



Donald Letter

To mpoon@legco.gov.hk

20/05/2012 20:22

cc

bcc

Subject GMO (Control of Release) (Exemption) Notice

History:

 This message has been forwarded.

Dear Sir

I have been growing organic produce on my small farm in Mui Wo, Lantau, for some years now, and I am very disturbed to read about the GMO (Control of Release) (Exemption) Notice which is to be put before LegCo. Let me say that I am unequivocally opposed to all GMOs, and, in particular, I think the exemption proposed for GM papaya is totally irresponsible.

We can thank the University of Hawai'i for developing in 1998 transgenic papaya which was resistant to ringspot virus. According to Claire Hope Cummings in her book *Uncertain Peril* soon after their introduction to Hawai'i they started to contaminate other papaya varieties. By 2004 50% of papaya tested were contaminated.

In the LegCo brief it states that 60-70% of papayas grown in Hong Kong might be GM-contaminated, and that this would constitute an illegal release of GMO into the environment. These papayas are quite obviously ones that people have bought in supermarkets, and the seeds of which they have used in their own gardens, without any knowledge of them being GM. Yet they are now liable to prosecution, in the same way that farmers in the US have been prosecuted by Monsanto when their crops have been contaminated by GM crops grown by someone else.

This is utterly contemptible. It is the companies who introduce their frankenseeds into the environment who should be prosecuted. By what right do these companies contaminate the natural plantlife of the planet, which is the natural inheritance of us all? By what right do they destroy the crops of organic papaya growers, forcing them to pull up and burn their plants, as has happened in other countries?

If GM crops are as harmless as the biotech companies want us to believe, then make them label everything that has been genetically modified and let the consumer choose for herself what products she would prefer.

Far from allowing GM papaya to spread uncontrolled through the territory, there should be a major assault made upon this whole pernicious business. The government should put some of its filthy lucre into destroying all GM-contaminated papayas in Hong Kong, and provide the growers with free, organic seedlings instead. Make Hong Kong a totally GM-Free Zone. How pitiful to see the Hong Kong government kowtowing to these American neo-imperialists.

Donald Letter

Transition South Lantau