

International coalition of farmers and NGOs warns about “Monsantosizing”

Munich, 22.10.2009 In a media release released on 21 of October 2009, the international coalition [No Patents on Seeds](#) warns about increasing monopolisation of plants, animals, seeds and food. Similar the [UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food](#) [1], Olivier de Schutter, raised concerns that seed patents might increase food crises.

Testbiotech experts are involved in the work of “No Patents on Seeds”: Dr. Ruth Tippe is researcher on European patent applications and spokesperson of [No Patents on Life!](#) [2]. Dr. Christoph Then is involved in the coordination work and acts as a special external expert for Greenpeace on this issue. Greenpeace and “No Patents on Life!” are two of the organisations that initiated “No Patents on Seeds.” The experts also wrote the backgrounder [Future of Food and Seeds](#) [3] which was published by the international coalition.

This report shows interesting findings: Patents on conventional breeding are significantly increasing over the last ten years. Patent applications from companies like Monsanto, Dupont and Syngenta (the top leading international three seed companies, see ETC group [link]) follow this general trend: About 30-50% of their patent applications in the context of plants are directed to conventional breeding. See [graphic](#) [4] and short [backgrounder](#) [5] as recently published by “No Patents on Seeds”.

These findings indicate a very general development:

1. Conventional breeding is on the agenda for all companies as being the most effective way of producing plants and seeds, especially in case of complex properties such as drought resistance or higher yielding. Thus conventional breeding is replacing genetic engineering as being the most potential technology in seed production.
2. Internal companies are increasingly trying to take over the chain of food and biomass production via patent law. It started about 20 years ago with patents on genetically engineered seeds. Meanwhile even harvest such as biofuel and salad oil of plants derived from conventional breeding are claimed as inventions. This raises broad concerns which are also reflected by the international coalition of “No Patents on Seeds”.

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Links

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