

## **Constitutional Court canceled the act which was laid down for Cargill**

The 6. entry of the act about making amendment of the land protection and usage act, which is known as “Cargill act” by Turkish public, is canceled by Constitutional Court.

The arrangement that was mentioned, whether their certificates are canceled by court decision or not, provides companies like Cargill to sustain activities which has built plants on first class agricultural lands by completely ignoring many rules. Turkish president Ahmet Necdet Sezer, submitted the case to the Constitutional Court and declared “ the decision of the judgement is rendered ineffective by recognizing industrial plants which had lost legal basis before”.

After several times in the past closing by court, activities of Cargill was allowed by legal arrangements which were made by previous cabinets. With coming into force of the last decision, in a case of a new arrangement of the cabinet, Cargill has to stop its activities. The declaration of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan “ I am sad for Cargill, we will continue our efforts about the issue”, casts suspicion about new arrangements.

The farmer unions and other democratic organizations would decisively pursue the struggle against the activities of Cargill which is supported by cabinets that defy the laws.

## **Legal Victory against the Commodification of Forests**

“The Regulation concerning the Trade of Forest Products” was suspended by the Council of the State, responding to the application filed by No to GMOs Platform and The Chamber of Agricultural Engineers. The Platform and the Chamber saw this regulation as a threat against Turkey’s ecosystem and biodiversity as a result of its attempt to commodify genetically modified forest products. The Eight Chamber of the Council of the State ruled its decision number 2006/1455 on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007, suspending the execution of the regulation’s 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>/2, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> articles and its temporary provision number 1.

This regulation could have created a suitable ground for the ruining of our country’s ecosystem and biological diversity. The regulation’s main objective was to turn the plants and forest byproducts into commodities that could be traded in international and national markets. Turkey is a rich country in terms of its biodiversity. Forest byproducts that could be imported from ecologically foreign geographies can harm the biodiversity of Turkey.

We are against the making our country a suitable trading ground for multinational corporations that aim at patenting genes, and working to further the commodification of agriculture, food, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. By pursuing Bio-Piracy, the multinationals are stealing our gene sources that belong to everyone. Moreover, the research concerning the biodiversity of Turkey and the scanning of its variations are not accomplished yet. In other words, we live with animals and plants that we are not aware of yet. The suspended regulation was aiming to commodify even the varieties we have yet to know, thus supporting Bio-piracy in our country.

Genetically Modified Organisms are increasingly used in forests. Despite the fact that GMOs are forbidden in Turkey, their growing and trade are tried to be made possible by circumventing the legal regulations. For example, the Seed Law Draft was also aiming at deregulating GMOs. Following the resistance of No to GMOs Platform, The Chamber of Agricultural Engineers and the Farmer Unions, the articles concerning the deregulation of

GMOs are taken out from the code. However, the articles that are against the farmers' right on their seeds passed.

We welcome our sister organizations' success in this legal battle. The suspending of the articles that make possible the trading of GMO based forest products was a positive step towards protecting our ecosystem and society from the perils whose effects we have yet to know. With this success, our countries' gene sources are saved from the mercantile interest of multinational companies.

Yet the struggle should continue, for similar attempts will be made around the Seed Law and the Draft Law on Biosecurity. The main objective of these laws should be the protection of the rights of peoples and the richness of biodiversity, not the furthering of the interests of multinational corporations. The objective of protecting our society and biodiversity is an aim, we as the No to GMO Platform, The Chamber of Agricultural Engineers and the Farmer Unions pursue diligently.

**Abdullah AYSU**

**Spokesperson  
Farmer Unions of Turkey**