

OPEN LETTER TO AGREVO FROM GENETIX SNOWBALL

Dear Madam / Sir,

Further to previous correspondence with you; specifically letters dated 29 June 1998 and one which you received on 22 March 1999. In this instance we, the undersigned, write solely on our own behalf. Small groups of people, including ourselves, have attempted to take action as part of the genetiX snowball campaign - acting nonviolently, openly and accountably on two separate organised days of action. In both cases their openness has been rewarded with the threat of injunctions and their actions have been restricted.

Nobody taking action as part of the genetiX snowball campaign has been charged with breaking the law for their action. You have declined to use the criminal legal system and instead have relied on restraining injunctions which name six people including ourselves, but which may have deterred other unnamed people who also wanted to exercise their democratic veto by removing GM crops from test field sites. Such measures work to favour the property and commercial interests of big businesses such as AgrEvo over the interests of people who are concerned that democracy is being engineered to the detriment of all.

Although we are a small number of people prepared to take action, it is clear that we have the voluntary support of a large percentage of the public behind us. We are prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. There has been no significant change to your position in refusing to accept liability for your actions; and neither is the government prepared to take this on.

One of our aims is to "encourage people to question mindless obedience and to move through their fears into a position of shared power balanced with a strong sense of responsibility." There are times when our obedience is a failing, against the interests of civil society; when passivity allows injustice, the wielding of undemocratic power and irresponsible actions can be taken without recourse. We believe we have reached exactly such a situation and in order to continue in the spirit of nonviolent civil responsibility we must challenge obedience and refuse to be bound by restraints which are unjust, undemocratic and repressive. The imperative to take civil responsibility may yet come into conflict with the law, but since we serve the public interest we believe our actions are legitimate.

Therefore, we will not abide by the terms of your injunction and intend to continue to remove GM crops from test field sites as part of genetiX snowball. Your repressive measures have left us feeling that we have no option but to ourselves attempt to remove as many GM plants as we possibly can regardless of your injunction*. We are unwilling to allow this injunction to be effective in stopping genetiX snowball from rolling and will continue to invite others to join with us.

As part of genetiX snowball (which is also a signatory to the Five Year Freeze campaign) we are calling for:

- A1) A five year moratorium on the deliberate release of GM plants in Britain, except for government sponsored ecological, health and safety tests (in enclosed systems) and;
- A2) the removal from the environment by government agency, farmers or the biotechnology companies of all GM plants already existing.

Yours faithfully,

Rowan Tilly,

Jo Hamilton

& Martin Shaw

* PLEASE NOTE: Those of us who have co-ordinated the genetiX snowball campaign have amended the ground rule which has previously placed a 100 plant limit on the number of plants pulled per person per action; this is an adaptation to the new circumstances presented by the two injunctions held over so-called "members" of genetiX snowball. In response to these attempts to stop legitimate nonviolent direct action, we have decided to remove this limit, at least for people who are named on injunctions taking action on injuncted GM release sites; this will give people a chance to complete a significant amount of decontamination on each site.