



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Farmers, Citizens and NGOs Protest  
Genetically-Modified Wheat  
at Agriculture Minister's Office  
Present Vanclief with GM-Free Loaf of Bread**

**BELLEVILLE, Ont.** — The National Farmers Union, local farmers, other constituents and several non-governmental organizations staged a protest today at Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief's Constituency Office in Belleville, Ontario. The protesters brought a loaf of homemade GM-wheat-free bread to Vanclief's office as well as a large greeting card asking him to reject Monsanto's GM wheat and grant all Canadians "a GM-Free Holiday and New Year."

"GM wheat will damage family farms across Canada," said local farmer, constituent, and National Farmers Union member Ken Marisett. "It will drive down prices, and over 80% of our markets won't buy it – GM Wheat is a raw deal for Canadian farmers."

The Canadian Wheat Board estimates that over 80% of Canada's wheat export market will not buy GM wheat. That market is valued at over \$3 billion annually. The Canadian government is currently considering whether to approve or reject the genetically modified wheat.

Farmers were also reacting to recent reports that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), after spending \$2.5 million helping Monsanto develop GM wheat, would collect millions in royalties from the corporation if the government approves the crop. "This is a clear corporate-government partnership that runs counter to the interests of Canadian farmers and citizens," said Lucy Sharratt of the Polaris Institute.

Protesters also presented a stocking full of coal for Monsanto. "Monsanto deserves a stocking full of coal from the Agriculture Minister, not \$2.5 million in public funds and not the gift of approval for its GM wheat," said Sharratt.

There are serious environmental concerns with GM wheat. "GM wheat will increase pesticide dependence, threaten food security, and increase problems associated with Roundup-resistant superweeds. It's an environmental time-bomb", said Andrea Peart of the Sierra Club of Canada.

This week AAFC will present more evidence that glyphosate—a chemical sprayed heavily on Monsanto's Roundup Ready crops and would be sprayed on GM wheat—may contribute to the spread of the costly plant disease fusarium.

In a statement read at the protest, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario President Ann Slater said: "The demand for organic food is increasing around the world. Organic farming is one of the few expanding segments of agriculture in Ontario and across Canada. If GM wheat is approved, organic farmers will not only lose the option of growing wheat, many will be forced out of organic farming altogether."

"Current GM crops and foods are not adequately tested and they are not labeled in the stores," said Pat Venditti of Greenpeace, "The vast majority of Canadians do not want GM wheat in their bread. We are here today to ask the government of Canada to act in the best interests of Canadians and reject Monsanto's application for GM wheat."

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