

## Recommended reading on GMOs

Three talks given in July 2003 during a national consultation on GM crops, which are still very relevant today.

Between them they provide a rare chance for people with a limited knowledge of the subject to get clear and detailed information for an overall understanding of the issues. (The articles may seem long, but do not be put off. Because they were talks, they are easy to read.)

Dr John Latham is a genetic scientist, who has studied plant virology. He takes us carefully through the basic science, how it is carried out and how it is regulated. He gives examples to show how random the process is, how little is known about it and how lax the regulatory process is.

Helena Paul was the European representative on the International Committee of Oilwatch International, a co-founder of both the UK Forest Network, and the UK Five Year Freeze on Genetic Engineering in Food and Farming. She has worked on the Programme on Corporation Law and Democracy in the US and is one of the authors of 'Hungry Corporations', published by Zed Books in 2003.

Helena has studied the effects of GM on indigenous peoples of the Third World, and shows through examples that GM crops, in contrast to the claims of the companies trying to sell them, are causing many problems. She shows the close collaboration between the US government and the multinational companies involved and concludes that the aim of selling GM is to gain ownership of seeds and extend patents.

Lord Peter Melchatt is an organic farmer in Norfolk, formerly the UK Director of Greenpeace and Director of the Soil Association.

His talk confirmed and added to the information given by John and Helena, about the uncertainty and potential health hazards of GM crops, and the intimidation of farmers by GM manufacturers. He also talked of the positive alternative - organic farming, and that the power consumers have to decide this issue. It really is up to us to make our position clear. Supermarkets and food manufacturers will follow our lead.