deeply by the assault of biotechnology on the natural order of life on our planet. But to be effective in bringing about change, it's important to be conversant with the basics of genetic engineering. Let your passion drive you, but make sure it's informed by hard facts. Don't be daunted by the complexities of genetics. The basics are not hard to understand. The fact sheets [p. 3-11] will get you up to speed on the science and some of the known and potential impacts of engineering life. If you'd like a fuller introduction to the subject, check out the Recommended Reading and helpful web site listings in the Resources section of the toolkit [p. 31].

Step 2: Individual actions

Once you've got the basics down, what do you do with your knowledge? An easy way to get started is writing a letter – to elected representatives, food company executives, and your local newspaper. The Media [p. 24], Government [p. 26] and Community to Congress [p. 14] sections offer tips and contacts for effective advocacy you can undertake on your own.

Step 3: Join a group....

While individual actions are important, you can have a greater impact as part of a group of like-minded people. Environmental, food safety and public interest groups are becoming increasingly concerned about the risks of genetically engineered foods, and many of them have local branches you could join. If a local group is not currently involved in GE food activism, attend a meeting and suggest that they take on the issue! To find local groups in your area, check out the Resources section [p.31].

Step 4: Or start your own!

It's not as hard as it sounds! If you can't find an existing group willing to take on genetic engineering, we've got a dynamite (and proven) method for starting your own. Check out the Group-Building strategies in the "Getting Started, Getting Organized: Working with others to Protect your Community" section [p. 18].

Health Risks Associated with GE Foods



New Allergens in the Food Supply

Genetic engineering is imprecise and unpredictable. By inserting genes from organisms that have never before been eaten as food, new proteins are introduced into the human and animal food chains. These new proteins could cause new food allergies. A genetically engineered food supply is, therefore, a major gamble with human health.

Known allergens could also be introduced into genetically engineered plants. In 1996, for example, Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. (a seed company now owned by DuPont) developed a genetically engineered soybean using a gene from a brazil nut to increase the protein content of its animal feed. Independent tests on the GE soybean revealed that people allergic to brazil nuts reacted to the engineered soybean.ⁱ The GE soybean had previously been tested on laboratory animals but the animals did not have similar reactions to the humans.

Antibiotic Resistance

Almost all genetically engineered foods contain genes that code for resistance to commonly used antibiotics. Genetic engineers use these genes as “marker genes.” They insert them into plants along with the desired genes from other plants or animals. Genetic engineers douse a product with antibiotics and if it is resistant, they know that the product has taken up the foreign genetic material. Though antibiotic resistant markers have no further use after this process, they remain present in the plant tissue.

The presence of antibiotic genes in foods is a grave health risk. The trait for antibiotic resistance could be passed on to the bacteria in the guts of humans and animals, making antibiotics ineffective in the case of illness. Hospitals are already reporting increased incidences of antibiotic resistance in bacteria.

In 1999, the British Medical Association called for a 5-year moratorium on genetically engineered crops, because of the possibility that these crops could foster antibiotic resistance.ⁱⁱ

Toxicity

Genetic engineering could also lead to increased toxicity of some foods. Genetic engineers have little control over where they insert a gene or how many copies of that gene they insert into the receiving organism. Modifying organisms at the genetic level can change the chemical composition of crops and foods. The inserted gene may alter the way existing genes in a plant or animal express themselves, which may in turn increase the production of existing toxins, or switch on the production of previously silent genes.

L-Tryptophan is an amino acid once used to treat sleep disorders and depression. In 1989, the Japanese company Showa Denko K.K. brought to the market L-tryptophan that was manufactured using genetically engineered bacteria. Many American consumers who ingested the Showa Denko product came down with a crippling disease – eosinophilia myalgia syndrome. Overall, 37 people died and 1,511 others were hospitalized according to the Center for Disease Control. A study published in the journal *Science* found that the genetically engineered L-tryptophan contained a new protein not found in conventional non-GE L-tryptophan.ⁱⁱⁱ

Sources:

¹ Nordlee, J.D., Taylor, S.L., Townsend, J.A., Thomas, L.A. and Bush, R.K. 1996 “Identification of a Brazil Nut Allergen in Transgenic Soybeans” *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol 334 (11) p. 726

² British Medical Association press release May 18, 1999

³ Raphals, P. 1990. “Does Medical Mystery Threaten Biotech?” *Science*, 249, 619, 1990.



Environmental Hazards of Genetically Engineered Plants

Biological Pollution

Genetically engineered (GE) plants are created by splicing foreign genetic material into plant genomes, creating new organisms that could never arise in nature. The most common form of gene-splicing is quite similar to the process of viral infection. The gene is first cobbled together with pieces of unstable DNA from disease-causing viruses and bacteria, which are required to “infect” the target plant with the desired gene, overcome the plant’s defense mechanisms against foreign DNA, and force the plant to express the inserted gene. Once inserted, both the gene and its viral helpers are passed on to future generations; they may mutate, recombine with viruses, or be transferred “horizontally” to other organisms, with unknown and largely unstudied consequences. While chemical toxins may be cleaned up, genetic engineering truly gives pollution a life of its own.

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCE

Almost two-thirds of genetically engineered crops grown on a commercial basis in the United States have been modified to tolerate certain proprietary herbicides or weedkillers. Crops such as corn, soy and canola have been genetically engineered to withstand otherwise lethal doses of chemical pesticides. Farmers, therefore, can douse their fields with herbicides without having to worry about killing their crops.

Herbicide-tolerant crops contradict the claim that genetic engineering will help the environment. Instead of moving farmers away from their dependence on chemical pesticides, the crops actually encourage pesticide use – a threat to our drinking water, our food and to wildlife. A report by Benbrook Consulting in July 1999, which reviewed more than 8,200 university-run field tests on herbicide-resistant crops, found that farmers planting Roundup Ready soybeans used two to five times more herbicides than conventional soybean farmers.

Superweeds

It has been shown that herbicide-resistance genes can spread to related plants in pollen carried by bees or the wind. Researchers have found evidence for this in the case of canola and sugar beet in Europe.^{iv} In Canada, volunteer canola resistant to three different herbicides resulted from such uncontrollable cross-breeding between plants resistant to one herbicide each.

These superweeds can be difficult and expensive for farmers to eradicate. They could displace existing species of plants, destroying local ecosystems and threatening biodiversity.

Research in the UK has shown that pollen from GE crops can contaminate fields up to 4 km away^v, creating serious liability problems for farmers growing crops for the expanding markets in non-GE and organic foods.

Herbicide-resistant crops, themselves, may also become weeds if they grow in places where humans don’t want them. We already have examples of the consequences of intentionally introducing non-native plants into the environment. Kudzu and Johnson grass, for example, were both introduced into the United States and today have become serious weeds.

Pesticide Plants

Second in acreage only to herbicide-resistant crops, pesticide plants are engineered to produce toxin in all their tissues, including the edible grain. Pesticide plants are produced by means of a “gene gun,” which is used to “shoot” a toxin-producing gene taken from a soil bacterium – *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) – directly into the tissue of corn, canola, potatoes and cotton to make the plants poisonous to insects. About 25% of the U.S. corn crop is now planted in Bt varieties. Proponents of genetic engineering argue that Bt crops will reduce the need for insecticides and therefore spare the environment. In fact, the transformation of plants into pesticides is a terribly misguided development with ominous implications for the health of the ecosystem.

Effects on non-target organisms:

The toxin gene found naturally in Bt bacteria produces an inactive “protoxin” that is activated by the gastric juices of certain insects; the activated toxin then destroys their digestive tracts and kills the insects. In contrast, genetically engineered plants produce an active toxin that does not require activation.

In 1999, scientists at Cornell University revealed that pollen from genetically engineered Bt corn can kill Monarch butterflies.^{vi} The findings of this lab study have since been confirmed in an ongoing field study at Iowa State University.

New research also shows that the Bt toxin can leach through plant roots into the soil where it binds to soil particles and remains active for up to 250 days, possibly harming soil micro-organisms and disrupting the soil ecology.^{vii}

Evidence shows that Bt crops may also affect beneficial predator insects such as lacewings and ladybirds when they eat insects that have been feeding on genetically engineered plants.^{viii}

A Threat to Organic Agriculture

Bt crops also pose a threat to organic agriculture. Organic farmers have long used the Bt toxin in a natural spray as a component of an integrated pest management scheme. The spray targets specific pests and is non-toxic to mammals. However, plants that continually produce the Bt insecticide will exert strong selective pressure on insects to develop resistance to the insecticide. As insects evolve resistance to Bt toxins, organic farmers will be stripped of one of their most valuable tools.

Superbugs

Many scientists believe that efforts to slow the development of resistance in pests are ineffectual. The main strategy involves planting “refuges” of non-Bt crops interspersed among the genetically engineered fields, with the goal of diluting resistant insect populations with susceptible individuals.

A recent article in the journal *Science* found that a common pest of cotton was able to build up resistance to the Bt plant pesticide very quickly.^{ix} The US EPA subsequently announced that refuges of non-GM crops needed to be increased by 20 to 50 percent of the total area in order to prevent the build-up of resistance in the insect population.

¹ Chevre et al, 1998. “Characterisation of Backcross Generations Obtained Under Field Conditions from Oilseed Rape Wild Radish F-1 Interspecific Hybrids: An Assessment

¹ Thompson, C.E. et al, 1999 “Regional patterns of gene flow and its consequences for GM oilseed rape” in *Gene Flow and Agriculture: Relevance for Transgenic crops*; British Crop Protection Council Symposium Proceedings No. 72. Ed. P.J.W. Lutman

¹ Losey, J.E. et al, 1999 “Transgenic Pollen Harms Monarch Larvae” *Nature*, 399: 214, May 20, 1999

¹ Saxena, D., Flores, S. & Stotzky, G. 1999 “Transgenic Plants: Insecticidal Toxin in Root Exudates from Bt Corn” *Nature*, 402: 480

¹ Hillbeck, A. et al, 1998 “Effects of Transgenic *Bacillus thuringiensis* corn-fed prey on mortality and development time of immature *Chrysoperla carnea*.” *Environmental Entomology* Vol 27 (2): 480-487.

¹ Tabashnik, B.E. et al 2000 “Resistance to Bt Toxins” *Science* 7/1/2000, p.287

GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS



American Consumers Want to Know: In a survey published in *Time* magazine, 81 percent of Americans surveyed wanted GE foods to be labeled. - Time Magazine, 1/11/99 from a Time/CNN Poll.

Together, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USDA) are responsible for ensuring that genetically engineered foods are safe for consumers and safe for the environment. Currently, there are no regulatory laws for mandatory pre-market, food safety testing or labeling.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

- The primary function of the FDA with respect to genetically engineered crops is to ensure their safety for food. In May 2000, the FDA announced plans for mandatory notification to FDA when companies market new GE crops. Instead of food safety testing, the FDA will call for “consulting sessions” with GE crop manufacturers. Consultations do not require thorough pre-market safety and toxicology testing as is required for other food additives.
- The May 2000 FDA policy also rejects mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods. Instead, the agency has created a “GE free” voluntary labeling scheme. **Under this new policy, not a single producer of GE foods will have to reveal that their product is genetically engineered. Instead, producers not using genetically engineered ingredients will bear the labeling burden.**

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- EPA regulation of GE crops falls within the pesticide regulation regime authorized under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). By law, the agency regulates the sales, use, distribution and testing of plants that produce pesticidal substances. For example, Bt crops, which are genetically engineered to contain toxins that make the plant itself function as a pesticide, must be registered with the EPA.
- **Currently genetically engineered crops are subject to the same handling as conventional crops. No specific attention is being paid to GE crops, although scientists know very little about their potential health or environmental impacts.**

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- The USDA is responsible for determining whether GE crops are considered plant pests. **In order to make these determinations, the USDA issues permits to biotechnology companies to field test their own GE crops, instead of conducting independent, scientific field tests.**



WILL GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS FEED THE WORLD?

Biotechnology companies are mounting a \$52 million public relations campaign to give biotech foods a friendly face. Among other arguments, industry is claiming that genetically engineered foods will “feed the world.” However;

- ✓ **In 1999, 99 percent of all genetically engineered crops were grown to enhance the plant’s pest management traits, not to increase yield or nutrition value.^x**
- ✓ **According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report, 98 percent of genetic alterations are done to make food production and processing easier and more profitable for the manufacturers.** Only two percent are aimed at improved nutrition or taste. In general, these crops are being engineered to increase corporate profitability, not designed to alleviate world hunger.
- **GE crops result in a lower yield and higher prices.** According to an independent, yield study conducted by Dr. Roger Elmore of the University of Nebraska, Monsanto’s Round-Up Ready soybeans yield 6 percent less than their closest relatives did and 11 percent less than high yielding conventional soybeans^{xi}. For some farmers, the decision to grow GE crops will nearly double their spending on seeds and weed management systems including both direct and indirect costs.
- **The leaders in biotechnology are the same giant chemical companies -- Monsanto, DuPont, Aventis and Novartis -- that sell toxic pesticides and herbicides.** These companies are genetically engineering plants to be resistant to herbicides that they manufacture so they in turn can sell more herbicides. Farmers in both developed and developing countries will become increasingly dependent on the industry to provide them with the materials necessary to continue their livelihood.
- **The problems surrounding world hunger have more to do with food distribution than food production.** The world today produces more food per inhabitant than ever before. Enough food is available now to provide 4.3 pounds for every person each day.^{xii}

¹ Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 1999. *ISAAA Briefs No.12*: Preview. ISAAA: Ithaca, NY.

¹ Anthon, George. “Genetic Changes Affect More Than Yield.” *Des Moines Register*. June 18, 2000.

¹ Altieri, Miguel and Peter Rosset. “Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology will Not Ensure Food Security, Protect the Environment and Reduce Poverty in the Developing World.” *AgBioForum*. Summer/Fall 1999.

Biotechnology 101

Dispel the Myths and learn the Facts about Genetic Engineering

Genetic engineering poses unprecedented ethical and social concerns, as well as serious challenges to the environment, human health, animal welfare, and the future of agriculture.

Just look at the facts:

Myth I: Biotechnology is a science that results in a specific desired outcome. If something does go wrong it will occur in the lab under controlled conditions.

Fact I: At Michigan State University researchers found that genetically altering plants to resist viruses can cause the viruses to mutate into new, more virulent forms, or forms that can attack other plant species. Foreign genes from genetically engineered plants are carried by pollen, insects, wind, or rain, and flow into other crops, as well as wild and weedy relatives. A report published by 100 top American scientists warned that the release of gene-spliced organisms "...could lead to irreversible, devastating damage to the ecology." Three different types of engineered canola have already crossbred in the open and unexpectedly produced a variety with all three engineered traits. StarLink corn has cross-pollinated with 80 brands of seeds, contaminating the food supply. More serious accidents are bound to occur. Because they are alive, genetically engineered products are inherently more unpredictable than chemical products -- they can reproduce, migrate, and mutate. Once released, it is virtually impossible to recall genetically engineered organisms back to the laboratory.

Myth II: Genetic engineering is not going to reduce Bio-diversity. With cross-species genetic exchanges there will be even more diversity than before.

Fact II: Once researchers develop what is considered to be the "perfect tomato" or "perfect chicken" that new organism will be reproduced in large numbers; "less desirable" species would fall by the wayside. The "perfect" animals and plants could then be cloned (reproduced as exact genetic copies), reducing even further the pool of available genes on the planet. A species that is genetically uniform has a drastically increased chance that a single disease or pest could wipe out its entire species rather than just a single variety of it.

Myth III: Biotechnology allows farmers to use less harmful chemicals.

Fact III: Biotech companies love to say that genetic engineering will end the use of dangerous chemicals in agriculture. The leaders in biotechnology are the giant chemical companies like Monsanto, Du Pont, and Syngenta; it would simply not be in their interest to lose profits from the reduced sale of chemicals. These companies genetically engineer plants to be resistant to herbicides. In order to use the herbicide resistant crops, farmers must sign a contract committing to buy the company's herbicide. Because the plants will not die from increased amounts of herbicide, farmers can spray even more poisonous herbicide to kill all the weeds. As a result weeds become increasingly resistant with every generation, forcing farmers to spray additional chemicals. This type of crop accounts for nearly half of the applications for field-testing submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) since 1988.

Source: www.Purefood.org/text.html

Similarly, plants genetically engineered to produce their own pesticide will cause pests to quickly develop resistance. Farmers are then left little choice but to spray additional pesticides. And what will happen when the pesticide gene spreads to weeds and other unwanted plants?

Myth IV: Genetically engineered foods are just as safe and in fact no different from non-genetically engineered foods.

Fact IV: The genetic engineering of crops and food-producing animals can produce toxic and allergic reactions in humans. People allergic to nuts for example, experienced allergic reactions to soybeans engineered with a Brazil nut protein during food trials. Had these been commercially released, people would have had no way of knowing that soybeans had been altered with nut proteins since GE foods are not required to be labeled. This could happen with a variety of foods. Proteins are also extracted from bacteria found in things such as the soil and ocean. Such substances have never been in the food supply before, so their toxic or allergenic characteristics are not entirely known.

Genetically engineered products do not have a good track record for human safety. In 1989 and 1990, a genetically engineered brand of L-tryptophan, a common dietary supplement, killed more than 30 Americans and permanently disabled or afflicted more than 5,000 others with a potentially fatal and painful blood disorder, before it was recalled by the FDA. The manufacturer, Japan's third largest chemical company, had used genetically engineered bacteria to produce the over-the-counter supplement. It is believed that the bacteria somehow became contaminated during the recombinant DNA process. There were no labels on the product to identify the product as having been genetically engineered.

Myth V: Genetic Engineering helps farmers and the economy as a whole.

Fact V: If the trend is not stopped, the patenting of transgenic plants and food-producing animals will soon lead to tenant farming in which farmers will lease their plants and animals from biotech conglomerates and pay royalties on seeds and offspring. Within the next few decades, agriculture will move off the soil and into biosynthetic industrial factories controlled by chemical and biotech companies. Hundreds of millions of farmers and other workers worldwide will lose their livelihoods. By patenting the genes they discover and the living organisms they create, a small handful of corporations then owns and controls the genetic heritage of the plant. Scientists who "discover" genes and ways of manipulating them can patent -- and thus own -- not only genetic engineering techniques, but the very genes themselves. Chemical, pharmaceutical, and biotech companies such as DuPont, Upjohn, Bayer, Dow, Monsanto, Ciba-Geigy, and Syngenta, are urgently trying to identify and patent plant, animal, and human genes in order to complete their take-over of agriculture, animal husbandry, and food processing. These are some of the same companies that once promised a carefree life through pesticides and plastics. Would you trust them with the blueprints of life?

Source: www.Purefood.org/text.html

Myth VI: Patents are good, they provide incentive for research to be done that will improve our health and quality of life.

Fact VI: The genetic engineering and patenting of animals reduces living beings to the status of manufactured products. In January 1994, then-USDA Secretary Mike Espy announced that USDA scientists had completed genome "road maps" for cattle and pigs, a precursor to ever more experimentation on live animals. Resulting "mistakes" are born with painful deformities. A purely reductionist science, biotechnology reduces all life to bits of information (genetic code) that can be arranged and rearranged at whim. Stripped of their integrity and sacred qualities, animals that are merely objects to their "inventors" will be treated as such. Currently, more than 200 genetically engineered "freak" animals are awaiting patent approval from the federal government.

Myth VII: We can trust the FDA and USDA not to let any unsafe products onto the market.

Fact VII: No one is regulating genetically engineered organisms adequately or properly testing them. In 1986 during the Reagan administration, policymakers stitched together a patchwork of pre-existing and inadequate statutes to ease the way for biotechnology. These laws were created years ago to deal with chemicals -- not the unpredictable living products of genetic engineering. To date, no suitable government apparatus has been established to deal with this radical new class of potentially overwhelming environmental and health threats. In May 1992, Vice President Dan Quayle, announced the FDA's newly developed policy on biotech foods: genetically engineered foods will not be treated differently from naturally produced foods; they will not be safety tested; they will not carry labels stating that they have been genetically engineered, nor will the government keep track of foods that have been genetically engineered. As a result, vegetarians, followers of religious dietary restrictions, and people with allergies face the prospect of unwittingly eating vegetables and fruits that contain genetic material from unknown sources including animals as well as humans. Health risks are then left to consumers to be discovered by trial and error. USDA oversight is no better than the FDA's. The agency has the task of both promoting and regulating agriculture. Indeed, the USDA is a primary sponsor of biotech research on plants and animals.

Myth VIII: There is a consensus among scientists that biotechnology will not only save but improve our future.

Fact VIII: Not all scientists are sanguine about genetic engineering. Among the doubters is Erwin Chargoff, the eminent biochemist who is often referred to as the father of molecular biology. He warned that all innovation does not result in "progress". Chargoff once referred to genetic engineering as "a molecular Auschwitz" and warned that the technology of genetic engineering poses a greater threat to the world than the advent of nuclear technology. "An irreversible attack on the biosphere is something so unheard-of, so unthinkable to previous generations, that I could only wish that mine had not been guilty of it."

Primary Source: Organic Consumers Association, [www. Purefood.org/text.html](http://www.Purefood.org/text.html)



'Golden Rice' and Vitamin A Deficiency

"If anyone tells you that GM is going to feed the world, tell them that it is not... To feed the world takes political and financial will – it's not about production and distribution."

Steve Smith, head of Novartis Seeds

High-tech cure for Vitamin A deficiency?

"Biotechnology and GM crops are taking us down a dangerous road, creating the classic conditions for hunger, poverty and even famine. Ownership and control concentrated in too few hands and a food supply based on too few varieties planted widely are the worst option for food security."

Christian Aid Report: "Biotechnology and GMOs"

In 1999, Swiss and German scientists announced the development of a "golden rice" genetically engineered to produce beta-carotene, a substance which the body can convert to Vitamin A. The new rice was quickly heralded as a miracle cure for vitamin A deficiency (VAD), a condition which afflicts millions of people in developing countries, especially children and pregnant women. Severe VAD can cause partial or total blindness; less severe deficiencies weaken the immune system, increasing the risk of infections such as measles and malaria. Women with VAD are more likely to die during or after childbirth. Each year, it is estimated that VAD causes blindness in 350,000 pre-school age children, and it is implicated in over one million deaths. At first glance, then, golden rice would seem to be a godsend. But a closer look reveals a different picture.

A long road from lab to field

"...the public relations uses of Golden Rice have gone too far. The industry's advertisements and the media in general seem to forget that it is a research product that needs considerable further development before it will be available to farmers and consumers."

Gordon Conway, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, the chief funder of the Golden Rice project.

Golden rice is produced by splicing three foreign genes – two from the daffodil and one from a bacterium – into japonica rice, a variety adapted for temperate climates. The developers anticipate at least five more years will be required to breed the Vitamin A trait into rice varieties adapted to local climates in developing countries. This is probably overly optimistic, given the unprecedented difficulties presented by engineering a complex three-gene trait (all current GE crops are spliced with single-gene constructs), and the need for safety and environmental testing before field introduction.

Too little, too late

Even if golden rice is successfully introduced, it will likely do little to ameliorate VAD because it produces so little beta-carotene – just 1.6 micrograms per gram rice ($\mu\text{g/g}$) at present, with a goal of 2.0 $\mu\text{g/g}$. Even if scientists reach this goal, a woman would need to eat 16 lbs. of cooked rice every day in order to get sufficient Vitamin A, if golden rice were her only source of the nutrient. A child would need 12 lbs. More realistically, three servings of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cooked golden rice per day would provide only 10% of her daily Vitamin A requirement, and less than 6% if she were breast-feeding. Yet even these modest contributions are uncertain. In order to absorb beta carotene, the human body requires adequate amounts of zinc, protein and fats, elements often lacking in the diets of poor people. Those with diarrhea – common in developing countries – are also unable to obtain vitamin A from golden rice.

Magic bullets miss the mark

"A single nutrient approach towards a nutrition-related public health problem is usually, with the exception of perhaps iodine or selenium deficiencies, neither feasible nor desirable."

John R. Lupien, Director, Food and Nutrition Division, Food and Agricultural Organization, United Nations

Nutrition experts thus confirm what common sense tells us – a balanced, diverse diet supplying a full range of foods and nutrients is the only sound way to promote health and prevent VAD and other nutritional deficiencies. According to Dr. Samson Tsou of the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center, VAD is not a major problem in countries with vegetable consumption of more than 200 grams per day. A pre-school child's daily requirement of vitamin A can be met with just two tablespoons of yellow sweet potatoes, half a cup of dark green leafy vegetables, or two-thirds of a medium-sized mango. And unlike golden rice, these vegetables supply other micronutrients as well.

Shall man live by rice alone?

"Seeking a technological food fix for world hunger may be...the most commercially malevolent wild goose chase of the new century."

Dr. Richard Horton, editor of the British science journal The Lancet

The Green Revolution of the 1960s and 70s replaced diverse cropping systems with monocultures of new wheat and rice varieties. These new hybrids required irrigation, fertilizers and herbicides to deliver increased yields. These herbicides killed off many green, leafy vegetables that had been important sources of Vitamin A. They also poisoned rice paddy waters, causing steep declines in fish and shrimp populations in areas such as Bangladesh, where integrated rice-fish farming is practiced. Monoculture in the fields predictably led to less diverse diets. In India, household consumption of vegetables has decreased 12% over the past two decades. In rural Indonesia, 80% of caloric intake now comes from rice, up from less than 50% before the Green Revolution. An impoverished diet that consists of little else but rice (golden or not) will never provide a solution to world hunger or malnutrition.

Alternatives to golden rice

"If it were not for the vast array of alternatives on offer, the arguments for the GM approach might be genuinely compelling."

Hugh Warwick, Splice, magazine of the Genetics Forum, March/April 2000

Even if golden rice is successfully developed, many question whether it is an efficient use of scarce public funds. An educational project in Bangladesh begun in 1993 by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization has helped landless families develop home gardens with vitamin A-rich crops such as beans and pumpkins. This successful program grew to involve at least three million people by 1998. A public education campaign in Thailand that utilized radio, posters and street theater taught farmers the advantages of growing the ivy gourd, another good source of vitamin A. A project in the Jiangsu province of China has helped spawn a huge increase in rice/aquaculture systems, which resulted in 10-15% increases in rice yields and, more importantly, 750 kg of fish per hectare of rice paddy. The fish also helped reduce the incidence of malaria by consuming mosquito larvae.

There are innumerable small-scale projects such as these throughout the developing world, only we rarely hear about them. And they don't get nearly the amount of funding that they deserve. According to Hans Herren, Director of the Kenyan-based International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, "half of Rockefeller's agricultural money now goes to biotechnology." Herren, recipient of the World Food Prize in 1995, helped avert famine in Africa through introduction of a natural predator that eliminated a serious cassava pest. And this elegant solution didn't cost farmers anything. One must wonder how many other low-tech, sustainable, people-centered solutions to hunger and malnutrition go unfunded thanks to government and biotech industry obsession with the hugely expensive technology of genetic engineering.

Source: www.foe.org/safefood/rice.html

ACTION ALERT!

WRITE TO MAJOR FOOD COMPANIES

TELL THEM TO STOP USING GENETICALLY ENGINEERED INGREDIENTS

Please write your favorite food companies and also join others across the country writing to Kraft, Campbell's and Kellogg.

Ms. Betsy Holden
President and CEO
Kraft Foods North America
3 Lakes Drive
Northfield, IL 60093

Carlos M. Gutierrez
President and COO
Kellogg Company
One Kellogg Square, P.O. Box 3599
Battle Creek, MI 49016

Douglas Conant
President and Chief Executive Officer
Campbell Soup Company
1 Campbell Place
Camden, NJ 08103-1799

A sample letter follows. We encourage you to write something personal about your use of any of their products or how the company figures in your family.

Dear _____,

I recently discovered that many Kraft products contain genetically engineered ingredients, and I am concerned about the potential health and environmental threats they pose. As a consumer, I support Kraft's decision to quickly recall your products contaminated with StarLink corn and to switch to non-genetically engineered white corn in all Kraft taco products, but I feel that this is not enough.

I ask that Kraft continue to be a leader in corporate responsibility, and work to prevent other threats to consumers, by taking the following steps with the goal of phasing out the use of all genetically engineered ingredients until adequate testing, labeling, and liability are in place:

I look forward to Kraft's commitment to safeguard my health and the environment we all care for.

Sincerely,

Take Action: Ideas for Action from your Community to Congress

Consumer action is necessary in order to prevent genetically engineered (GE) products from pervading the market. Suppliers pay close attention to what you demand. Purchases of certified organic foods are not only safer and more nutritious, but they let store managers know what kind of market to cater to. Check food labels for soy-, corn-, and cottonseed additives, which are likely to be genetically engineered. Stay away from processed foods, which usually contain GE ingredients.

Effective consumer action can be taken in your schools and communities, at supermarkets and restaurants, by contacting food companies, and by talking to public officials.

At the Supermarket:

Ask the managers of your local supermarkets questions to let them know you're concerned. For example:

- ??? Does the store stock foods containing GE ingredients?
- ??? What measures is the store taking to provide consumers with a GE free supply of foods?
- ??? Would your store be willing to pledge to go GE-free?

FYI: Some supermarkets in the U.S.A and Europe have already set the precedent in going GE-free, such as *Whole Foods*, *Wild Oats* and *Genuardi's*!

U.S.A Food Companies that have pledged to go GE-free are Gerber, Heinz Baby Food, & Frito-Lay.

Write a Letter:

Food companies and Supermarkets have an obligation to write you back, so you can be confident that your letter will receive due consideration. If you're not satisfied with the reply, let others know why. Below, is a sample letter:

Dear Supermarket Manager,

I am concerned that the products I have purchased from your store contain genetically engineered ingredients. As you know, currently genetically engineered foods are not labeled or properly tested. They also impose potentially dangerous health and environmental risks on my family and this community at large. I honestly do not feel safe shopping in your store, unless you can pledge that you will not sell products that contain genetically ingredients. Please let me know whether or not you are willing to make this pledge. My family, this community and I are all hoping that you will ensure your customer's health and safety by promising to set this standard.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Write a letter to the top 100 Largest Food Companies, their addresses are posted at:
<http://www.foe.org/safefood/companylist.html>

Organize:

Leafleting events or public demonstrations outside local supermarkets are a great way to show that your community is serious about it's demand for GE-free foods.

Get Creative! For example, symbolic food dumps of Kraft Foods in front of local Safeway Markets helped raise awareness and showed collective dissatisfaction with GE-products. See this tool kit's "How to Organize" section for guidance on getting the most out of your protest.

Such events are also good places to circulate a petition to send to food companies, supermarkets, federal regulatory agencies and public officials. For example, here are suggestions from purefood.org for what your petition could demand:

An outright GE moratorium unless there is:

1. Comprehensive mandatory labeling of all GE food and fiber products.
2. Mandatory, stringent pre-market safety-testing of all GE products.
3. Mandatory long-term liability insurance for GE corporations and labs.

There are currently bills in the House (HR-3377) and in the Senate (S-2080) requiring the labeling of GE foods. For summaries of these bills see the "In the Government" section. For information on state level legislation, please see our web site: www.foe.org.

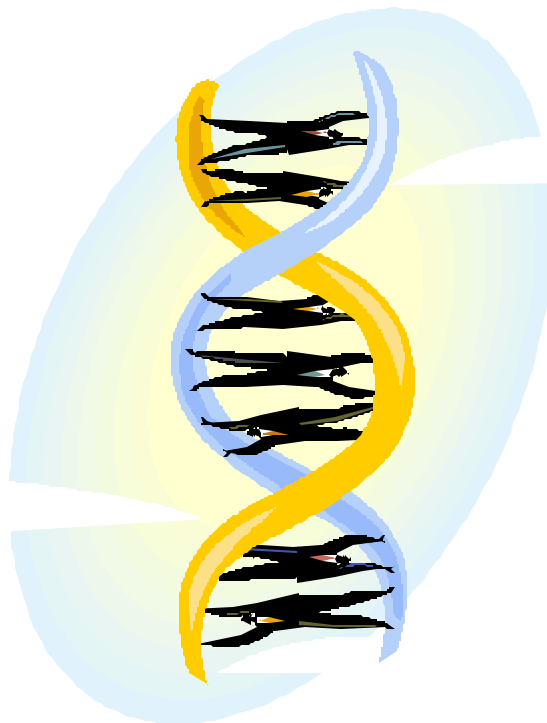
Contact your local members of Congress and urge them to support these bills:

Find your Congressional Representative: <http://www.house.gov>
OR <http://clerkweb.house.gov/mbrcmtee/mbrcmtee.htm>

Find your US Senators: <http://www.senate.gov/>

No web access? Call your local board of elections.

Source: www.purefood.com



In Your Community: Utilize Sustainable Alternatives That Allow You To Get Closer To The source Of Your Food!

Join a Co-op: Co-ops often offer the best varieties of organic and natural foods. Find a co-op near you by contacting:

Co-op Network
Box 57
Randolph, VT 05060
802-234-9293

Or Search at: www.purefood.org/coopindex.htm

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Programs: Many CSA programs allow you to get fresh organic food while supporting small local organic farmers. By choosing from seasonal varieties, you will also reduce the average distance your food otherwise travels (on average 1,500 miles) from the farm to your dinner table.

Search: www.sare.org/san/csa/index.htm

Or Request a List of CSA programs from: CSA/CSREES

1400 Independence Ave. S.W.
Stop 2207
Washington DC, 20250-2207

Farmer's Markets: Here's another way to support local farmers as well as to educate yourself on where your food comes from and the many processes under which it goes. Identify and get to know who grows certified organic produce and who uses genetically engineered seeds.

For location information, see: www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets.

Buying Clubs: In a large or small group, purchase natural and organic bulk foods at a discount of 10-50% off retail prices.

Contacts:

<i>Blooming Prairie Warehouse</i>	IA	319-337-6448	www.bpcop/index.html
<i>Blooming Prairie Natural Foods</i>	MN	612-378-9774	www.bpcop.com/index.html
<i>North Farm Cooperative</i>		800-236-5880	www.northfarm-coop.com
Serves: OH, MN, WI, KY, MO, IL, MI, ND, WY			
<i>Northeast Cooperatives</i>	VT	802-257-5856	www.northeastcoop.com
Serves: New England, PA, NY, and NJ			
		800-736-9032 (for NE area)	
<i>Federation of Ohio River Cooperatives</i>	OH	888-936-9648	www.forcwarehouse.com
Serves: MI, IN, OH, PA, WV, VA, NC, SC, GA, TN, and KY			
<i>Frontier Natural Products Coop</i>	CO	303-449-8137	www.frontiercoop.com
<i>Ozark Cooperative Warehouse</i>	AR	501-521-4920	www.ozarkcoop.com
Serves: AL, AK, FL, GA, KS, LA, MI, MS, OK, SC, TN, and TX			
<i>Tucson Cooperative Warehouse</i>	AZ	800-350-2667	www.tcwfoodcoop.com
Serves: AR, NM, West TX, Southern CA, Southern NV, UT, and CO			

Source: Genetically Engineered Food: A Self-Defense Guide for Consumers by Ronnie Cummins & Ben Lilliston

Community Gardens: Start or join a community garden, in either a rural or urban community.

American Community Garden Network
215-988-8785
www.communitygarden.org/index.html

Or search the Urban Community Garden Web site:
Alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~sewells/communitygardens.htm

Order Organic and Natural Foods On-line:

Walnut Acres	www.walnutacres.com
MotherNature.com	www.mothenature.com
Wild Oats Market	www.wildoats.com
Whole Foods Market	www.wholefoods.org
Sunshine Organic Foods	www.sunshineorganic.com (San Diego Metro Area)
Pioneer Organics	www.pioneerorganics.com
Urban Organic	www.urbanorganic.net
Planet Organics	www.planet-organics.com (San Francisco, Bay Area)
Green Grocer	www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com/indexx.html
Diamond Organics	www.diamondorganics.com



Source: Genetically Engineered Food: A Self-Defense Guide for Consumers by Ronnie Cummins & Ben Lilliston

Getting Started Getting Organized: Working with Others To Protect Your Community...

Find an existing group concerned about genetically engineered foods!

Environmental, food safety and public interest groups are becoming increasingly concerned about the risks of genetically engineered foods, and many of them have local branches you can join. If a local group is not currently involved in GE foods activism, attend a meeting and suggest that they take on the issue! To find local community and student groups in your area, check out the resource section of the toolkit.

Organize a Real Food Potluck/Discussion!

No interest groups in your area? Consider starting one of your own! An easy way to begin is finding like-minded people at a local organic food stores, co-ops, farmers' markets, or other places/events where people are likely to care about what they put in their bodies. You might start off by organizing a "Real Food" potluck and discussion with locally grown organic foods. You could put up ads at your local food store, or in a co-op newsletter. You might also leaflet at farmers' markets. Check out the "In Your Community" section for "real food" stores and farmers' markets in your area. Through these events, you could make genetically engineered foods part of a larger discussion of the health and environmental impacts of our food choices. The theme might be "Where does your food come from?" A discussion group organized around the sharing of real food is a good way to bring in people who are turned off to politics and might shy away from an overly political call to arms! A successful group in Baltimore, Consumers Against Food Engineering, got its start with "Real Food" potlucks.

A couple of things to keep in mind.

- 1) Be respectful. A lot of people as of yet unfamiliar with genetically engineered foods are concerned about other important food and farm issues such as factory farming, chemical pesticide pollution, pollution from concentrated feedlots, animal welfare, shooting up animals with hormones, saving family farmers, etc. These are all important efforts, so be receptive to their concerns as you bring genetic engineering into the discussion.
- 2) Be patient. There's lots of industry-sponsored PR out there about how genetically engineered foods (supposedly) reduce pesticide use and will help feed the world. Don't be surprised if you find people who have been persuaded, or at least confused, by these myths. Bone up on the fact sheets and other information you've collected so you can respond intelligently and persuasively and respectfully!

You've found or started a group of like-minded people. Now what?

The possibilities are limited only by your imagination! So please don't take the following suggestions as definitive – they are nothing more than tactics we have found to be effective. While it might seem obvious, the most important thing is to gauge the temper of your group, and suggest activities accordingly. It might make sense to start off with informational activities, like tabling and petitioning. Or if your group is gung-ho, you might try a supermarket demo. Here are some ideas:

Tabling:

- Setting up a table with information and petitions outside of your local food store, or farmer's market allows you to both educate your community and acquire contact information of potential supporters/group members. Choosing a good location is important. Community festivals are ideal! We have found that people are more receptive when they've got food on the mind! But any public place will do. In some cases, you may have to get permission beforehand, so plan accordingly.
- When tabling it is important to have an easy action available for them to take. For example, signing preprinted letters, postcards or petitions. If you are collecting petitions, have an e-mail column for people who want to get more involved. This way you get a signature for your cause of the moment and a contact for future actions.
- Informational materials may consist of fact sheets, such as those in this tool kit. Others may be obtained off the web or sent to you from GE Food Alert or other organizations. Having information is important! Even if people are unwilling to sign a petition or letter, you can always offer them information. People really appreciate this because it shows that you respect their need to make up their own mind on the issue.
- Create an Eye-catcher. You will get a lot more traffic if you have a colorful, eye-catching display, poster, logo with your group's name – anything that incites interest. We have often used a 4 x 2 foot poster of the fish-strawberry. Costumes are also great!

Door Knocking:

Door knocking or canvassing means simply going door-to-door to tell people about your group and your issue. This is a particularly good tactic if your issue affects a certain neighborhood.

Remember to have some basic information with you to distribute, such as fact sheets, recent news articles or letters of endorsement from community leaders. Take along a clipboard with sign-up sheets and petitions. Again a petition is a good excuse for knocking on someone's door.

Door knocking can be tough but important duty.

Phone Calling:

This is where petitions filled with names and numbers can be useful. It is important to have a specific goal for the phone call, for example getting a commitment to attend a meeting. Reintroduce yourself, remind the person of the problem and solution and ask him or her to get involved. Outline talking points for volunteers who may be helping to make phone calls.

Holding a Public Meeting:

A public meeting can be a useful community education tool. Choose an accessible and well-known venue, such as a local school, community center or public library. Select a time that will allow for the kind of attendance you would like. Make sure that someone from your organization outlines clearly your goals and objectives and invites others to join

the effort. Develop an agenda and then stick to it, working to assure that you and any speakers you recruit can and will stay within your allotted timeframes.

In preparing for a public meeting, do your homework and put relevant information into fact sheets to distribute. Put up posters and distribute leaflets advertising the meeting in advance.

Advertise in the local newspaper, if possible. If you want press coverage, make sure the news media knows where and when the meeting will be and what issues will be raised. Serve drinks and snacks, if possible. Choose an individual to run the meeting who will be adept at keeping things on schedule and dealing graciously and effectively with any disruptive or off-point comments.

Organize a Public Event or Demonstration:

Your group may choose to hold a variety of special events, to grab attention, energize your supporters, recruit new activists, raise money or simply have fun. Creative props or costumes help to illustrate your point and attract the media. For example citizens and FoE members staged symbolic food dumps at Safeway Supermarkets in Boston, Baltimore, Washington DC, San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Sarasota. They demanded that the chain go "GE Free" in its store brand of products. The success of this demonstration is rooted in its ability to make a serious point by appealing to the public's sense of humor. Protestors achieved this with costumes such as the Gene Beast in order to facilitate a "Frankenfoods" theme. For a copy of the symbolic food dump guidelines to organize an event in your area, contact Simon Harris with the Organic Consumer's Association at 510-525-7054.

Other ideas: You can sponsor public debates or organize bike races or you might plan a major Earth Day event. The options are limited only by your imagination and resources. Remember, however, whether your event is a demonstration or a celebration, preparations can never be too thorough or too organized. Some things to remember for any type of special event include:

- ✓ Sign-in lists, pens, paper and pencils
- ✓ Name tags for organizers and volunteers;
- ✓ A first-aid kit and a copy of your permit to hold the event;
- ✓ Literature for your sign-in table, such as background information, fact sheets, membership applications, a donations box;
- ✓ A media table with press releases and other information;
- ✓ Signs, banners, props, a podium.

For guidelines on conducting a symbolic food dump at your local supermarket, The preparations for a special event are generally calmer, if not easier, if you leave plenty of lead-time to make location arrangements, recruit helpers, prepare materials and advertise. Often, however, the timeline will be dictated by events that run on a time schedule set by someone else. But even when time is tight, you can accomplish a lot.

Source: www.foe.org

Consider the case of activists fighting to save an area known as Children's Island Washington, D.C.

Advocates for the protection of Children's Island, a 45-acre tree-covered site located in the middle of the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C, learned on a Thursday in October that a hearing would be held by the City Council the following Monday on emergency legislation affecting the island. The legislation would have granted a 99-year lease to developers proposing to build a theme park on the island, thereby ending the prospect of preserving the site in its natural condition for recreation and education.

That Thursday afternoon Friends of the Earth (FoE) and the Sierra Club New Columbia Chapter decided to hold a press conference prior to the Monday hearing to pressure city council members to vote no on the legislation. Local civic activists were telephoned to see if they could speak at the press event. Sympathetic council members were also invited to speak. With speakers arranged, FoE and the Sierra Club issued a media advisory late Thursday afternoon announcing the event.

On Friday and over the weekend, several community groups in the area recruited members to attend the hearing and the press conference. Earth Conservation Corps, a conservation service group dedicated to Anacostia River protection, arranged for bus transportation to take community members to the hearing and recruited more people.

On Sunday, the Sierra Club wrote a press release to tell the citizens' side of the story. It included quotations from a community leader as well as a quotation from the local Sierra Club leader. Using a press contact list, the press release was sent by fax to local TV, radio and newspapers early Monday morning. The release provided a chance for advocates to think through exactly what they wanted to say at the conference to avoid leaving out essential information that might not get through in a live interview on Monday.

A staff member at Friends of the Earth made follow-up phone calls to TV, radio and newspaper assignment editors on Monday morning prior to the conference and re-sent the press release to those who had not seen it. With reasonable assurance of a large turnout, she provided additional information that there would be a rally of 35-40 people as well as a press conference. This would attract the attention of the TV stations with the prospect of additional images, motion and sound.

Over 35 people, primarily from local, affected communities attended the rally and hearing. A FoE staff member led a 15-minute rally with chants to provide visuals and sound for the three TV crews present. A public radio reporter attended along with the station's D.C. political commentator. Reporters from the Washington Post and the NW Current, a local newspaper, were present and the Washington Times later covered the story by working from the press release.

On a one-vote margin, the Council granted the 99-year lease. The activist demonstrations, however, raised the profile of the issue and garnered the attention of the authorities overseeing the City's financial situation. The City's Control Board investigated improprieties in the contract and overturned the decision. Children's Island today remains undisturbed.

Campaign Strategy Chart!!!

The following Strategy Chart outlines important questions to consider when choosing to embark on a campaign. You may want to consider them as an individual or present the categories to your group and have them fill in the blanks together.

Source: www.foe.org

Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy. Be specific. List all the possibilities.

GOALS	RESOURCES	ALLIES/OPPONENTS	TARGETS	TACTICS
<p>1. List the long-term objectives of your campaign.</p> <p>2. State the immediate goals for the issue campaign. What constitutes victory?</p> <p><i>How will the campaign:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win concrete improvements in people's lives? • Give people a sense of their own power? • Alter the relations of power? <p>3. What short term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?</p>	<p>1. List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: money, number of staff, facilities, reputation, canvass, etc.</p> <p>What is the budget, including in-kind contributions, for this campaign?</p> <p>2. List the specific ways in which you want your organization to be strengthened by this campaign. Fill in numbers for each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand leadership group. • Increase experience of existing leadership. • Build membership base. • Expand into new constituencies. • Raise more money. <p>3. List the internal problems that have to be considered if the campaign is to succeed.</p>	<p>1. Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose problem is it? • What do they gain if they win? • What risks are they taking? • What power do they have over the target? • Into what groups are they organized? <p>2. Who are your opponents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will your victory cost them? • What will they do/spend to oppose you? • How strong are they? 	<p>1. Primary Targets A target is always a person. It is never an institution or elected body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? <p>2. Secondary Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has the power over the people with the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? 	<p>1. For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt.</p> <p>Tactics must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In context • Flexible and creative • Directed at a specific target • Make sense to the membership • Be backed up by a specific form of power. <p>Tactics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media events • Actions for information and demands • Public hearings • Strikes • Voter registration and voter education • Law suits • Accountability sessions • Elections • Negotiations

Source: Midwest Academy, 225 West Ohio, Suite 250, Chicago, IL 60610

Sample Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

GOALS	RESOURCES	ALLIES/OPPONENTS	TARGETS	TACTICS
<p><u>Short-Term (1-3 months)</u></p> <p>Measure of success</p> <p><u>Intermediate-Term (3 months- 1 year)</u></p> <p><u>Long-Term (1-5 years)</u></p>	<p><u>Short-Term (1-3 months)</u></p> <p><u>Intermediate-Term (3 months- 1 year)</u></p> <p><u>Long-Term (1-5 years)</u></p> <p><u>Strengths & Weaknesses</u></p>	<p><u>ALLIES:</u></p> <p><i>GRASSROOTS/NATIONAL NGOS:</i></p> <p><i>AGENCY:</i></p> <p><i>LEGISLATIVE:</i></p> <p><i>INDUSTRY:</i></p> <p><u>OPPONENTS:</u></p> <p><i>GRASSROOTS/NATIONAL NGOS:</i></p> <p><i>AGENCY:</i></p> <p><i>LEGISLATIVE:</i></p> <p><i>INDUSTRY:</i></p>	<p><i>AGENCY:</i></p> <p><i>LEGISLATIVE:</i></p> <p><i>CORPORATE:</i></p>	

Source: Midwest Academy, 225 West Ohio, Suite 250, Chicago, IL 60610

Media Coverage:

Media events can be used to dramatize an issue, announce that a group is working on it or put pressure on an elected or appointed official. Events include rallies, among other things, demonstrations, vigils, press conferences and press briefings. Representatives from the media may also be invited to cover an action."

If you are holding a demonstration, have clear signs which broadcast your message to your target and passers-by and, hopefully, on the evening news. Chanting or "call and response" is a good idea if you are hoping to get radio coverage, as the radio obviously cannot show visual shots.

There are many things to remember as you organize a media event. First, be aware of what the media is interested in. Try using humor or gimmicks: If they are suitable, they can lend interest to your story.

In addition to preparing your props and stunts, anticipate potential questions that you will get from reporters. Responses to these questions should be short, clear statements that accurately represent the position of your organization and include quotable lines. If you cannot answer a reporter's questions at your event, it is okay to say, "I don't know" or "Our organization has not taken a position on that issue."

If possible, have a press table at your event and ask reporters to sign in. Make sure to add the names and addresses to your media list. Hand out press kits as well. Distribute a list of all spokespersons and their affiliation, so that reporters have the correctly-spelled names and contact information available for their use.

Press Conferences

A press conference is a media event that frequently relies primarily upon "talking heads." At a press conference, designated speakers will directly address an audience of TV cameras, microphones and print reporters about an issue. Press conferences usually center on big news or a timely event.

To show that a campaign is universal in its goals, try to have a range of people speaking, such as representatives of your group, business owners, community residents, religious leaders, children and elected officials, for example.

Remember that all the rules about having good visuals apply at a press conference. It helps if people in the background are holding colorful signs or if there is a sign on the podium from which the speakers are addressing the crowd.

Try to use a room or location that you can "fill." Don't let an expansive scene make your turnout look smaller than you would like. Another option is to hold a press briefing, a less formal and often smaller scale meeting with reporters for purposes of explaining an issue. You may actually choose to hold a briefing before the release of a report or prior to a hearing or other event. This allows reporters to cover the story with a fuller understanding of the issue and the aid of additional background information.

Source: www.foe.org Beginner's Guide to Organizing

Writing a News Advisory

To alert the media of a big upcoming event, send out a news advisory seven days prior to the event. You can either send it directly to a reporter you know is interested, or you can send it to the assignment editor who will make sure that it is on the paper's or station's weekly planner. The news advisory should include all the Ws. What is going to happen? When and where will it happen? Why is it happening? Who will be involved? At the top, write "News Advisory," come up with a catchy title, and make sure to include the name and phone number of a contact person or two. Telephone all the reporters and assignment editors on your press list one to two days before the event to remind them and to provide any additional information they might need.

Writing a News Release

Send out a news release to the media when you have new information that you wish to publicize. This includes a new report that your group has released or an event that you have recently held. Issue the release on your group's letterhead. If you don't have printed stationary, simply place your group name or the names of your group and your coalition partners prominently on the page. At the top, put "For Immediate Release" and the date. If you wish to send out a news release prior to the event or action about which you are writing and therefore do not want it immediately released, write "Embargoed until appropriate time and date." Be aware, that editors do not always honor the embargo. Be sure to include the name and phone number of a contact person or two.

Create a strong headline to interest an editor, and write a first sentence containing the most important fact in your story. Put the most important information toward the beginning or "top" of the release. Make sure that the rest of the release covers who is involved, what has happened or will happen, and where, when, and why it happened. Include two to three quotations from a spokesperson, which can be used in a news story. The release should be one to two pages double-spaced.

For News Advisory and Press Release Samples: <http://www.foe.org/ptp/guide/organize/media3.html>

Letters to the Editor

Write a letter to the editor and send it to all the print media in your area, including daily papers, weekly papers, neighborhood papers, college papers and newsletters. Letters to the editor should be short (approximately 200 words) and to the point, such as the following:

To the Editor:

Last year over 70 million acres of genetically engineered (GE) crops were grown in the United States. I am deeply concerned with the way these ingredients have been sneaked into the food on my grocery store shelves without proper safety testing. Has the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fallen asleep at the wheel? Or have the special interest groups pressured them to look the other way?

Upwards of two-thirds of all processed food on store shelves contains genetically engineered ingredients yet the FDA does not require safety testing of these foods. American food companies such as Kellogg's and Campbell's have agreed to not use GE ingredients in their European products but still do so in this country. Over 80% of Americans want these foods labeled, so they can avoid them. Food companies should respect consumers' wishes and remove genetically engineered ingredients from their products until they have been safety tested and labeled for consumer health, just like any other food additive. The British Medical Association has called for a ban of genetically engineered food ingredients until further research into potential health and environmental impacts is conducted. Why then are American consumers being used as guinea pigs in Kraft's and Campbell's science experiments?

Sincerely,

Source: www.foe.org and www.purefood.org

In the Government:

Step 1: Know who your representative and senators are:

Visit: http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW_by_USA_Map.htm
http://www.senate.gov/contacting/index_by_state.cfm

Step 2: Fill Up Your Lawmaker's Mail Box

A letter to an elected official is a powerful tool for community activists. It informs a representative of constituent concerns and lets a legislator know what actions he or she can take to address these concerns. While legislators might not read all letters personally, their assistants will read them and will pass on what constituents are saying.

Many offices will keep a count of letters pro and con on different issues. Sometimes a particularly compelling letter from a constituent will be quoted in a hearing or debate or carried to a meeting on an issue.

Furthermore, because relatively few people actually write letters, a few letters - or sometimes even a single letter - can have a big effect. Lawmakers understand that those who take the time to express their views on paper care deeply about issues and are likely to keep tabs on how the legislator acts on the points they have raised. Each letter is often assumed to represent the view of dozens or even hundreds of others. According to one member of Congress, there is a priority in "ranking" the impact of Congressional mail: Personal letters carry the greatest weight; form or standard letters bring slightly less influence; and petitions follow on that hierarchy.

General Tips:

Be brief - Limit your letter to one typed or hand written page, if possible. Attach a news clip or concise fact sheet, if appropriate.

Be specific - Focus on a single issue. If you are writing to a member of Congress or your state legislature about a specific bill, try to include the bill number or a clear description of the issue.

Be personal - Use your own words to express your concern. Explain how the issue affects you and your community.

Be informative - If you have expertise or specific knowledge, share it. If possible, try to provide information that the recipient doesn't already have.

Be informed - Show your familiarity with the subject and, if possible, with your legislator's voting record.

Be constructive - Don't just criticize. Give advice on how to change things for the better. Compliment the person to whom you are writing on positive actions they have taken in the past.

Be accurate - Check your facts. One inaccurate statement can undermine your whole letter.

Be selective - Only send your letter to the most appropriate people. In general, when writing to members of Congress, stick to your own representatives, because you will have much greater influence with them.

Request a reply. And include your return address and phone number.

Source: www.foe.org

Labeling Legislation: The Genetically Engineered Food Right to Know Act

This bill was introduced to the 106th Congress by Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich and then in the Senate, by California Senator Barbara Boxer. Look for updated legislation in mid- September 2001.

Summary: Food that contains or is produced with GE material would have to be labeled. Genetically engineered material is material derived from a GE organism. A genetically engineered organism is defined here as an organism that has been altered at the molecular or cellular level by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes. For example, foods containing genetically modified soy and genetically modified corn would have to be labeled. Plant varieties developed through traditional processes, such as crossbreeding, are not considered to be GE and would not have to be labeled.

If the organism from which the food is derived has been injected or otherwise treated with a genetically engineered (GE) material or the animal from which the food is derived has been fed GE material, then the food is considered to have been produced with GE material. For example, foods that contain milk from a cow injected with GE hormones would have to be labeled.

For more information see: <http://www.foe.org/safefood/boxer-s2080.htm>

For a list of co-sponsors see: <http://www.foe.org/safefood/cosponsorsgefoodact.htm>

Testing Legislation: The Genetically Engineered Food Safety Act

This bill was introduced to the 106th Congress by Senator Daniel Moynihan and by Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich. Look for updated legislation coming out in mid-September 2001.

Summary: The Federal Government has a duty to ensure that genetically engineered foods (GEFs) are safe to eat. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) currently requires rigorous pre-market review for pharmaceutical drugs, biological products, and medical devices introduced in the U.S. market. For GEFs, however, FDA only asks the industry to submit safety data voluntarily. Even if industry fully complies, our concern is that a conflict of interest exists when an industry determines its own level of safety review for products it wants to promote.

This bill would simply give FDA discretion to conduct its own safety testing of new GEFs and requires that certain factors are examined. GEFs on the market today will remain on the market as long as FDA also reviews these products for health safety. Much like the current practice, funding for these tests will come primarily from industry. A fee system will be developed that is modeled after FDA's current program for reviewing pharmaceuticals and supplemented by Federal funding.

To read the bill see: <http://www.thecampaign.org/S2315.htm>

For state level legislation: www.foe.org

Source: www.thecampaign.org

Share Resources, Experience, and Knowledge with other Biotech Activists Brought Together by GEAN, the Genetic Engineering Action Network

Here are some commonly asked questions answered by Jessica Hayes, the National Coordinator of GEAN:

Q: What is GEAN?

A: A national network to support and further the work of those organizations and individuals working to address the risks to the environment, biodiversity and human health, as well as the socioeconomic and ethical consequences of genetic engineering. With over 100 different organizations working on the many issues related to genetic engineering, we are able to act as an umbrella for dialogue. We also offer coaching in areas such as meeting and event organization, funding, and skill building.

Q: How can I affiliate with GEAN?

A: An individual or organization can affiliate with GEAN at any time as long as they support our mission and our four main principles.

GEAN's four Core Principles

- Prior informed choice is essential to a democratic and accountable food system. Therefore, the mandatory, clear, accurate, complete labeling of all products, whether foreign or domestic, derived from, processed with, produced by, containing or consisting of GE organisms should be required.
- We need a publicly enforced and fully transparent government system to assess the socioeconomic, environmental and human health impacts of genetic engineering that conforms to rigorous scientific standards, requires a demonstration of a reasonable certainty of no harm, shifts the burden of proof and cost to the manufacturer and permanently codifies the Precautionary Principle.
- We must protect family farmers, workers, consumers and the environment by ending all monopoly practices of corporate agribusiness by enforcing anti-trust and market concentration laws, banning patents of seeds, plants, animals, and terminator type technologies, and renewing public interest agricultural research.
- Any entity, excluding family farmers, engaging in research, development or manufacturing of genetically engineered or modified products must assume all liability for harm to health and the environment including, but not limited to: the transfer of GE traits, transgenic drift, destruction of wildlife and habitat and the short and long term effects on human health and the environment.

Q: What is a typical GEAN affiliate's meeting like?

A: GEAN meetings vary. Each group is different. A group may start out with only 2 or 3 individuals. The small groups I've seen have been capable of amazing amounts of work. Often it is quite effective to start a group with a few dedicated individuals, and let their work inspire the dedication of others. Depending on your goals, you may want to emphasize recruitment right away. With a big group it is often helpful to divide up into smaller working groups to allow people to focus on specific areas they are interested in. For example you may have a team for state policy, another for media and one for public education etc.

The most effective meetings take place when the group's leader has done enough research so that they have a deep understanding and confidence regarding the science and policy related to these issues. Then an agenda for the meeting should be set. Though the first meetings may be more of a

brainstorming session in which allies, opponents, goals, and strategies are mapped out, it is helpful to have someone facilitate the direction. You may pick a single topic or a number of possibilities with which to guide the group's focus. Examples of issues are agriculture and food, biotechnological warfare, human genetics or genetic discrimination. Different approaches to each issue may also be offered. A group may be inclined to use direct lobbying while another prefers to convey their message through theater. It is best to go with the group's interest, with enthusiasm you are likely to be more productive.

Depending on the group, meetings may also consist of skills building workshops.

Q: Where do you do outreach?

A: Public places where people share similar interests and goals. For example, it is common and effective to distribute flyers outside of a local co-op.

Q: How are decisions within a group made?

A: Initiating a group discussion on the decision making process should be done right away. A commitment to a prescribed decision making routine can be difficult to make, but is empowering once achieved and will allow greater efficiency. Ask questions: does the group want 100% consensus, or is it willing to settle for a 99% agreement? What does it do if 1% disagrees? Should a majority system be used? Decide if that majority consists of 51% or a 2/3 vote. This process needs to be settled before issues are introduced.

Q: How often do groups meet?

A: It is common to have bimonthly or monthly meetings. However if you are organizing an event, weekly meetings may be prudent.

Q: How do affiliates raise money:

A: We recommend application for grants, or asking for donations from individuals or organizations. Some groups like to canvas, though that is often more of a challenge.

Q: What are examples of successful projects or events?

A: GEAN Wise in Chicago recently did two very creative and media savvy actions. They staged a funeral and eulogy reading outside of a biotech convention. Then at "Biodevastation" they held a two-day teach in with a march and rally to counter the biotech industry.

Q: What kinds of obstacles to success are encountered?

A: Getting a group to know and trust each other is not always easy, but crucial to success. Also, if a group is not committed to consensus, there is usually increased frustration and conflict. Often, activists suffer from burn out. In order for the group to be sustainable it should take the actions that members are most energized by. Some may be tired of supermarket petitions while excited about the prospect of lobbying, or talking to farmers.

Q: What activity was the most fun?

A: We've had folks go into markets with stickers that say, "Warning: this product contains genetically engineered ingredients, which may impose risks on your health and environment." As they walked down the aisles, they labeled the foods that are likely to contain GE ingredients. With the media covering the event it was a lot of fun. It is important before such an action is taken that all participants know your state laws and any risks they may be taking. Stickers that can peel off are safer.

Funding your Campaign

Develop a Budget:

- First find out the total amount you need, by drafting a fundraising plan. A fund raising plan allows you to itemize and record, rather than estimate, the amount of each fundraising cost. The plan should also list all contributors, identifying the amount each one donated or could donate.
- Contributions minus fundraising costs give you total revenue. This figure allows you to more efficiently map out your expenses according to your budget. Again, when calculating expenses, it is important to itemize costs.
- If you find yourself exceeding your budget then you will get an idea of how much more money you need to raise. Or you may choose to focus on narrowing down your expenses. Ask yourself, whether the expenditure is really necessary, determine exactly which goal it furthers and do your homework to find out if there is a cheaper way of achieving the same goal.
- It is helpful to allow yourself a contingency fund of 5-10% of the total fundraising goal in case unplanned expenditures arise.

How to Raise Money:

- Think about individuals or organizations that have a strong interest in the success of your campaign. Financial support could come from family members, friends, and colleagues as well as organizations, community leaders, and politicians.
- Make sure the person knows that they are making a worthwhile investment. Offer informational materials on goals, plans for achievement, and any progress already made.
- It is best to ask for a specified amount of money. Estimate how much the individual or organization may be able to contribute. In general, it is a good idea to aim too high, for example, if you ask for \$100 they might give you \$75, but if instead you ask for \$75, it isn't likely that they'll offer \$100.
- With large donations it is worthwhile to express gratitude in either a personal letter and/or by public acknowledgment.

Tracking the Money:

If you are with a volunteer group, see if you can find an accountant or book keeper to volunteer to keep track of your funds.

Different Kinds of Money:

If your group decides to operate as a non-profit or it is housed as a project of a non-profit, it is important to keep track of the type of money you are receiving, which may be "non-tax deductible," "tax-deductible," or "electioneering." For further resources and guidance in funding your organization see: www.fdncenter.org, www.progressivepubs.com or www.guidestar.com.

Source: The Sierra Club's "Grass Roots Organizing Training Manual"

Resources:

GE Food Alert Coalition Members:

- GE Food Alert www.gefoodalert.org
- The Center for Food Safety (CFS) www.centerforfoodsafety.org
- Friends of the Earth (FoE) www.foe.org
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) www.iatp.org
- National Environmental Trust (NET) www.environet.org
- Organic Consumer's Association (OCA) www.purefood.org
- Pesticide Action Network, North America (PANNA) www.panna.org
- The State PIRG's - The State Public Interest Research Groups (see your local chapter) www.pirg.org

Other Organizations Working for Safer Food:

- Food First www.foodfirst.org
- Greenpeace www.greenpeace.org/
- The Campaign www.thecampaign.org
- Third World Network www.twinside.org.sg/
- Union of Concerned Scientists www.ucsus.org/index.html
- Genetic Engineering Activist Network

Campus Support:

- Free the Planet www.freetheplanet.org
- Ecopledge www.ecopledge.com
- The Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) www.uspirg.org
- The Sierra Club www.sierraclub.org
- The Organic Consumer's Association www.purefood.org

Great Web Sites to help your Campaign Funding:

- The Foundation Center www.fdncenter.org
- Progressive Pubs www.progressivepubs.com
- Guide Star www.guidestar.com

GE Food Alert Tutorial: <http://www.panna.org/panna/resources/geTutorial.html>

Recommended Reading:

- ***The Biotech Century* by Jeremy Rifkin.** This book offers an easy to read and engaging overview of the scientific and ethical controversies of biotechnology.
- ***Against the Grain: Biotechnology and the Corporate Take over of your Food* by Mark Lappé, Ph.D. and Britt Bailey.** This book takes a close look at the consequences, the regulations and the promoters of transgenic foods.
- ***Genetically Engineered Food: a self-defense Guide for Consumers* by Ronnie Cummins & Ben Lilliston.** This guide offers resources to help you reclaim and exercise your freedom to choose healthy and safe, non-GMO foods for yourself and community.
- ***Genetic Engineering, Food and our Environment* by Luke Anderson.** This primer book is easy to read, written for non-science types.

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² British Medical Association press release May 18, 1999

ⁱⁱⁱ Raphals, P. 1990. “Does Medical Mystery Threaten Biotech?” *Science*, 249, 619, 1990.

^{iv} Chevre et al, 1998. “Characterisation of Backcross Generations Obtained Under Field Conditions from Oilseed Rape Wild Radish F-1 Interspecific Hybrids: An Assessment

^v Thompson, C.E. et al, 1999 “Regional patterns of gene flow and its consequences for GM oilseed rape” in *Gene Flow and Agriculture: Relevance for Transgenic crops*; British Crop Protection Council Symposium Proceedings No. 72. Ed. P.J.W. Lutman

^{vi} Losey, J.E. et al, 1999 “Transgenic Pollen Harms Monarch Larvae” *Nature*, 399: 214, May 20, 1999

^{vii} Saxena, D., Flores, S. & Stotzky, G. 1999 “Transgenic Plants: Insecticidal Toxin in Root Exudates from Bt Corn” *Nature*, 402: 480

^{viii} Hillbeck, A. et al, 1998 “Effects of Transgenic *Bacillus thuringiensis* corn-fed prey on mortality and development time of immature *Chrysoperla carnea*,” *Environmental Entomology* Vol 27 (2): 480-487.

^{ix} Tabashnik, B.E. et al 2000 “Resistance to Bt Toxins” *Science* 7/1/2000, p.287

^x Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 1999. *ISAAA Briefs* No.12: Preview. ISAAA: Ithaca, NY.

^{xi} Anthan, George. “Genetic Changes Affect More Than Yield.” *Des Moines Register*. June 18, 2000.

^{xii} Altieri, Miguel and Peter Rosset. “Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology will Not Ensure Food Security, Protect the Environment and Reduce Poverty in the Developing World.” *AgBioForum*. Summer/Fall 1999.

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