

Follow Up on Federal Pre-emption of Local GE Bans

In July, we asked you to oppose the inclusion in the federal Farm Bill of language that would overrule the county GE bans, as well as democratically enacted GE restrictions in several other states.

We are happy to report that your voices have been heard, and the pre-emption language was removed from the House version of the Farm Bill, which passed in August. The Senate is currently taking up its own version of the Farm Bill, and if we hear of any similar attempts by the biotech industry to take away local democratic rights, we will let you know! In the meantime, thank you for your involvement and vigilance!

**Take Action – Tell Schwarzenegger you want labels on cloned milk & meat
Action needed ASAP!**

A California bill (SB 63) requiring labeling of cloned milk and meat passed the Legislature and now on the desk of Governor Schwarzenegger for his signature.

An overwhelming majority of Americans believe that milk and meat from cloned animals should be labeled, according to a recent national poll conducted by Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*. The poll found that 89% want such labels and that 69% were concerned about eating milk or meat from cloned animals.

CFS report on food from clones, **Not Ready for Prime Time** (available at http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/AnimalCloning_PR3_21_07.cfm), reveals that most cloning studies considered by the FDA when making its decision found troubling abnormalities and defects in animal clones, many of which could pose food safety risks. The CFS report also reveals that swine clones are smaller and more sickly than pigs born naturally, and often die early from unexplained illnesses. The report outlines the frequent and severe deformities clones are afflicted with, and noted that FDA's review failed to adequately address animal welfare issues, entirely ignoring Americans' ethical and moral concerns about animal cloning.

SB 63 was introduced by Senator Carol Migden, and requires clear, prominent labeling indicating that food derives from an animal clone or its progeny on any such food for human consumption. It passed the state House on Sept. 10 and the Senate on Sept 12. It now goes to Governor Schwarzenegger who has until October 15 to sign or veto the bill.

Please send a simple letter or email to the office of Governor Schwarzenegger right away – if he is going to veto the bill, he could do it at any time, and he is undoubtedly being lobbied hard by the food industry and cloning proponents.

Email:

Log onto <http://gov.ca.gov/interact#email>. Select the Food & Ag issues" subject area, and then enter your message.

Phone:

916-445-2841

Suggested message:

I urge the Governor to sign SB 63 into law to protect our right to know what's in our food. Californians want to know whether the food they buy and eat is coming from cloned animals because they are concerned about this untried and untested technology. The Governor should sign this legislation to require food manufacturers to label food derived from cloned animals so consumers can avoid them if they choose to and so that the government can track any future negative health impacts.

GE Sugar Beet Heads for Market

A genetically engineered sugar beet resistant to Roundup herbicide and developed by Monsanto Corporation has been approved for commercialization by federal regulators and is expected to be marketed for the 2008 growing season. Sugar beets are a minor California crop produced on very few acres, but are grown widely in states such as North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wyoming.

A story as reported in the Bismark Tribune can be found at:

<http://www.bismarcktribune.com/articles/2007/08/22/news/state/138089.txt>.

Cusco, Peru Bans the GE Potato

In mid-July, the regional government of Cusco, Peru banned the GE potato in order to protect the genetic diversity of more than 4,000 native potato varieties that farmers have developed over generations. That area of Peru is a center of potato diversity, where potatoes have been cultivated for centuries and have important cultural, economic and nutritional significance. The decision forbids the sale, cultivation, use and transport of genetically modified potatoes as well as other native food crops.

Local farmers' organizations fear that genes from genetically modified, GM, potatoes could transfer into local varieties and alter their unique properties. The ban was a response to proposals from a network of local potato farming communities and Asociacion ANDES, an indigenous non-governmental organization based in Cusco.

The full story is available at <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jul2007/2007-07-19-01.asp>.

Scientific Foundation for GE Being Challenged

From <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/07/03/business/biotech.php>.

The \$73.5 billion global biotech business may soon have to grapple with a discovery that calls into question the scientific principles on which it was founded. Last month, a consortium of scientists published findings that challenge the traditional view of the way genes function. The exhaustive, four-year effort was organized by the United States National Human Genome Research Institute. The results, published in Nature, are the culmination of a \$42 million, five-year project called ENCODE (ENCyclopaedia Of DNA Elements) involving 80 different scientific teams in 11 countries.

To their surprise, researchers found that the human genome might not be a "tidy collection of independent genes" after all, with each sequence of DNA linked to a single function, like a predisposition to diabetes or heart disease. Instead, genes appear to operate in a complex network, and interact and overlap with one another and with other components in ways not yet fully understood.

According to the institute, these findings will challenge scientists "to rethink some long-held views about what genes are and what they do."