



Saskatchewan Organic Directorate
Organic Agriculture Protection Fund
Box 130 Canwood, SK S0J 0K0 CANADA
Phone: 306-468-2218 Fax: 306-468-2346
email: lester.wyatt@saskorganic.com
website: www.saskorganic.com



*'To Champion The Development of Organic
Agriculture In A Democratic Manner'*

** Food For Life **

*'To preserve and protect certified organic
food and fibre production'*

Media Release

May 26, 2004

Saskatoon, Sask. CANADA

Companies must take responsibility for patented GMOs: organic farmers

The majority on the Supreme Court of Canada has clearly failed to grapple with the implications of allowing the de-facto patenting of higher life-forms via patents on genes or cells inserted into plants. On May 21, 2004 the Court narrowly decided in favour of Monsanto in its patent infringement suit against Saskatchewan farmer, Percy Schmeiser. The 5-4 ruling allows biotech corporations monopoly control over seeds, plants and their progeny on the basis that they consist of cells that contain patented genes – either intentionally or as a result of GMO contamination.

The political battle regarding patents on life forms will continue, as Parliament will undoubtedly be called upon to clarify the law. In the courts, the focus will shift.

The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate's Organic Agriculture Protection Fund legal action by certified organic farmers seeking compensation for damages caused by GMO canola contamination (Hoffman et al v. Monsanto et al), is about the biotech companies' liability for patented genes. The Monsanto v. Schmeiser decision, allows biotech companies to assert ownership of patented genes. Our case, Hoffman et al v. Monsanto et al, seeks to impose responsibility upon the companies.

Percy Schmeiser has shown great courage in refusing to be intimidated when sued by Monsanto. His persistence and dedication to exposing agribusiness corporations' efforts to take away the ability of farmers to save seeds made biotech corporations' pursuit of patent rights versus farmers' traditional seed-saving practices a public issue world-wide. We are very appreciative that, though not an organic farmer himself, he has always been supportive as we pursue our legal action.

His battle ended at the Supreme Court on Friday.

The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate's Organic Agriculture Protection Fund action will keep public attention focused on the struggle of farmers versus the corporate agriculture biotech industry. We are seeking compensation for damages caused by contamination of certified organic crops by Monsanto's Roundup Ready Canola and Bayer's Liberty Link Canola, clean-up costs, and an injunction to prevent commercialization of Roundup Ready Wheat if Monsanto moves to reintroduce it. Our legal action (Hoffman et al v. Monsanto et al) began in January 2002. The class certification hearing will be held September 14 and 15, 2004 at the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

- 30 -

For more information please contact:

Arnold Taylor, Chair, OAPF Committee, phone: (306) 252-2783 or (306) 241-6125

Marc Loiselle, Research Director, OAPF Committee, phone (306) 258-2192 or (306) 227-5825

For details of the class action suit, please see <http://www.saskorganic.com>
