

GM GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION – 8 APRIL 2006



No GM crops were grown in the UK in 2005 for the first time since 1993. This is a huge success for the GM campaign in the UK. However, GM soya and maize continue to be imported as animal feed and the recent WTO judgement will bring further pressure from the likes of Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta and Dow to open up our shores to GM imports.

The **GM Global Day of Action** on 8 April is ideally timed to remind the UK government, US government, EU, the biotech companies and the food/feed industry that the UK wants to be a GM-free country in a GM-free Europe in a GM-free world. It has been proposed that we all take part in one action to mark the **Global Day of Action** across the country.

The suggestion is that groups and individuals join up to light Beacons on the highest points or other prominent hills of their county (list by county available). We would all aim to light up at 16.00 on 8 April and photograph our GM-Free Beacon plus suitably worded banner for the local media and issue a press release.

THE BEACONS

The beacons need not be massive – just big enough to look impressive in a photograph. A minimum of three people would be needed to act as sherpas for a banner, wood, newspaper, lighter/matches, fire lighters, water and digital camera to the top of the hill. The best way to carry such loads would be on your head but on your back is a good second! Choose a bare piece of ground or rock to make your beacon. Fire lighters and a lighter might be handy in very windy weather.

GETTING A GOOD PICTURE

You will need a reasonably high resolution digital camera to get pictures accepted by newspapers. Three to four million pixels should do. Work out your best angle before lighting the beacon. Take several shots and pick the best ones.

SAFETY AND FIRE PREVENTION

If the weather remains dry and windy the risk of fire spreading may be high so we need to be seen to be acting in a responsible manner. Here are a few tips: • Check that there is not a ban on fires on the hill tops you intend to use for the beacon before starting to plan. • Smaller beacons will be easier to control than large ones. • Choose bare ground or a flat rock to build your beacon. • Extinguish the fire completely, including embers before you leave (hence the water).

BAD WEATHER

The weather in early April can be appalling on high ground (and low ground!) so check the forecast before you set out. Take water proof and warm clothing, food and water, plus torch, map etc.

If it is a day when the cloud cover is very bad or very poor weather is forecast please do not proceed. It's simple enough to inform your local media that bad weather forced you to cancel.

LOCAL MEDIA WORK

Send an announcement of your GM-free beacon ahead of the **Global Day of Action** to warn your local papers that they can expect a picture by email over the weekend. Talk to someone to get them interested and find out the right person to email photographs to after the event. Include background information and a good quote. You never know they might even send their own photographer. You might consider dressing as GM-free scare crows to increase the appeal of the pictures.

After the GM-Free Beacon select your two best pictures and email them to all your local press contacts again enclosing a press release and quote in time for the first edition of the paper. If you are trying to get coverage in several papers it's best to send a difference picture to each one – they are funny like that. Ideally send pictures as soon as possible after the event to maximize chances of getting it in. Include local radio and TV as you might get a pre or post beacon interview.

NATIONAL MEDIA

If we get sufficient support (say 20 Beacons) we will compile a list of actions and issue a national press release. Please copy pre-Beacon announcements to us Monday 3rd April so we can get them to any paper that might be interested. Copy photos to us as well – we'll put them on the web.

WHAT TO DO

If you would like to get involved either by lighting a beacon, organising people to do it, or arranging publicity please contact:

Gerald Miles: gm@stdavids.co.uk 07879 664703 or Pete Riley: pete@gmfreeze.org 07903 341065

Give your name, number and the area in which you wish to operate. We will then send you more information and compile a list of actions.

DON'T THINK ABOUT IT - DO IT NOW!