

Media release
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Individual action not the way to go: organic farmers.

Today Larry Hoffman and Dale Beaudoin have elected not to proceed with their individual claims against Monsanto and Bayer, after having the courts deny them access to the class action procedure as a means to seek compensation for losses resulting from the contamination of certified organic fields and crops by genetically modified canola.

The question of liability of corporations for genetic contamination remains unresolved.

The court case on behalf of all certified organic farmers in Saskatchewan began in 2002 and was instrumental in bringing public attention to the liability issues surrounding GMO contamination. The organic farmers sought an injunction to prevent the introduction of GMO wheat. Monsanto withdrew its plans to introduce Roundup Ready wheat in 2004. The farmers continued their action to seek redress for losses due to the virtual elimination of organic canola as a crop due to widespread contamination of seed stock, as well as for losses due to unwanted GMO canola plants contaminating organic fields. During the course of their legal action no new GMO crops were introduced into Canadian agriculture.

Class action legislation is an important tool for groups of citizens to gain access to justice. When denied the benefit of class action procedure, individuals are unfairly pitted against large multinational corporations that have enormous resources. However, Hoffman and Beaudoin, along with fellow organic farmers, remain committed to protecting the right to grow GMO free crops, and the right to eat GMO free food.

“I believe our case has raised awareness around the impacts of products released into the environment,” says Larry Hoffman. “We will work to further address those issues in the future.”

“We are closing a chapter, but not the book. We will challenge Monsanto and Bayer for the liberty, freedom and right to grow GMO free crops. We want to be able to save and use our own seed,” stated Dale Beaudoin. “The courts of the land failed to see our side of the story on how we needed canola in our rotation of crops. I was proud along with my co-partner, to represent organic farmers in this legal action. Just as in the Biblical story of David and Goliath, David has his moment of victory. Someday we, the organic farmers, will receive the justice we deserve.”

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