



PHOTO: RITA BRHEL

Seed Sovereignty

She Would Care Who Controls The World's Supply Of Seeds?

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

Baby cereal, taco shells, sugar: Each of these is derived from a major agricultural crop — rice, corn, sugar beets — and each has been entangled in the controversy of whether genetically modified (GM) foods are safe to eat. Whether or not this is a valid concern — research predominantly supports that GM food crops are benign — anything GM is consistently under fire for some breach of natural law.

One issue that is often overshadowed by food safety and pest resistance issues centers on seed sovereignty and the potential effect on biodiversity — specifically who has control of the world's seed supply and how much of it is GM.

"GM policies are directed toward making money for corporations and not about the farm and natural resources," said Dena Hoff, chairwoman of the Northern Plains Resource Council in Billings, Mont., vice president of the Washington, D.C.-based National Farm Family Coalition, and a diversified crop and livestock producer near Glendive, Mont. Hoff spoke at a recent virtual workgroup meeting of the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance.

While genetic science has been a key technology in greatly boosting yields and profits within the agricultural industry, and even some aspects of environmental health — for example, glyphosate-resistant crops was acclaimed at its introduction for allowing farmers to economically employ no-till or reduced-tillage into their operations, thus improving natural soil health — GM crops have their share of ecological concerns.

"One thing we hear often is, genetic engineering (GE) is no different than breeding when it's actually very different because it's injecting genes from a completely different species," said Marcia Ishii-Eiteman, senior scientist at the Pesticide Action Network North America in Oakland, Ca. Seed sovereignty is about maintaining a pool of "pure" seeds, untouched by GM technology.

"Now, it's hard to find seeds not contaminated by GM crops," Hoff said. As much as 70 percent of the world's seed supply is owned by 10 companies, 27 percent of which is controlled by just Monsanto, whose stronghold extends from the United States to Africa. "So, it's not just local. It's every-

where," she added.

GM growers are often hostile to the issue of seed sovereignty, and understandably so, as it's one in a list of criticisms, but Hoff warns that there is a danger in that so much of the world's seed is controlled by so few entities. The lack of biodiversity is a conservation concern, as is the increasing monopolization is an economic concern. But what the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance aims to do is communicate the link between seed sovereignty and food security.

"If you control the seeds, you control the food," Ishii-Eiteman said. "Then, you can control people's livelihoods and even the culture."

It may sound more like a conspiracy theory, but if one corporation owns all of the seed corn, that company also controls where and how the crop is grown and used, which ultimately affects food access and the cost to the consumer. Caught in the middle would be the family farmer who would be unable to make a livelihood independent of that company. Globally, agriculture would essentially become vertically integrated.

There is a lot of discussion about seed sovereignty and how it intersects with food security in the organic and alternative agriculture sectors, but these talks lack a strong united front in the United States. Even though the local foods movement is spreading nationwide, the conversation is disjointed and both Hoff and Ishii-Eiteman would like to see it merged with the global movement.

"What do over 60 countries in the world, representing over half of the world's population, have in common?" Ishii-Eiteman asked. "A national requirement for mandatory GE food labeling."

The question is how to get the dialogue beyond the local farmers markets and backyard seed-saving gardeners to Congressional sessions and corporate Board meetings. Ishii-Eiteman says the responsibility lies in a grassroots movement. Consumers and farmers need to take a stand together.

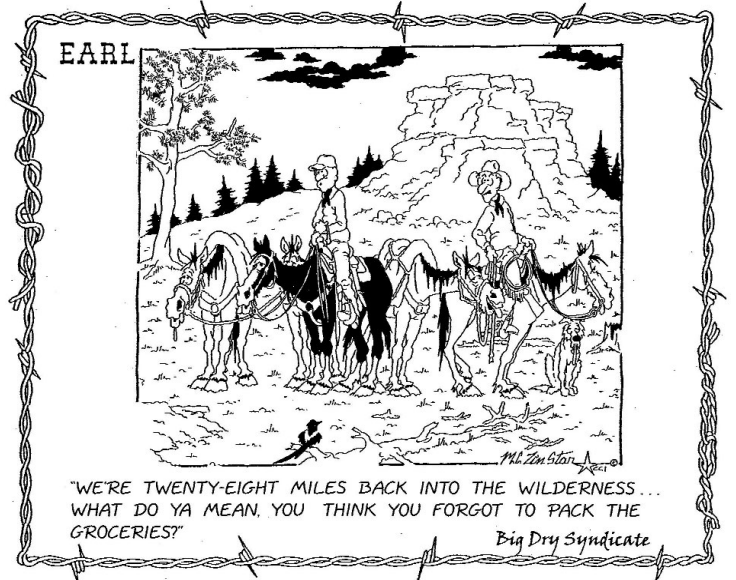
Another challenge is in keeping the balance. GM crops are not "wrong," per se. They boost yield, which is good for farmers' bottom lines, and their food safety controversy is negligible when used for livestock feed or other non-human food uses. And there is apparent economic benefit to developing countries, as well as health benefits to famished populations.

But, it's when corporations forget to draw the line on where profitability ends and environmental and community impact begin, where GM crops get a bad name, Hoff said. It's when GM companies deny the possibility of weed resistance, ecosystem change, and the effect on small farmers and farming communities. It's also when GM companies continue to push that their product is safe for consumption even when consumers have clearly communicated that they do not want to eat GM, no matter what the research shows. It's not always about science-backed food safety claims, says Hoff; many times, it's about ethical eating. Consumers have a right to demand GE labeling when they simply do not like the idea of eating GM food, Ishii-Eiteman said, because consumers have a right to know what is in their food and to choose whether to eat it or not.

Ishii-Eiteman spoke of a proposed law in California that would mandate GE food labeling and how the GM industry, including Monsanto and several mega-food manufacturers, spent \$25 million as of August 2012 to defeat the initiative. The reason for this oppositional push is that GE labeling has the potential to completely change the GM industry, she said. It's not about what's right for the consumer or what should be the GM industry's responsibility from a human rights perspective, she added.

"Moving brazenly from selling to the marketplace into rewriting our very laws, industry allies in Congress are threatening sweeping policy changes that would fast-track GE crop approvals," Ishii-Eiteman said. "Three riders to the Farm Bill — if approved — gut the USDA's already weak regulatory process for GE seeds. A fourth rider in the House Agricultural Appropriations Bill would enable USDA to permit continued planting of GE crops, even when a court of law has ruled that such crops were approved illegally."

"As House and Senate move to pass a 2012 Farm Bill, these dangerous biotech riders could slip through, unraveling what little regulatory oversight the executive branch of the U.S. government has not yet abrogated and stripping the last of our democratic checks and balances by rendering the courts essentially moot on this topic," she added. "We must be vigilant in defending what remains of our democracy."



Report Offers Snapshot Of S.D. Commodities

BROOKINGS — There was a wide range in market expectations for corn and soybean production and wheat ending stocks prior to the release of The World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report Oct. 11. This report may have cast more light on uncertain supply and demand fundamentals, says Lisa Elliott, SDSU Extension Commodity Marketing Specialist and Assistant Professor.

Read on as Elliott summarizes the Oct. 11 report as it pertains to South Dakota commodities.

- **Corn** — For South Dakota, 2012 corn harvested acres were increased 50,000 acres from the September Crop Production report to 5.35 million acres. Yield, in South Dakota, was decreased 2 bushels per acre to 94 bushels per acre.

- **Soybeans** — For South Dakota, 2012 soybean harvested acres were increased 200,000 acres from the September Crop Production report to 4.65 million acres. Yield, in South Dakota, remained the same at 28 bushels per acre.

- **Wheat** — Most market analysts expected that the U.S. wheat balance sheet would be adjusted given an estimated unprecedented amount of feed usage reported in the Sept. 28 Grain Stocks report.

To read Elliott's summary of the complete report as it relates to the nation as a whole, visit iGrow.org.

Beef Production Audit Series Scheduled

BROOKINGS — Beef producers are invited to participate in a Beef Production Audit Series scheduled to begin Nov. 7 and end Jan. 23, 2013.

The series consists of six sessions focusing on various segments of the beef production system. This series is hosted by SDSU Extension and South Dakota Center for Farm and Ranch Management (CFFRM) at Mitchell Technical Institute.

This series will be held on the south campus of Mitchell Technical Institute, Technology Center Amphitheater, 1800 E. spruce Street, Mitchell. It will also be available at all Extension Regional Centers through DDN.

- **Session one:** Nov. 7 and begins at 7 p.m. and concludes at 9 p.m. This session will cover an update on cattle markets and an analysis of trends will be a focal point of the agenda. A discussion of "Tool Kits" available from CFFRM that producers can utilize to make management decisions will also be part of session-one as will an update on the use of the Cow Herd Analysis Performance Software™ (CHAPS) program that is currently undergoing a technical revision.

- **Session two:** Nov. 20 and will run from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. This session will cover wintering diets for cows, backgrounding operations and even finishing systems will be the focus of this discussion segment. Utilizing drought-stressed forages and alternative feeds in wintering rations is a challenge most South Dakota cattle producers will face this year.

- **Session three:** Dec. 6 will begin at 1 p.m. George Perry, SDSU Reproductive Management Specialist, will lead the discussion which centers on the beef cow, her reproductive performance within the herd, ways for her to produce a calf every 365 days and synchronization protocols to assist her in meeting those demands.

- **Session four:** Dec. 19 beginning at 1 p.m. This session will feature a discussion on the Business Year-End Analysis. Farm Management personnel and financial representatives will be present to lead this discussion topic. In addition, a producer panel will share some of their individual thoughts on dealing with their respective approaches to cattle feeding and facilities that they utilize in their systems that make a difference.

- **Session five:** Jan. 9 beginning at 1 p.m. Darrell Mark, SDSU Economics Adjunct Professor, will advise participants as they build a production budget for their production year.

- **Final session:** Jan. 23 beginning at 1 p.m. Beef Production Outlook is the topic of the final Beef Production Audit Series. Several specialists will be available to share a glance to the future, analyzing the most current livestock numbers and price indicators as well.

Cattle producers are invited to attend one or all these sessions. The first session is free. There are fees for additional sessions. To register for one or multiple sessions, email Will Walter (will.walter@mitchell-tech.edu) or Jack Davis (jack.davis@sdstate.edu) or call, 605-995-7378.

CAFO Training Session Scheduled In Huron Nov. 7

BROOKINGS — An environmental training session for operators of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) is set for Nov. 7 in Huron.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Crossroads Convention Center, 100 Fourth St. S.W. in Huron. The program begins at 8:50 a.m. and concludes at approximately 4:45 p.m. To register for the training, call Candy Wilms at (605) 688-5141.

Specialists from South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are offering the training. This training fulfills the environmental and manure-management training requirement to obtain a livestock permit for CAFOs from the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Producers and any other interested individuals who are not currently applying for a permit also can benefit from the information and are encouraged to attend. Current federal (EPA, USDA) and state water pollution control programs encourage

livestock producers, even those who do not need permits, to voluntarily adopt livestock production and manure management practices that protect water quality.

Certified Crop Advisor credits are also available for attending this program.

During the morning session, SDSU Environmental Quality Engineer Erin Cortus will discuss water quality. John Lentz, Resource Con-

servationist with the NRCS, will talk about implementing conservation practices to improve sustainability. Jason Roggow, a natural resources engineer with the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, will give an overview of the South Dakota DENR Livestock Permit program.

In the afternoon, SDSU Soil Specialist Ron Gelderman will discuss managing nitrogen and phosphorus

in land applications of manure. Lentz and Gelderman will also go through nutrient management planning worksheets. SDSU Swine Specialist Bob Thaler will lead a session on livestock nutrition options for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus content of manure. Cortus will conclude the day's training with a session on air quality and odor.

SACRED HEART PARISH BAZAAR & DINNER

Sunday, November 4, 2012
11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sacred Heart Parish Center
509 Capital St., Yankton, SD

Serving Delicious Turkey Dinner with stuffing, real homemade mashed potatoes & gravy, choice of salads, bun, dessert & beverage

Take Out Meals! Raffle! Games!
Book Nook! Bakery Booth & More!

6th grade to Adult \$9, Preschool-5th grade \$6,
Children 2 years & younger Free

KOLETZKY LAW OFFICE

is pleased to announce its new office location at:

231 Broadway Avenue, Suite 1
Yankton, South Dakota
(605)260-5000

Sherri J. Koletzky,
Attorney At Law

General Practice & Domestic & Family Law Including:
Divorce & Child Custody & Support • Personal Injury
Trust & Wills • Probate • Civil Litigation • Real Estate

MARITAL DISCORD?

Whether you're seeking reconciliation, mediation, or separation, our trained and caring therapists can help you sort out complex issues. (605) 260-9284

F | E
C | C
Family
Education and
Counseling
Center, Inc.
1700 Burleigh St. • Yankton, SD
www.feccinc.com
A United Way & Volunteer Services Agency



Plan To Attend
2012 REGIONAL STRING
ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL
Monday, November 5 • 7 p.m.
Yankton High School Theatre

Featuring

Guest conductor and music educator, David Barg
Orchestra students, over 200, from South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska high schools
Performing musical selections by Frescobaldi, Vivaldi, Hamvas and Khachaturian
FREE PERFORMANCE

Vote
Patriotic...

Yankton County

4H
Eat American at the
Soup Kitchen

Tuesday, November 6th
709 Whiting Drive, Yankton

• Menu •

- Bean-N-Ham Soup, Chili, Chicken Noodle, and Chicken & Wild Rice Soup
- Egg salad sandwich, hot dog, tavern
- Pie & Desserts
- Coffee, Lemonade, Milk, Iced Tea, and Bottled Water

Serving 11am - 7pm • Each food item is \$2.00
Beverages are .50 each • \$6.00 for a meal:
Choice of soup, sandwich, dessert & drink