

UNDER ATTACK:

Our rights to save, re-use, or exchange seeds

An issue of importance to all Canadians

A bounty of seeds and foods form the base of our farms and gardens, our food system, and our civilization. Our seeds have been carefully selected and improved by hundreds of generations of farmers and gardeners. And that selection and improvement relied on our rights to save, re-use, and exchange seeds. *Those rights are now under attack.*

Proposed changes to Canada's *Seeds Act* and our *Plant Breeders' Rights Act* directly threaten the rights of farmers and gardeners to save, re-use, and exchange seeds. These changes would criminalize our age-old, customary practices. And they would give increased control of our food system to transnational seed corporations.

Amendments to Canada's laws are already being written and may be introduced over the winter of 2004/05.

Monsanto and other seed transnationals are pushing these damaging changes to Canada's seed system. These changes should be of concerns to all Canadians, whether they grow their own food or not. *To a significant extent, whoever controls seeds, controls agriculture and food production. Proposed changes to our seed laws would mean that farmers and gardeners would lose their right to save, re-use, exchange, or sell their seeds. Farmers and gardeners would essentially lose ownership of their seeds and become renters of corporate seeds.*

Finally, to protect farmers' and gardeners' rights to their seeds, we need a well-funded, public, not-for-profit plant breeding program. If we, as a nation, withdraw from plant breeding, then foreign transnationals will own and control all new seeds. And, thus, they will gain control of our food supply.

Our seeds were not created by Monsanto

Of the 1,000 main commercial crops in North America, only a handful originated on this continent—these include Jerusalem artichoke, cranberries, and sunflowers but *none of our major food crops*. Our agriculture rests upon seeds brought here from around the world (and adapted to our climate) by farmers, gardeners, indigenous peoples, and government bodies. All this occurred before the rise of big seed companies.

Farmers, gardeners, indigenous people, governments, and public research created our seeds. Now, seed companies want to put restrictions on farmers in order to increase these companies' profits and to protect their rights to "their" seeds.

Transnational seed companies want legal changes that would force farmers to pay fees every time farmers re-used their own seed on their own farms.

The flip-side of this flyer lists actions you can take to safeguard our seed supply.

Work with us to protect YOUR RIGHT to save, re-use, exchange, and sell seeds

The **National Farmers Union (NFU)** is fighting back on behalf of farm families, gardeners, and all Canadians who believe that the seeds of life are too important to be controlled by foreign transnationals.

The NFU has launched an aggressive campaign that includes these actions:

- Flyers and Fact Sheets like this one;
- Meetings with urban allies to forge a rural/urban coalition around this issue;
- Meetings with legislators;
- Ads in newspapers;
- Press conferences, meetings with editorial boards, and other media work; and
- An NFU National Convention focused on seeds and farmers' rights (November 18-20, 2004 in Saskatoon);
- A petition to the federal parliament demanding that the government enshrine in legislation Canadians' rights to save, re-use, select, exchange, and sell their seeds and that the government support farmers, gardeners, and the Canadian economy by expanding Canada's public plant breeding programs.

You can help in four ways:

1. Join the NFU as an Associate Member. Working together, rural and urban people can retain control of their seed supply.
2. Donate to our work. Your donation will help finance our work on this issue.
3. Spread the word. Talk to your neighbors and pass on this information.
4. Help collect signatures on our petition to parliament.

Petitions, fact sheets and additional information are available by calling, writing, faxing, visiting or emailing the NFU office.

Please join us to protect Canadian family farms and to create better food and agricultural policies for Canada.

To join as an Associate member, please send a cheque for \$50 to the address below.



NFU National Office

2717 Wentz Ave., Saskatoon, Sask., S7K 4B6

Tel (306) 652-9465 / Fax (306) 664-6226 / Email nfu@nfu.ca

