

RoundupReady toxic soy 'responsible'?

What is RoundupReady soy?

In South America vast areas of soy are being cultivated to serve as fodder for intensive meat production in Europe and China. Most soy is 'RoundupReady', genetically manipulated to be resistant to the herbicide Roundup. Seeds and pesticide both come from multinational Monsanto. Roundup basically kills all plants, except the resistant soy. Spraying is done with tractors or small airplanes. Locals get spray-poisoned over and over. This leads to acute and chronic health problems. Children are especially vulnerable. Food stuffs on adjacent fields are dying, animals are poisoned to death when they drink contaminated water. Complete communities and regions are being structurally poisoned. Weeds become resistant, which leads to increased herbicide use. Other pesticides are being added in the process. The soy monocultures strongly decrease soil fertility. This way of producing can never be sustainable or responsible.

What is the Round Table on Responsible Soy?

The RoundTable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) was established in 2005. The goal is a new label for 'responsible' soy. Taking part in the RTRS are multinationals such as Ahold (supermarkets), Cargill (grain traders) and Monsanto (biotech), and a few NGOs like Solidaridad and the World Wildlife Fund. The RTRS is not in the interest of small farmers and indigenous communities, who are the prime victims of the soy monocultures. For that reason the RoundTable received a lot of criticism from the very start. The RTRS gives an undeserved green lining to the soy industry and receives Dutch development money to do so.

Criticism is growing

The campaign 'stop toxic soy' points to the damaging effects of soy cultivation. Almost 3000 people signed a call to the World Wildlife Fund and Solidaridad to stop supporting a 'responsible' label for toxic soy. Our action in front of the WWF office in the Netherlands drew quite some attention. During a debate in the Dutch

Parliament a lot of criticism was heard. Nobody believes this soy is really 'responsible'. Still Dutch development money is being spent on this process. Through our new action alert you can urge the Dutch government to withdraw its financial support. See <http://www.toxicsoy.org/toxicsoy/Action/action.html>



Panda dances with Monsanto. Action at the Dutch WWF head office in Zeist, protesting against the support for genetically manipulated toxic soy. See article on page 2.

Criticism on the Round Table on Responsible Soy

More than 90 organisations have spoken out (again) in a statement against the RTRS. Subscribers include the international networks Global Forest Coalition, Friends of the Earth and Via Campesina, which links millions of small farmers around the globe. These are the main arguments:

- The RTRS allows

- expansion of soy plantations
- The RTRS declares GM RoundupReady soy 'responsible'.
- The RTRS criteria are extremely weak, and don't even exclude more deforestation.

Almost 3000 people urged Solidaridad and WWF by

email to get out of the RTRS. The organisations have yet to respond positively to this call. According to the WWF, a 'responsible' label for RoundupReady soy doesn't mean that they support this kind of soy. Criticism is growing, also within the organisations, for example from WWF Germany and France.

Panda dances with Monsanto

On May 19th 2009 the Dutch WWF head office in Zeist (The Netherlands) was alarmed by the sound of drumming. A group of people in white suits, a lifelike panda and a Monsanto circus director entered the office. While the hall was being sprayed with 'Roundup' (in this case just plain water) the poor WWF Panda had to dance. "Give paw," Monsanto demanded, by way of signing the declaration of 'responsible soy'. But like a real tough panda should, he refused to obey. The director of WWF Nether-



lands, Johan van de Gronden, engaged in a discussion with the visitors. He repeated the official line, but could not explain how WWF can be opposed to GM products and at the same time support a 'responsible' label for GM toxic soy.

An English-spoken video is available at <http://bit.ly/2qp5Vm> Article in The Ecologist <http://bit.ly/qQfBk>

The results of the RTRS conference

After five years of negotiations the RTRS members agreed late May 2009 to a set of 'principles and criteria'. These are now being tested for one year. The criteria are weak. 'Responsible' soy can be produced on land that was forest until June 2009. Even after that, deforestation is allowed for 'responsible' soy, except when it concerns a nature area 'of exceptional value'. The land can not be taken from 'local people'. But without official proof of property it is impossible to claim the right to land. Furthermore the criteria allow the heavily sprayed GM RoundupReady

soy to be labeled 'responsible'. The criteria are available from www.responsiblesoy.org

During the conference the Argentinian NGO FUNDAPAZ resigned, the only member with good connections with the farmers' movement. They didn't see the use of any further participation. APROSOJA also left, an organisation that represents a quarter of the total Brazilian soy production. Despite all the criticism Solidaridad and WWF have agreed to the criteria. Solidaridad is now even presiding the RoundTable.

Paraguay: deadly victims of spraying pesticides

In the Caazapá district in Paraguay twelve people from an indigenous Guarani community recently died from respiratory failures. Among them were three newborn children. Iván Allende, director of the Paraguayan Health Institute, blames the bad living conditions, but also points out that the infections deteriorated because of the poison. "At this moment no soy is being grown, but wheat. These communities have been exposed to pesticides over a long period of time." He reported that photos have been taken of recent spraying.



This poster has been distributed by the farmers' movement MAP (Movimiento Agrario Popular) throughout Paraguay to warn the population of the effects of spraying pesticides. In april this year a new platform has been set up which unites farmers and indigenous communities, the Coordinadora de Víctimas por Agrotóxicos (Association of Victims of Agricultural Poisons).

Dutch Parliament critical about RTRS

On Thursday September 10th 2009 the Dutch Permanent Parliament Committee on Agriculture discussed the outcomes of the Round Table with the Dutch Ministers Verburg and Koenders. The debate was requested by the Party for the Animals (PvdD). Toxicsoy.org pointed in a joint letter with the Global Forest Coalition to the international objections. We asked the MPs to critically test the results of the RTRS process. The PvdD, the Socialist Party (SP) and Green Left ventilated strong criticism. They mentioned "greenwash". According to the Christian Union the RTRS criteria should not become "a norm for sustainability". The liberals (VVD) dubbed the agreement "fragile". However, the social-

democrats, the liberals and the christian democrats CDA remained in favor of the Dutch support to the RTRS. The critics pointed to a lack of support by organisations and movements and to international statement by more than 90 organisations. The PvdD thinks that The Netherlands "should not support a panda logo that does not even prevent deforestation". According to Minister Verburg of Agriculture "all stakeholders" have been involved in the process (not true). She states that there are sustainable GM crops, but refused to answer the question whether she would label Roundup Ready soy 'responsible'. The SP pointed to the inherent unsustainability of soy monocultures, and to the fact

that GM crops are specifically designed for this type of large-scale agriculture. Minister Koenders of Development Cooperation supports the RTRS because international agreements between countries "take too long". He seems to forget that the RTRS has achieved nothing after five years of negotiating, and is a step backwards for real sustainability labels. The Dutch Parliament will talk more about soy, including during climate discussions. The biotech lobby, led by Monsanto, has been pleading for climate subsidies for years. Not ploughing the land for RoundupReady soy would in their eyes imply less CO₂ emissions from the soil. WWF seems to support this plea. The Parliament has been duly warned.

Genetic manipulation to feed the world?

Genetic manipulation is claimed to help fight starvation. However, this is not the reality. Shortage of food is not the main problem, unfair distribution is. GM crops don't bring more food, they do bring more poison and dependence. Of all GM crops in the world 75% is resistant to a herbicide such as Roundup. The other 25% are plants producing their own pesticide. Farmers become increasingly dependent on multinationals like Monsanto and Bayer, who own the seed patents.



The failure of large-scale agriculture

In 2008 the IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development) report was released, assigned for by the UN. 520 researchers contributed to this investigation of the role of technology in agriculture. Co-funder CropLife International, a federation of seed companies, withdrew because the researches were critical of the role of GMO crops. Hans Herren, co-director of the IAASTD: "If we look at reality, we see that the implementation of GMOs in agriculture has not solved a single problem. It hasn't been an answer to poverty, starvation, malnutrition, health problems or environmental degradation. [...] Also, GMOs stimulate a type of

agriculture with less genetic variation. This means an impoverishment and weakening of the agricultural model."

According to Herren the large-scale industrial agricultural model is out of date. "We have produced more and more food, but the number of starving people is still increasing. The Green Revolution has created more problems than it has solved: water scarcity, soil exhaustion, loss of biodiversity and global warming. Moreover we conclude that poverty is growing, especially in the area of agriculture, [...] and the inequality in agricultural trade is increasing as well!"

Thanks to: www.duurzaamnieuws.nl

Roundup more toxic than expected

Roundup: you will find it at any garden center and both city and railroad maintenance services use it to kill weeds. Apart from the active substance glyphosate Roundup also contains substances that make the plant absorb the poison. Exactly these substances appear to be very harmful. In the approval process of Roundup the total level of toxicity has not been reviewed, since the EU approves pesticides per separate substance. Furthermore, with the EU introduction of RoundupReady soy, the 'maximum residue limit' (the amount of what may

remain on a product) for glyphosate was raised by 200 times, from 0.1 mg/kg to 20 mg/kg. Monsanto states Roundup is 'environmentally friendly'. In 2007 the company was found guilty by a French court of disseminating misleading information. A representative was fined for wrongly calling Roundup "biologically degradable". Roundup is much more poisonous than the producers claim. Researchers of the University of Caen (France) observed in a recent study the dying of human cells, defects to the DNA and

obstruction of cell breathing. They concluded that the toxic effect can be increased by the combination of different substances. Not only Paraguay and Argentina have a Roundup problem. In the Netherlands the water company RIWA Maas states in her annual report 2008 that especially herbicides are regularly above the drinkwater limits in the Maas river. "Glyphosate is a well-known example. For this substance, representative for herbicide use, new legal restrictions have been implemented but -for now- without result."

Watch your food: what's not on the label

Food labels should tell if a product contains over 0.9% genetically manipulated organisms (GMOs). But most GMOs are being used as cattle feed. You won't find that on the packings of milk, cheese, eggs or meat. Members of European Parliament are now suggesting a change. Which of course outrages the cattle feed industry (especially branche association FEFAC, prominent member of the RTRS). Germany and France have already introduced a voluntary labeling system. According to FEFAC this would "confuse" the consumer. For the moment the only way to be sure you are eating GMO-free, is by getting organic products, or products from local producers who grow their own fodder.

RoundupReady maize allowed within the EU and Mexico?



Monsanto has requested permission to grow RoundupReady maize (NK603) within the EU and Mexico. Monsanto writes: "The use of NK603 plants allows the farmer to [...] take advantage of the favorable environmental and safety qualities of the active substance [of Roundup], glyphosate." In Spain

this kind of maize as been grown for some years and the GMO has spread by wind pollination to fields far away. Growing organic corn is hardly possible in Spain by now. Even the maize in the home country Mexico is in grave danger. Support the petition at <http://tinyurl.com/yjlu8fq>

Roundup should be banned.

You can make this work and tell people about the dangers. Ask your city council or the railroad company to stop using it.

Ask shop managers to stop selling it.

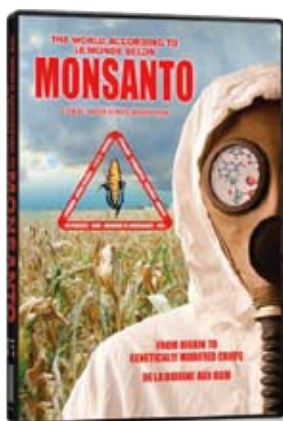
Mail us your experiences.

info@gifsoja.nl

The Monsanto agenda

Monsanto is a large chemical and biotech company from the USA. Profit comes first, the health of workers and local residents is of little interest. Infamous Monsanto products are the carcinogenic PCBs and Agent Orange. Nowadays Monsanto is mainly active in the field of seed patents. Anyone who buys seeds from the company, is also forced to buy the attached Roundup there. Monsanto has become the largest seed producer in the world and their goal is to dominate the food chain. Most soy, rapeseed and maize in North and South America is now Roundup Ready. Admission to grow in Europe is close. After that an even bigger market is looming: food for human consumption, such as rice, wheat and vegetables. This failed in 2004 after strong protests from consumers, wheat producers and Greenpeace. Since then the company has focussed on the acceptance of GM soy, maize and rapeseed. Thanks to the

RTRS. Meanwhile the company has strengthened its position by buying wheat seed company Westbroad LLC in July 2009. The vegetable market is being penetrated by the 2008 purchase of Dutch De Ruiter Seeds, a large producer of vegetable seeds. The company's grip on the world food production is growing year after year. Whether on purpose or as a side effect, WWF, Solidaridad and the Dutch government's support for the RTRS are of great value to Monsanto.



You can find a good overview of the company's activities in the documentary and the book "The World according to Monsanto" by Marie-Monique Robin.

<http://bit.ly/18AVKg>

The campaign against toxic soy

What we do

We campaign against so-called 'responsible' soy through newsletters, the websites www.gifsoja.nl and www.toxicsoy.org, informing media and politicians, and through petitions and action. Toxicsoy.org is supported by ASEED Europe and Corporate Europe Observatory. You can reach us at <info@gifsoja.nl> For more videos and background on soy: www.lasojamata.org



Protest tegen de tweede RTRS conferentie (Paraguay, 2006)
"Soja: Verantwoordelijk voor de dood van 30 boeren in 4 jaar tijd"

What can you do?

- Distribute this newsletter among friends, family, and in your community
- Link to our website on your website, hyves, facebook etc.
- Eat GMO-free and buy organic food.

IN SHORT

Stop GM rice permission

Greenpeace is campaigning against authorisation for Bayer's genetically manipulated rice LL62. The rice is resistant against glufosinate, a Bayer herbicide. This herbicide is so harmful that a recent European law proposal suggests to ban the substance as soon as the current permit expires. Please sign the petition at <http://bit.ly/FYG8>

Book German organisation on social effects of genetech

The EED, a protestant organisation, has published an interesting book called: "Genetic Engineering is not an Alternative to Sustainable Agriculture to Feed the World". The book contains many case studies, including the experiences with Bt-cotton in Maharashtra (India) and the contamination of indigenous maize in Mexico. The book concludes that gene technology so far "has not been effective, and poses a threat to other forms of agriculture, mainly agro-ecological approaches". Please find it at www.eed.de

X-Y fund supports campaign

Thanks to the Solidarity Fund X-Y for supporting some material costs of our campaign! See www.xminy.nl/

