

Green Mission News

July 2013 Green Mission News

What's in the News...

Via Campesina and the Fight for Seeds

"The U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Monsanto and its patented seeds last Monday by throwing out a case tirelessly petitioned for by organic farmers. ...

But Via Campesina, the global agrarian movement made up of more than 200 million peasants in 80 countries, is not ceding to big agriculture..." ([Article](#) by Salena Tramel)



(Photo: Tineke D'haese for Via Campesina)

External Article Links:

- When will governments learn that GE crops are uncontrollable?

www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/Blogs/makingwaves/when-will-governments-learn-that-ge-crops-are/blog/45372/

- Plastic SPI Resin Identification Code - Guide to Correct Use
Plastics get rid of the "chasing arrows"

www.plasticsindustry.org/AboutPlastics/content.cfm?ItemNumber=823

- Renewable Energy Global Status Report

www.ren21.net/Portals/0/documents/Resources/GSR/2013/GSR2013_lowres.pdf

- The Connection Between Food Waste and Zero Waste

thenonconsumeradvocate.com/2013/05/the-connection-between-food-waste-and-zero-waste/

- Municipal Solid Waste Generation, Recycling, and Disposal in the United States:
Facts and Figures for 2011 (released June 2013)

www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/MSWcharacterization_508_053113_fs.pdf

- See historic reference to 1976 report- Cradle to Cradle

www.product-life.org/en/cradle-to-cradle

- Worked Example of a Meme Map: The Organic Ag Meme

orgprints.org/15752/1/15752.pdf

- Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon

www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/inforeg/social_cost_of_carbon_for_ria_2013_update.pdf

- The Revolution is Going to Be Fought with the Hoe: Agriculture and Environment in New Mexico

otherworldsarepossible.org/revolution-going-be-fought-hoe-agriculture-and-environment-new-mexico

- GMO's and Packaging

<http://www.packworld.com>

- Bill McDonough and Waste Management Want to Kill Packaging Waste

www.triplepundit.com/2013/06/bill-mcdonough-waste-management-kill-packaging-waste/

- Dell promises waste-free packaging by 2020

www.wasterecyclingnews.com/article/20130621/NEWS03/130629982

- About the Closed loop economy/circular economy model/ principles of Cradle to Cradle.

www.emg-csr.com/blog/circular-economy/

- The Contribution of Organic Agriculture to Climate Change Mitigation

www.infoagro.net/programas/Ambiente/pages/mitigacion/casos/2.pdf

- How Grassroots Advocates Beat the Biotech and Food Lobbies

www.foodsafetynews.com/2013/06/how-grassroots-advocates-beat-the-biotech-and-food-lobbies/#.UbTdnK5pfi4

- A Sustainable Society is Possible: Will complexity kill us or save us?

www.naturalstep.ca/a-sustainable-society-is-possible-chad-parks-post-accelerate-reflections

- Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico: Progress towards the completion of an Integrated Assessment

Scientific investigations in the Gulf of Mexico have documented a large area of the Louisiana continental shelf with seasonally-depleted oxygen levels. Most aquatic species cannot survive at such low oxygen levels.

oceanservice.noaa.gov/products/pubs_hypox.html

- The Goodman Affair: Monsanto Targets the Heart of Science

independentsciencenews.org/science-media/the-goodman-affair-monsanto-targets-the-heart-of-science/

- Blumenauer helps push hemp over the hump

www.sustainablebusinessoregon.com/articles/2013/06/blumenauer-helps-push-hemp-over-the-hump.html?page=all

- Josh Fox Extended Interview **Pt. 1** (Gasland director, video)

In this exclusive, unedited interview, "Gasland Part II" director Josh Fox disputes the idea that natural gas is a boon for the environment. (06:39)

www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-june-26-2013/exclusive---josh-fox-extended-interview-pt--1

- Josh Fox Extended Interview **Pt. 2**

Josh Fox argues that government regulatory agencies are in the natural gas industry's pocket

(04:25)

www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-june-26-2013/exclusive---josh-fox-extended-interview-pt--2

- Josh Fox Extended Interview **Pt. 3**

Josh Fox warns of lobbying and PR solutions to technical and engineering environmental problems. (04:30)

www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-june-26-2013/exclusive---josh-fox-extended-interview-pt--3

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Full Length Article Below:

- Via Campesina and the Fight for Seeds

- Los Angeles to Become Largest City in U.S. to Ban Plastic Bags

- Study: You're In Trouble, Roundup

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Published on Saturday, June 15, 2013 www.commondreams.org/view/2013/06/15-6

Via Campesina and the Fight for Seeds

by [Salena Tramel](#)

The U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Monsanto and its patented seeds last Monday by throwing out a case tirelessly petitioned for by organic farmers. That decision dealt yet another blow to the small-scale agricultural community—it was only last month that the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the agricultural giant's "license agreement" yet again.



(Photo: Tineke D'haese for Via Campesina)

But Via Campesina, the global agrarian movement made up of more than 200 million peasants in 80 countries, is not ceding to big agriculture. This week, Via Campesina held its VI International Organizing Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, reaffirming its fundamental commitment to seed sovereignty.

With the Green Revolution came a promise to end hunger through so-called miracle seeds. Instead, it ushered in seed property rights, domination and even criminalization of small-scale farmers, and waves of transnational corporate control of agriculture. Under “Monsanto Laws,” more specifically known as UPOV 91, patents prohibit farm-saved seeds and peasant seeds for which multinational corporations have filed patents. UPOV 91 works hand-in-glove with the Plant Variety Protection Act that asserted heritage seeds counterfeit to standardized industrial varieties.

These policies, adopted by one country after another, routinely displace peasants in the Global South and wreak havoc on the environment. In the Global North, native seeds have nearly reached extinction while hybrid (and often chemical GMO) varieties take their place.

“After 30 to 40 years of the Green Revolution, we’ve lost our seeds,” said Guy Kastler, a small-scale farmer from France. Kastler explained that he and other agricultural activists from Europe traveled to Latin America, Asia, and Africa to find and learn about peasant seeds. Those learning exchanges led Via Campesina to launch its Seed Campaign in 2001, through which it advocates the recovery, protection, and preservation of peasant seeds in each of its geographic regions—with a specific focus on those hardest hit by corporate seed policy.

Chile—a laboratory for neoliberalism—has churned out some of the worst agricultural policies in Latin America. Francisca “Pancha” Rodriguez defied Pinochet’s unmerciful military regime, literally carrying indigenous seeds in the folds of her skirts across international borders where they could be safely stored while her husband fought on the revolutionary frontlines. Today Pancha plays an integral role in Via Campesina’s Seed Campaign through the National Association of Indigenous and Rural Women (ANAMURI). She has trained countless women at home and across the world. “Locally, we understood what would happen if people lost their seeds,” Pancha offered, “But this is not only our battle. It is a universal struggle that we are turning into a rural revolution.”

Chukki Nanjundaswamy, a farmer who is part of Karnataka State Farmers Association (KRRS), explained that when Green Revolution technology hit India in the ‘60s peasants lost seeds because they were told to use modified high-yield varieties. “At first the companies offered free packets, but then they started charging,” she said. “High-yield seeds don’t grow in the rain-fed regions where sixty percent of Indian farmers work.” Through KRRS and Via Campesina, Nanjundaswamy breeds natural seeds on her own farm, sets up community seed banks with local activists, and advocates Agroecology through zero-budget natural farming.

“Seeds are life,” Nelson Mudzingwa, a farmer from Zimbabwe, passionately explained. “Without seeds there is no food, and without food there is no life.” Nelson’s local grassroots movement, Zimbabwe Small Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFF), was only ratified as a Via Campesina member organization this week—but its advocacy around seeds has been more than a decade in the making. In fact, Nelson himself has been saving heirloom seeds ever since he can remember, and said that it is at the heart of agricultural tradition passed down from his forefathers. “On my farm, not even a single grain grows from outside my fence,” he proudly added.

One of the main events at Via Campesina’s gathering this week was an outdoor

Agroecology fair where farmers exchanged experience and practices. That learning opportunity closed with a ceremony in which farmers exchanged their indigenous seeds from five continents. Peasant activists throughout the movement, working on complex interrelated issues—from land grabs to climate change to migration—agree that it all starts with control of their seeds.

Salena Tramel is a journalist and international policy and development consultant.

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Published 06/18/2013 <http://www.wasterecyclingnews.com/article/20130618/NEWS08/130619935>

Los Angeles to Become Largest City in U.S. to Ban Plastic Bags

Waste & Recycling News

by: Kerri Jansen

The Los Angeles City Council on June 18 adopted an ordinance banning the use of plastic bags at grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores and some retailers in the city.

The decision follows a [May 2012 City Council vote](#) to phase out single-use plastic grocery bags. It has taken a year to complete an Environmental Impact Report required by the state. The City Council approved the EIR and adopted the ordinance and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa is expected to sign the measure.

Los Angeles would be the largest city in the U.S. to implement a single-use bag ban, bringing the number of California residents living in an area with a bag ban up to 13 million, said Mark Murray, executive director of [Californians Against Waste](#).

"In 2014, one-third of Californians are going to be living in a jurisdiction where single-use plastic grocery bags are banned," Murray told Waste & Recycling News. "Whether the state legislature decides to take that on or not, 13 million Californians will live in communities where there are no more plastic bags. That's more people that live in most states."

Only four states have more than 13 million people: California, Texas, New York and Florida.

Under the ordinance, large stores will be prohibited from distributing single-use plastic bags to customers starting Jan. 1, 2014. Infractions could result in fines of up to \$500. Plastic bags will be banned at smaller stores starting July 1, 2014.

Paper bags and thicker plastic bags will still be allowed. The ban does not affect restaurants, produce bags and food packaging.

"I think you can't ignore, the plastics industry can't ignore and other communities can't

ignore, that this is coming," Murray said.

A second and final reading of the bill is expected next week, when it will be sent to Villaraigosa.

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June 13, 2013, 12:48 PM blogs.wsj.com/brussels/2013/06/13/study-youre-in-trouble-roundup/

Study: You're In Trouble, Roundup

By Ashley Dalton

Europe may be skeptical of genetically modified crops — fearing they may contaminate traditional species and require more pesticides — but a new study shows that tests of urban Europeans' urine already spell M-O-N-S-A-N-T-O.

A network of environmental groups, Friends of the Earth International, [tested the urine of 182 European city dwellers, from 18 countries](#), and found traces of the potentially-dangerous herbicide glyphosate, commonly known as Roundup, in 44% of samples. The leading producer of this herbicide is [Monsanto Co.](#), a company whose name has become almost synonymous with the genetically modified organisms it produces.

"This weed killer is being widely overused," said Adrian Bebb, spokesperson for Friends of the Earth International. And that's even though hardly any genetically modified crops are grown in Europe. Doing so on a grand scale would increase the use of Roundup around eight-fold, according to Greenpeace.

Even without a lot of GMO, Roundup is already making the rounds in Europe. It's used for weed control in agriculture — especially on farms producing cereal crops, fruit orchards, olive groves and vineyards — and in public spaces, such as parks and railway lines.

Some scientists have linked the herbicide to birth defects, disruption of the human endocrine system, increased risk of cancer and miscarriage, according to the Friends of the Earth report. "If GMOs are allowed to be grown in Europe, then the use of Roundup will massively increase and we'll have even more contamination of people," said Mr. Bebb.

Other scientists, including those quoted by Monsanto, deny any health hazards associated with Roundup. "Under present and expected conditions of use, Roundup herbicide does not pose a health risk to humans," Monsanto said in a report.

GMOs have also been a hot topic amid discussions of a free trade deal between the EU and the U.S., with some European countries resisting allowing GMOs into their markets.

But Europe imports a large amount of GMO soy, which could be a potential source of the traces of Roundup in the urine of many Europeans, according to Mr. Bebb.

For the moment, European GMO critics seem to have won that debate, however, and [Monsanto reportedly stopped pushing for more GMOs to be authorized in the EU](#) — at least for now.