

GMO Opposition Week

27 nov. – 1st Dec 2006, Chiba, Japan
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N.B.: The date in the beginning should be 9-12 Nov.2006 (instead of 9.12.2006)

*The text is written in two different types. The normal letters explain the events and the italic letters belong to the speakers. The minutes and the seconds are written in **bold red** color.*

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00:10-00:53

The “**No to GMOs Platform**”, which was launched in March 2004, is a civil society movement formed in a spirit of solidarity and comprised of organizations working in Turkey in the area of ecology, environment, agriculture, and consumer rights, including more than 90 NGOs.

“Chamber of Agricultural Engineers” and “Initiative for the Confederation of Farmer Unions” who are the members of the No To GMOs Platform, have organized the 2.Ecological Festival in Esme, Sarigol, Alasehir, Salihli towns and villages between 9-12th november 2006.

The main topics of the festival and the meetings were “**Seed is life and life is ours**” and “**save your seeds**”.

The local people of these towns and villages were farmers and they mostly grow cotton, grape, tobacco and grains.

00:54- 01:36

In the first day there was a panel under the topic “**Turkish Agriculture under the pressure of Globalisation**” in which the speakers have given information about the danger of the globalisation and the how Wold Bank,IMF and WTO are trying to kill the farmers.

“Agricultural monopolies in the world are a handful. But through lobbies that they establish, they enable themselves to implement the laws and agricultural productions to their own benefits. Laws that are made to the benefit of multinational corporations, influence the lives of more than 3 billion peasants.

Farmers and peasants;

- *Have the right to determine the kind of the plant they want to produce*
- *Have the right to denounce the plants which would be harmful economically, ecologically and culturally*
- *Have the right to determine the forms and conditions of farming they want to perform*
- *Have the right to save and develop local agricultural knowledge*
- *Have the right to use agricultural facilities*
- *Have the right to choose personally and collectively their product types, quantities, qualities, and the particular way of breeding and cultivation democratically.*
- *Have the right to choose a technology that is convenient to human health and ecology and to use this particular techonology in breeding and cultivation.*
- *Have the right to develop and grow their native species.*

The government musn't turn our country to a testing field for the global monopolies. Refrain from burying the farmers. And respect the farmer's universal rights concerning seed production and agriculture, and do not contribute to the making of a slavery agricultural laws and directives in the 21th century.”

01:37 – 02:16

In the second day there was a panel on “**Kisladag Gold Mine and It's Affects On The Environment**” The mine is located not very far from the agricultural lands and the peasants were very curious about the cyanide that is used in gold mining process.The participants of the panel informed the people about the potential risks of the mine to the health and the environment.

The profit that is gained from the gold will not have any meaning if the the health of the people in this area and the agricultural lands will heavily be affected .

“Gold” is always symbolised as wealth, richness and power, but for the farmers “the gold” is their fertile land and the crops that they breed...

02:17 – 03:03

The panel that was organized in Yesilova village was about the **“Biosafety law and the GMOs”**. The draft law of Biosafety has been prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture in Turkey. There were lots of concerns about this draft law due to the possibility of accepting the importation and breeding GMO crops in Turkey.

“Our current biosafety law, codes and regulations, our customs services and laboratories are not ready yet for the analysis of GMO products and seeds. It is necessary that these preparations be made as soon as possible. Also The Turkish Food Codex should define the GMO products and these products should be banned forever because of their potential risks and harmful effects on human health.

Turkey has a rich biodiversity with 3.000 endemic plants out of 13.000 species. This ecologic richness will be under a great risk if the GM crops will freely produced in our lands.

By spreading through the natural plant species, the modified genes destroy the genetic diversity in their natural habitat, cause a deviation in the natural structures of wild species and violate the distribution and balances in the ecosystem.

The farmer largely depends on several agricultural industry organizations to achieve produce from the field. It is not difficult to guess that an important part of these companies are multinationals. 8-10 companies dominate the world seed market of genetically modified agriculture and feed products. The main target of these companies is to shape the agriculture and stock raising sectors of all countries so that they have to depend on them for seeds.

Patent rights of the sources of the third world countries with rich gene resources, are gradually collected by a few developed countries, in fact by a few multinational companies

In genetic changes, only the technique used may be patented. All the other patents given for the genes that already exist in nature are not legal. So the plants and the seeds cannot be patented. This is biological crime, and biopiracy. If the farmer reuses the excess seeds of genetically modified cotton, corn or corn, he has to repay a fee to the patent owner. One of the oldest and most fundamental methods, saving seeds from your own crops for the following year is therefore totally removed.

03:04-03:48

Participants of the Ecology festival were informed by the local people on the local food. The first lesson was about concentrated grape juice which is produced by boiling the grape juice in open air and called as **PEKMEZ**. This thick syrup can be used as a sweetener in all the villages located in the grape growing areas of Turkey.

03:49-03:53

Home wine making was the second lesson for the participants. The wine expert showed the guests how to produce white wine from the pressed juice of regional grape varieties.

03:54 – 04:16

The last show representing the local food was **Poppy Seed paste**. Selected seeds of the poppy have been cooked and then pressed by the stone mill. The product flowing from the mill was held in containers to be sold.

04:17 – 05:17

The panel that was organized in Esme town was about **“Turkish Seed Law and Food Sovereignty”**

With the new Seed Law, the government intend to make the private sector the owner of the seeds. And it means that these corporate firms take the charge of the agriculture. Corporations that monopolizes the seeds would not only dominate the agriculture but also the fate of the food. The

approved law which culminates in the dominance of a few corporate on the food production, makes the Turkish farmers upset..

For the new seed law the concerns being expressed by many people and NGOs in Turkey about their potential effects on the millions of people who depend for their livelihoods on agriculture.

The rules governing the food system, including those on patents and plant variety protection, increasingly favour the larger firms (including the agro biotech companies), often result from their ability to lobby, and gravely threaten the livelihoods of small farmers and future food security.

In the food sovereignty the individuals, the public and the countries must have the right of producing their own food and to determine their own agricultural policies.

Food Sovereignty offers

To Protect the Sustainable small scale farming,

To preserve the national food markets from the unfair trade which oftenly uses dampings

To protect the rights of the farmers on the land and credit sources and their rights on the sources of genetics,land and water against the private companies.

What kind of agriculture we prefere?

Everybody must easily reach enough, payable, healthy and tasty food,

Rural public must live a honorable life in their rural habitat, must gain equal income for their equal labor

Everybody must assist economical development on local, regional or country basis

Everybody must protect the rural environment and landscape, culture, local food,land,water and biodiversity and must have a sustainable management.

SEED IS LIFE, LIFE IS OURS.

LIFE CANNOT BE PATENTED...

No to GMOs Platform – Turkey / November 2006