



INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY
2105 FIRST AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404 USA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 10, 2004

Contact: Dennis Olson, 612-870-3412, dolson@iatp.org

Monsanto's Retreat on GE Wheat a Victory for Farmers

IATP Calls on Monsanto to Withdraw Application for USDA Approval

Minneapolis - The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) expressed cautious optimism about Monsanto's public announcement today that it would abandon research and development of GE wheat.

"If Monsanto is in fact abandoning research and development of its genetically engineered wheat, this would represent a major victory for North American wheat farmers who have followed the market principle that 'the customer is always right,'" said Dennis Olson, Director of the Institute's Trade and Agriculture Project. Olson noted that U.S. and Canadian wheat farmers have vigorously opposed Monsanto's proposed introduction of the world's first genetically engineered wheat variety primarily because a vast majority of their consumers worldwide have stated they don't want it. "North American farmers have demonstrated their respect for their customers by opposing GE wheat," he said.

Wheat farmers have also raised serious agronomic concerns such as the danger of creating "super weeds" that would develop immunity to the herbicide glyphosate. "In looking closely at GE wheat, many wheat farmers have concluded that it would complicate weed management, not simplify it as Monsanto has claimed," Olson said. Additionally, farmers have expressed worry that GE wheat introduction would further tighten Monsanto's monopoly control of seeds worldwide, and place unfair liability on individual farmers. "Monsanto's predatory prosecution of individual farmers for patent violations has gone a long way towards convincing farmers that they will face unfair liability exposure if GE wheat is introduced, even if they choose not to grow it themselves," Olson added.

Monsanto is currently going through the permit process with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to de-regulate genetically engineered Roundup Ready wheat.

Olson called on Monsanto to follow-up today's announcement by withdrawing applications for the commercial introduction of GE wheat, not only in North America, but in all other countries where it is seeking regulatory approval, such as South Africa and Japan. "Monsanto publicly committed to delaying introduction of GE wheat until it was simultaneously approved in the U.S., Canada and Japan, but then reneged on that commitment and pressured U.S. wheat growers to support a US-only introduction," Olson said. "Given its past backpedaling, Monsanto should clarify its true intentions to farmers and consumers worldwide that it is indeed acting in good faith when it claims to be abandoning the commercial introduction of GE wheat," he concluded.

IATP has been active in opposing the introduction of GE wheat. Read more background at: www.iatp.org.

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy promotes resilient family farms, rural communities and ecosystems around the world through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy.