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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU URGES CANADA TO SUPPORT A GLOBAL BAN ON TERMINATOR GENE

Officials from Environment Canada are being urged to support a global ban on Genetic Use Restriction Technologies (GURTs) – popularly known as “Terminator” technology.

Terminator is a form of genetic engineering that renders seeds sterile at harvest, thus preventing farmers from saving and re-using seed. Terminator technology is designed to benefit large multinational seed and chemical companies because farmers would be forced to purchase seed every year.

Representatives of the Biodiversity Convention Office of Environment Canada are heading to Granada, Spain this week to take part in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Working Group meeting. At a similar meeting a year ago in Bangkok, Thailand, Canadian representatives attempted unsuccessfully to end an international de-facto moratorium on field-testing and commercialization of Terminator technology.

In a letter to John Karau, Director of Environment Canada’s Biodiversity Convention Office, NFU Vice-President Terry Boehm urged the Canadian delegation to recognize the inherent dangers of GURTs. “The use of Terminator is such a fundamental offense to the foundations of life and of agriculture that the very concept engenders rage from farmers and citizens around the world,” he stated. “Farmers east, west, north and south are absolutely dependent on using and reusing the seeds that they grow.”

Boehm pointed out that the earth’s biodiversity is in large part due to the stewardship practices of farmers over many thousands of years. They have carefully “selected, preserved and re-used seeds” for the common good of humanity, he noted. While seeds with the ability to reproduce contain the essence of life, Terminator represents only “exploitation and death”.

Boehm drew a parallel between GURTs and nuclear weapons, explaining that no amount of “testing” can alter the inherently dangerous character of the technology. “Extensive testing of nuclear weapons did not change the fact that this was such a dangerous technology that it should not be used,” he said.

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