



GREENPEACE



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**HALT INTRODUCTION OF GM WHEAT:
TAKE MARKET, AGRONOMIC AND CITIZEN CONCERNS INTO ACCOUNT**

OTTAWA, Ont.—A diverse group of organizations brought their message to Ottawa demanding a halt to the introduction of genetically modified (GM) wheat, following up on the letter they sent to Prime Minister Chrétien on July 31, 2001. The unusual coalition, representing farmers, wheat marketers, rural municipalities, environmentalists and consumers, says that farmers are concerned about agronomic impacts and market loss, while consumers have raised food safety, environmental damage, and regulatory adequacy as issues. The group is asking government to make market acceptance a requirement in the approval process for GM crops. (see second page for a list of organizations)

In July, in a letter supported by over 300 other organizations and experts, the coalition asked Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to "...prevent the introduction of GM wheat into Canadian food and fields unless the concerns of Canadian farmers, industry, and consumers are addressed adequately. (The July 31 letter is available at www.nfu.ca). To date, the Prime Minister has failed to respond to the group's appeal.

"We can't afford to have Ottawa gamble with wheat, Canada's largest export crop and a staple of the food supply worldwide," said spokesperson Stewart Wells. "It's time for Jean Chrétien to respond to our concerns and act in the best interests of farmers and citizens," said Wells. "The government must halt the introduction of genetically modified wheat."

The coalition presented their concerns in meetings with the Prime Minister, other politicians and regulators, and at a special hearing of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

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