

Monsanto's Failing PR Strategy

by Kenny Bruno

Monsanto's PR strategy is to depict itself as a philanthropic organisation interested in protecting the natural environment and feeding the world's hungry. The reality however could not be more different.

“Monsanto believes you should hear all opinions” about food biotechnology. So opens an unusual European advertising campaign by the US's leading corporate genetic engineers. With the help of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH), Monsanto, the St. Louis-based chemical and agribusiness giant, is out “to encourage a positive understanding of food biotechnology” in Europe.¹

In this campaign, Monsanto does not ask us to buy their products. The ads are almost all text, and the copywriters attempt a tone of enlightenment and openness. Dozens of commonly seen TV and print media images from other Corporations outrage far more people than the Monsanto ads. Still, some readers will do a double take when they see the last line of the ads – an invitation to visit the website or telephone the offices of Monsanto's most vociferous critics, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Food for Our Future. These pressure groups have positions on biotechnology which threaten Monsanto's very lifeblood – genetically engineered products.

Monsanto is rather proud of the ad campaign's “important contribution to the necessary public debate.”² In retrospect, it seems it was only a matter of time before some clever advertising executive saw the benefit of the simple strategy of announcing the website and phone number of its critics. Everyone knows who they are anyway, and the ads imply the complicity of these Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in an “open debate” on the issues. At the same time, the company demonstrates its serene, if subjective, interest on these topics. Nike, on its webpage, refers often to the arguments of its critics on sweatshop issues, though in a more defensive tone than Monsanto.³ The nuclear industry has used this tactic recently as well.⁴ We'll be seeing more of this tactic as corporations attempt to appear as open-minded as possible.

So what does it mean? With information more available than ever, has the *fin de siècle* multinational given up the fight to control information? Will the transnational corporation (TNC) of the 21st century be so committed to democracy that they voluntarily initiate public scrutiny of their operations? Monsanto's “Information Manager” for Europe says they

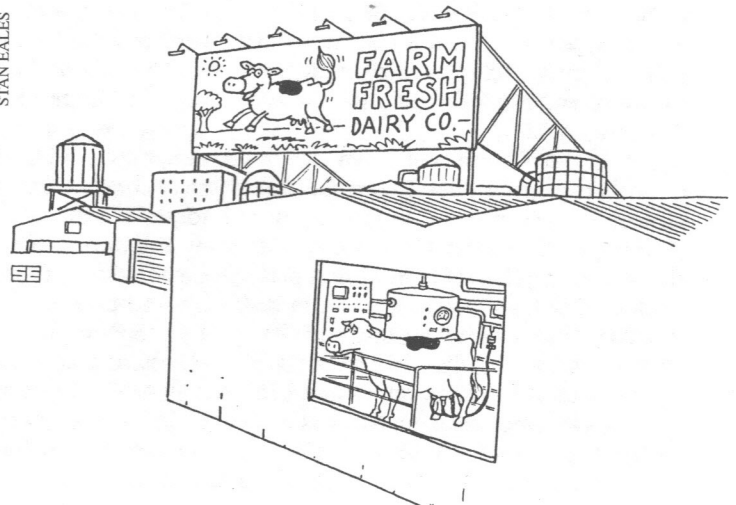
encourage the reader to explore other points of view because the “case for the safety and benefits of biotechnology is overwhelming.”⁵ If that is true, why are there no similar ads in North America? What is really behind Monsanto's decision to spend money to alert people to the campaigns of their own critics?

As Monsanto admits, it is a reaction to their critics, whom they accuse of spreading misinformation, voodoo theories, vandalism, obscurantism, and a steady diet of scare stories about so-called “superweeds” and “Frankenfoods.”⁶ Aside from the innovation of sharing the Greenpeace telephone number, the ads are clearly in the tradition of corporate environmental advertising known as *Greenwash*. This article will analyze the ad campaign in the context of the history of *Greenwash*. I argue that Mon-

santo chose this approach in Europe due to the public relations fiasco around the introduction of genetically engineered soya to Europe in 1997, which will also be discussed.

Greenwash was conceived after the major ecological catastrophes of the 1980s – Love Canal, Bhopal, Chernobyl, Basel, the Exxon Valdez, the ozone hole. The place of these catastrophes in the public mind, and the global environmental degra-

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ation they represented, became so prominent that the freedoms and profits of the industries involved were threatened. Environmental regulations proliferated, environmental pressure groups grew as never before, and environmental protection became a genuinely popular issue. The blame was placed squarely on the offending companies. Monsanto, the inventor of one of the world's most ubiquitous pollutants (PCBs), deserved a substantial share of the blame. The companies needed to do something other than the traditional denial of responsibility which had been a serviceable strategy until then. The Greenwash counterstrategy was born.

The major tenets of Greenwash were environmental image

advertising, voluntary corporate Codes of Conduct, and more traditional political campaigns to avoid environmental regulations. In the US, DuPont (primary manufacturer of ozone-depleting chemicals) and Occidental (creators of Love Canal) featured ads using images of whales, seals, birds and beautiful ocean or forest scenes. Rhone Poulenc, San-doz, Waste Management, Mitsubishi, Ford, General Motors, and Union Carbide followed

suit. UK-based multinational ICI tried Greenwash ads in Malaysia ("Paraquat and Nature in Perfect Harmony"), while Shell photographed an adorable Asian girl holding a globe for an ad in the Hong Kong Friends of the Earth magazine. The tone was pious, caring, more-environmentalist-than-thou.⁷ With

In other words, the public had no right to know, and no right to choose, whether or not to eat genetically engineered milk, soybeans or other foods

Burson Marsteller: The PR Professionals

EuropaBio is Europe's largest biotechnology trade federation, representing 540 companies and 8 national associations. Formed through a 1996 merger between Europe's two most firmly established bioindustry lobbying unions, EuropaBio wields influence both at

the policy-making and local level.¹

So far, the European Parliament and Commission have extended nothing but friendly patronage towards the federation. On September 10th 1997, for example, the Commission announced plans to pass statutory measures that will

obligate Austria, Italy and Luxembourg to repeal bans on the use and sale of genetically modified maize. Yet, despite such political affluence, consumer distrust has rendered biotechnology a precarious market.

Cue Burson Marsteller.

Burson Marsteller (B-M) is the world's largest PR firm, operating from over 60 offices in 30 different countries. They specialize in "Perceptions", which they insist, "are real. They colour what we see . . . what we believe . . . They can be managed to motivate behaviour . . . to create positive business results."

When US oil giant, Exxon, produced the world's most devastating oil slick, B-M was called in to touch up the company's tarnished image. And when Argentina's military dictatorship was having difficulty attracting foreign investment, B-M was hired to "improve the (country's) international image", over a period during which some 35,000 people "disappeared". As B-M was proud to point out: "the facts remained the same; only the perceptions changed."²

But perceptions will *have* to change a great deal if EuropaBio's member companies are to recoup the billions invested in biotechnology. When genetically modified produce first hit shop shelves in the US and EU, a storm of protest and direct action activism broke out – and that protest has only increased.

Here's where Burson Marsteller enters the frame. Before the first

European Bioindustry Congress, EuropaBio '97 (June 25-27, Amsterdam), B-M was commissioned to write up a strategy proposal for achieving a change in public 'perceptions'. The document was leaked to Greenpeace.

The federation were advised to steer clear of any form of public debate and particularly the industry's "killing fields" – namely: "public issues of environmental and human health risk". The task of persuading consumers to embrace genetically modified products should be left to "those charged with public trust – politicians and regulators".

Instead the industry should concentrate on the spread of positive stories and symbols, eliciting a message of "hope, satisfaction, caring and self-esteem". "Symbols", they add, "are central to politics because they connect to emotions, not logic."

The public, they advised, should be convinced that genetically altered products are not simply safe but "environmentally superior to standard crop varieties".

B-M warned EuropaBio to keep the media away from the 1997 Bioindustry conference. Instead they

were advised to feed journalists the kind of ready-made, positive stories "that we really want running back home". Yet, despite the PR tactics, Greenpeace had little difficulty in ruffling the federation's feathers. Before the discussion had even begun, a truckload of soya beans was dumped at the conference entrance. As Peter Linton, manager of the Bioindustry Congress, noted reluctantly: "Now TV stations all over Europe show pictures of a load of beans outside the industry conference. We missed a chance there."

Can the likes of Burson Marsteller really save the face of biotechnology in Europe? Monsanto and other biotech investors will have to bank on it.

Lucinda Labes

Notes

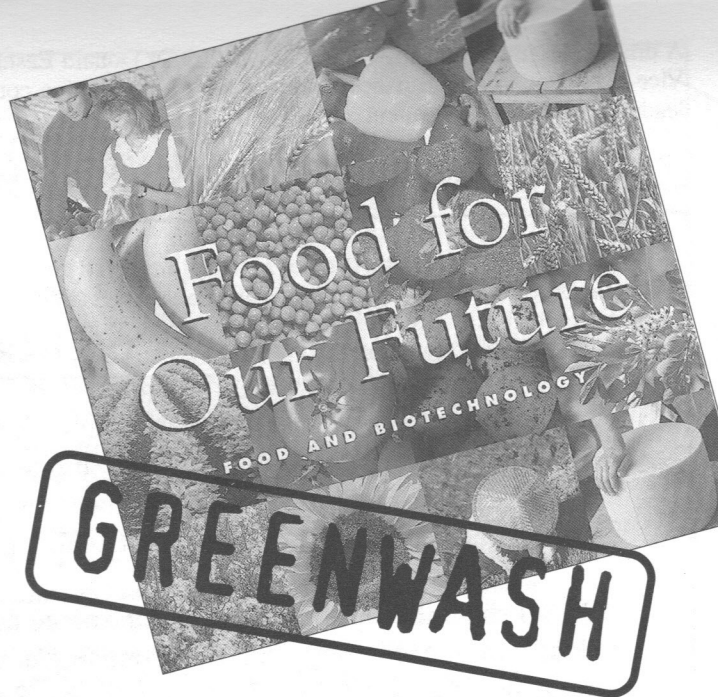
1. This article is adapted from "Smooth Façade: Greenwash Guru Burson Marsteller and the Biotech Industry" by the Corporate Europe Observatory, which was published in Vol 28, No 3, May/June 1998 of *The Ecologist*.
2. See B-M's web-site on www.bm.com "Perception Management: An Active Strategy for Marketing and Selling", Valeska C. Stupak and Ronald J. Stupak.

only a few PR companies serving a great many industrial TNCs, Greenwash advertising fast became a global industry.

Codes of Conduct were the second plank of the strategy. In the US, Responsible Care – a Code for all members of the US Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) – became the catch-all environmental programme for the chemical industry. It spread quickly to CEFIC in Europe, and later to Latin America and Asia. Responsible Care started as a response to the Bhopal gas leak, and later got a push from the development of the CERES Code of Conduct circulated by the responsible investment community in the US.⁸ Responsible Care, like environmental advertising, was not a proactive programme, but the reaction of a frightened industry. Monsanto, a member of Responsible Care, was learning the art of Greenwash.

The stance of Responsible Care was a fascinating balancing act, especially because its ambivalence is repeated again and again in corporate policies on environment and labour issues, including that of Monsanto. Responsible Care had a dual audience of the general public and the industry itself. To the general public, there was the assurance that the industry acknowledged its concerns, and would do everything to avoid the kinds of catastrophe everyone feared. But with its own members in the audience, the crafters of Responsible Care could not admit outright that their industry as a whole had been guilty of grievous environmental crimes. So they admitted only that there had been “too many incidents” and that the industry had failed to properly “communicate” to the public. The language in Responsible Care – for example their motto of “continuous improvement” – leaves open to interpretation whether improvements in environmental performance are truly necessary for the planet’s health or are necessary mainly to save their public image.⁹ The mixed message is “there is no problem, but a lot of you think there is so we’re going to fix it anyway.” Not entirely reassuring.

Meanwhile, these same companies and trade associations were lobbying against the very environmental legislation which aimed to address their past practices. In these fora, industry argued that Responsible Care and other voluntary Codes of Conduct were a more efficient approach than “command and control” regulation. The message, paraphrased:

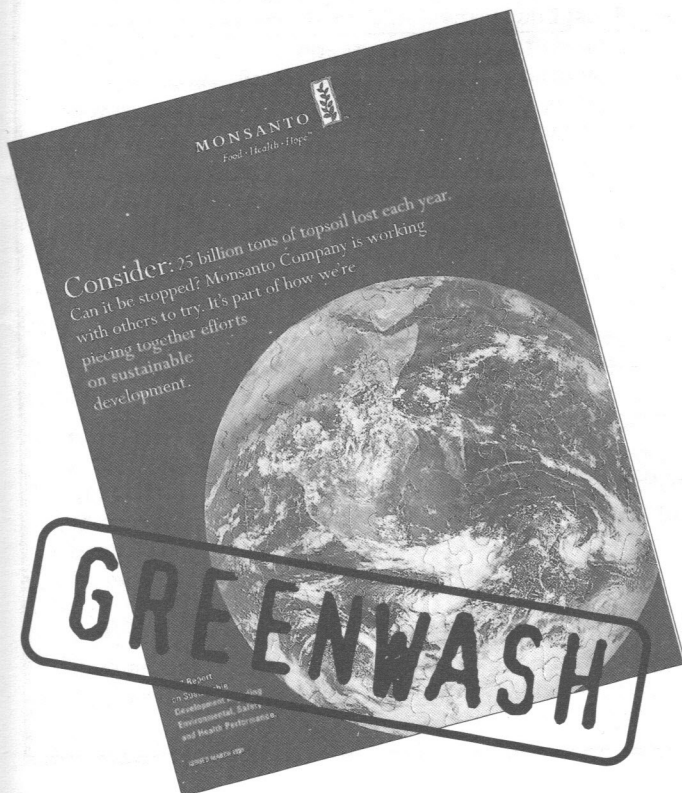


“We’re the experts, we love nature, and we’ll take care of it. If you government types get involved, you’ll just screw it up.”

With Greenwash, environmentally destructive companies in the chemical, waste, fossil fuel, automotive and nuclear industries commandeered ecological images and language from the environmental movement to deflect criticism of their practices. The Earth and its flora and fauna became the most common images for the very companies which had done the most to destroy it. Corporations took over Earth Day, endorsed recycling and redefined pollution prevention to their liking. “Self-regulation” made new environmental legislation seem anachronistic.

While the companies had continued their efforts to weaken or derail environmental legislation at the national level, environmental issues had become prominent at the intergovernmental level. During the UNCED process, Greenwash went global in a deeper sense. In this global forum, industry banded together in the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD) and the International Chamber of Commerce in a global political campaign to benefit their members (which again included Monsanto).¹⁰ The goal was to be visibly pro-environment while making sure the Summit did not become an effective check on their own powers. The practice of globally co-ordinated political action by industry was better known during the lead up to the Climate Convention meeting in Kyoto last year, when the Global Climate Coalition and the US Business Roundtable launched multimillion dollar campaigns against the climate treaty. But the earlier corporate efforts at UNCED were smoother, aiming for the impression that business was all for the Summit and indeed was helping make it happen.

For the most part those efforts succeeded. The UNCED Secretary General Maurice Strong publicly lauded industry’s efforts. The UNCED documents did not attempt to rein in TNCs, and in addition the world’s commitment to Agenda 21 has been notoriously lacking.¹¹ By the UN General Assembly Special Session Fifth Year Review of the Rio Earth Summit (UNGASS), the UNCED process had been marginalized. The Chairman of the G-77 complained that the development agenda had been sidelined; Commission on Sustainable Development officers adopted the BCSD language of “technology co-operation”¹² and the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Razali of Malaysia, hosted a closed luncheon for



A draft Monsanto Company statement, sent by Dr Donald Easum,* Vice-President, Global Business Access Ltd., to 'developing country leaders' for their endorsement.

* Dr Donald Easum has been "engaged by Monsanto to assist them in publicizing their efforts to promote the role of biotechnology in increasing the food supply and protecting the environment . . ."



LET THE HARVEST BEGIN

Across the vast farms of Europe and the United States, crops grow plentifully, providing an over-abundance of food. But in other parts of our world, hunger still confronts the population every day. Finding new ways to meet our global need for food, while maintaining ecological balance, might be the greatest challenge we face in the next century.

We all share the same planet – and the same needs. In agriculture, many of our needs have an ally in biotechnology and the promising advances it offers for our future. Healthier, more abundant food. Less Expensive crops. Reduced reliance on pesticides and fossil fuels. A cleaner environment. With these advances, we prosper; without them, we cannot thrive.

To feed the world in the next century, we need food that is more plentiful and more affordable than it is today. With more productivity needed from less tillable land, we need new ways to yield more from what is left – after development and erosion take their toll. To strengthen our economies, we need to grow our own food as independently as we can. Agricultural biotechnology will play a major role in realizing the hope we all share. Accepting this science can make a dramatic difference in millions of lives.

The seeds of the future are planted. Allow them to grow. Then let the harvest begin. Because securing food for our future begins a better life for us all.

Signatures:

A message from some of the world's most respected voices, made possible by some of the world's most respected companies, including Monsanto, committed to finding better ways to feed the world's people.

NO – LET NATURE'S HARVEST CONTINUE!

Response from all the African delegates (except South Africa) to FAO negotiations on the International Undertaking for Plant Genetic Resources, June 1998

During the past few weeks European citizens have been exposed to an aggressive publicity campaign in major European newspapers trying to convince the reader that the world needs genetic engineering to feed the hungry. Organised and financed by Monsanto, one of the world's biggest chemical companies, and titled "Let the Harvest Begin", this campaign gives a totally distorted and misleading picture of the potential of genetic engineering to feed developing countries.

We, the undersigned delegates of African countries participating in the 5th Extraordinary Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources, 8-12 June 1998, Rome, strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us.

It is time to look at some of the facts about the company behind this campaign:

- Monsanto is one of the world's largest pesticide companies. During the past two years only it spent over US\$6,000 million to take control over other seed and biotechnology companies and is now the major industrial player in this field. Its major focus is not to protect the environment, but to develop crops that can resist higher doses of its best-selling chemical weedkiller 'Roundup'.
- Rather than stretching a helping hand to farmers, Monsanto threatens them with lawsuits and jail. In the USA, the company employs detectives to find and bring to court those farmers that save Monsanto soybean seeds for next year's planting. Backed by patent law, the company demands the rights to inspect the farmers' fields to check whether they practise agriculture according to Monsanto conditions and with Monsanto chemicals.
- Rather than developing technology that feeds the world, Monsanto uses genetic engineering to stop farmers from replanting seed and further develop their agricultural systems. It has spent US\$18,000 million to buy a company owning a patent on what has become known as Terminator Technology: seed that can be planted only once and dies in the second generation. The only aim of this technology is to force farmers back to the Monsanto shop every year, and to destroy an age-old practice of local seed-saving that forms the basis of food security in our countries.

In "Let the Harvest Begin" the Europeans are asked to give an unconditional green light to gene technology so that chemical corporations such as Monsanto can

start harvesting their profits from it. We do not believe that such companies or gene technologies will help our farmers to produce the food that is needed in the 21st century. On the contrary, we think it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia and that it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves.

In particular, we will not accept the use of Terminator or other gene technologies that kill the capacity of our farmers to grow the food we need. We invite European citizens to stand in solidarity with Africa in resisting these gene technologies so that our diverse and natural harvests can continue and grow.

We agree and accept that mutual help is needed to further improve agricultural production in our countries. We also believe that Western science can contribute to this. But it should be done on the basis of understanding and respect for what is already there. It should be building on local knowledge, rather than replacing and destroying it. And most importantly: it should address the real needs of our people, rather than serving only to swell the pockets and control of giant industrial corporations.

NAME:

Jean Marie Fodoun, Cameroun
 George A. Agbahungba, Benin
 Paul Therence Senghor, Senegal
 Koffi Goti, Côte d'Ivoire
 Mokosa Madende, Congo Democ
 Jean Jacques Rakotonalala, Madagascar
 Juvent Baramburiye, Burundi
 Worku Damena, Ethiopia
 Gietaturn Mulat, Ethiopia
 M. S. Harbi, Sudan
 Eltahir Ibrahim Mohamed, Sudan
 Maria A. Calane da Silva, Mozambique
 Kohna Nganara Ngawara, Tchad
 Nkeoua Gregoire, Congo
 Mugorewera Drocella, Rwanda
 H. Yahia-Cafrif, Algeria
 Abebe Demissie, Ethiopia
 G. P. Mwila, Zambia
 Dr S. H. Rajtsogle, Lesotho
 Naceu Hamza, Tunisia
 Hambourne Mellas, Morocco
 Elizabeth Matos, Angola
 Tewolde Berhane Gebre Egziabher, Ethiopia

Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), allowing attendance of just two NGO representatives, with barely a whisper of protest.¹³

During the five years between UNCED and UNGASS the world's mighty global corporations had mercilessly pursued their own objectives: free trade, liberalized investment and control over technology. The World Trade Organization (WTO), unlike UNCED, had teeth without meaningful public participation. The TNCs gave lip service to the importance of UNCED, but they saw to it that the WTO – not the United Nations – would control the critical processes of globalization.

In the post-UNCED age, sustainable development and environment issues folded into each other. This “unholy alliance”, as Wolfgang Sachs called it before Rio,¹⁴ led to deeper understanding in the international community of the relationship between environment and development, especially for the South. However, it also played into the hands of the TNCs, which could place virtually any project or practice with economic implications under the sustainable development umbrella.

Greenwashing Biotechnology

This is where Monsanto places its genetically engineered crops. At a time when even UN diplomats have tired of the rhetoric of sustainable development, companies like Monsanto have increased their use of the phrase to describe their activities. As a leading biotechnology company, Monsanto would have us believe they are also a leader of sustainable development. And in promoting this vision, they are using the techniques of Greenwash.

Monsanto CEO Robert Shapiro is a devoted practitioner of the sustainable development phase of Greenwash. Environmental concerns are still prominent as well, but sustainability is the cornerstone. In the company's 1996 Environmental Review, Shapiro writes, “Sustainable development will be a primary emphasis in everything we do.” The formulation is perfect: to the industry and public relations insider, Shapiro is saying that they will *emphasize* sustainable development aspects of everything they do. To the general public, on the other hand, Shapiro is saying they will become a company actually devoted to sustainable development itself. Back on the business side of the Annual Reports, Shapiro makes it clear that what they are devoted to is genetic engineering. His phrase, a classic example of greenspeak, is “genetically improved” crops.

When Monsanto introduced genetically “improved” crops into the US, there was no fanfare, no advertising campaign, no invitation to “hear all the opinions”. In fact, Monsanto has gone to great lengths to avoid debate about its transgenic products, primarily by fighting labelling. Posilac, Monsanto's recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) was introduced in the US over strenuous objections by consumer and family farm advocates. Monsanto threatened to sue states that wished to label milk products free of rBGH. As the *New York Times* noted recently, “Because most consumers are unaware of the amount of genetically engineered food that is available . . . it is hard to judge their resistance to such products.”¹⁵ The enormous benefit of consumer ignorance was not lost on Monsanto, and opposition to labelling became central to their strategy for introducing the new foods.

Thus when Monsanto's genetically engineered Roundup Ready Soybeans (RRS) were first planted commercially in the US, there was no significant public discussion of the fact that



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for the first time, virtually all Americans were about to begin eating genetically modified ingredients in hundreds of processed foods containing soya. Monsanto opposed the segregation of the transgenic soybeans from conventional ones. The company said consumers did not need to know if they were eating Roundup Ready or not “since there was no difference” between them and ordinary soybeans.¹⁶ In other words, the public had no right to know, and no right to choose, whether or not to eat genetically engineered milk, soybeans or other foods. The major grain traders like Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland agreed with Monsanto,¹⁷ as did the authorities in Washington. Despite pockets of protest, transgenic soybeans were planted, harvested and mixed with the conventional crop and are now eaten by most Americans – yet

only a tiny percentage of those Americans know of this fundamental change in their daily diet.

When it was time to export soybeans to Europe, which buys approximately 25 per cent of the US soy crop, Mon-

santo maintained its stance: no segregation, no labelling for RRS, no public right to know. The result was a public relations fiasco for the company. EU-approval was still in process when the first shipments left the US in autumn 1997. Most European consumers were caught completely off guard – suddenly their diet was to contain genetically altered ingredients! They had not been warned, and the foods would not be labelled. The public was outraged. Several countries and companies began scrambling for RRS-free supplies of soya to reassure consumers. The soy market was thrown into considerable chaos.¹⁸ The arrogance of Monsanto – assuming that Europe would take the transgenic soya without questioning it – led to a political storm over the prosaic soybean.

What befuddles and irritates Monsanto and other genetic engineering advocates is that the storm has not subsided. They see European resistance to genetic engineering as “Luddite superstition”¹⁹ which must be overcome. “It is just another step in the history of agriculture,” according to Joseph Zak of the American Soybean Association, which is trying to fos-

ter European acceptance of Monsanto's Roundup Ready soya.²⁰

Monsanto's current advertising campaign is best understood in the context of their first foray into the European market for genetically engineered food. Their miscalculation – that the European consumer would react the same as the US consumer – was so monumental that the company had no choice but to try a completely different approach. Their first approach was to suppress public awareness. Now they say “food is so fundamentally important that everyone should know all they want to about it.” Only *after* the fiasco did the company convert to the belief that a “transparent approach will find favour with consumers everywhere.”²¹ Monsanto's lately acquired commitment to dialogue, to reducing pesticide use, to feeding the world, is the reaction of a company in a dilemma. Its critics, perhaps annoyed at being named in the Monsanto ads, can take heart from the fact that these ads reflect the genuine threat that their efforts represent to the unfettered spread of food biotechnology. As Doug Parr of Greenpeace UK puts it: “These ads are a sign of a company losing an argument.”

Yet Monsanto should not be underestimated. Its commitment to food biotechnology is total, and the financial community is bullish on the company's future. Monsanto has even spun off its traditional chemical businesses, preferring to concentrate on biotechnology as its strategic business. If food biotechnology goes down, Monsanto goes with it. Monsanto has of necessity developed some rather compelling-sounding arguments to bolster its contention that food biotechnology equals sustainable development and vice-versa.

The most dangerous of these arguments is that genetic engineering is the answer to the world's food supply problems. Monsanto tugs at our heart strings by pointing to the gap between a growing world population and food supply.²² In *The Independent* they tell us “worrying about starving future generations won't feed them. Food biotechnology will.” Who would want to deny the world's poor children a chance for better nutrition, their parents a chance to grow crops more easily? Who would be so selfish as to oppose genetically altered foods for themselves when they will benefit the less fortunate? This is Greenwash with a Guilt Trip.

But will genetically engineered crops help feed the hungry? In theory, it is possible that some transgenic plants could be more nutritious, travel better, or produce better yields in harsh climates. But that is a far cry from bringing these foods to hungry people. In any case, Monsanto's main emphasis has been on developing crops that cannot conceivably play any part in feeding the impoverished masses of the third world. A detailed analysis of the relationship between genetic engineering and world hunger is beyond the scope of this article, but a brief look at few Monsanto products shows why the food supply argument is Greenwash.

For example, Monsanto's rBGH is designed to increase milk production. But the US already has an oversupply of milk, and the expense of using it excludes it from use by poor dairy farmers in the Third World.

Roundup-Ready soybeans are not designed to increase yield, though their ease of use might allow farmers to plant more soybeans (while increasing use of Monsanto's Roundup herbicide in those marginal acres). But these additional soybeans will not make it to the mouths of protein-deficient kids. Most soybeans end up in oil or become minor ingredients in a wide variety of processed foods never seen by undernourished peasants in Bangladesh or Chad.²³

Most of Monsanto's Yieldgard corn goes to animal feed. And so it goes for Monsanto's transgenic canola, sugar beets, cotton, corn or potatoes – none of them is designed to put food

in the mouths of hungry children.

Monsanto's exploitation of this emotional issue may create its own backlash. Diplomats from 24 African countries recently issued a joint statement with NGOs objecting “strongly that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology which is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us.”²⁴ [See box “Let the Harvest Continue” in this issue]

High technology, high input cash crops are not the solution for world hunger. They are, however, helpful to Monsanto's appetite for increased control over food production. Their purchase of seed companies, their contractual prohibitions on farmers' brown-bagging seeds, their opposition to smaller companies trying to avoid rBGH, their fear of labelling, all speak of a company anxious to advance our dependence on them for our basic sustenance.

In the long term, Monsanto believes it will win us over to transgenic crops. I imagine its executives see European opposition as a temporary setback, but one which will be inevitably overcome as progress – and profit – marches on. Their advertising campaign is necessary to undo the damage caused by the arrogance of the last few years, just a small price to pay considering what is at stake for them.

In Monsanto's 1995 Environmental Review, CEO Shapiro wrote: “There have been times in Monsanto's 94-year history when we, like others, weren't as aware of our actions as we should have been. These days have been over for a long time.” Critics of genetic engineering are crying out for a re-evaluation of Shapiro's conclusion. Perhaps he should call the numbers in their advertisements after all.

Kenny Bruno is the the Co-author, with Jed Greer, of *Greenwash: the Reality Behind Corporate Environmentalism*, 1996, Third World Network, Penang, Malaysia.

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