

# PROTECT FAMILY FARMS

## STOP THE RELEASE OF GM ALFALFA!

### GENETICALLY MODIFIED ALFALFA IS AN URGENT THREAT NOW

Companies want to introduce GM alfalfa this year. Prairie farmers have already vocally opposed GM alfalfa, so now the industry is trying to introduce GM alfalfa in Eastern Canada first – but farmers in the East also say no.

- » Alfalfa is used to produce many of the foods we eat everyday! It's feed for animals, and it also feeds the soil.
- » GM alfalfa will contaminate non-GM alfalfa because alfalfa is a perennial, insect-pollinated plant.
- » The entire process for approving GM crops is secret.
- » Farmers are not consulted before a new GM crop is introduced.
- » There is no assessment of potential economic harm before a new GM crop is approved.
- » Conventional and organic farmers across Canada widely agree that GM alfalfa is not needed and is an economic threat.

#### WHAT FOODS ARE PRODUCED WITH ALFALFA?

Dairy products including milk, butter, cheese, yogurt  
Beef, as well as meat from sheep, chickens and pigs  
Grains and vegetables! Many farmers rely on alfalfa  
to build healthy soil to grow their crops  
Alfalfa sprouts for sandwiches and salads  
Some honey  
Some "green" health shakes and supplements  
have alfalfa ingredients

### WHAT IS GM ALFALFA?

A company called Forage Genetics International has applied Monsanto's genetically modified (GM) Roundup Ready (herbicide resistant) technology to alfalfa.

Canadian regulatory authorities have approved GM alfalfa for eating and growing, but the company needs to complete one more step, called variety registration, before it can sell GM alfalfa. This last step could be completed any day.

### WHAT IS ALFALFA?

Alfalfa is popularly called the "Queen of Forages" and is extremely important for different types of farmers across Canada.

**ALFALFA IS HAY AND PASTURE:** Alfalfa is a legume that is grown as a mix with grasses, to produce high quality hay and haylage. The hay bales we see across our rural landscape often include alfalfa.

**ALFALFA BUILDS THE SOIL:** Farmers plant alfalfa after growing other crops in their fields to fix nitrogen in the soil, to build soil fertility and organic matter, and

to stop soil erosion. It's particularly important for organic farmers who don't use chemical fertilizers.

**ALFALFA PRODUCTS ARE IMPORTANT EXPORTS:** Alfalfa is also grown to produce seeds and dehydrated alfalfa products such as pellets and cubes, which are exported to feed animals in Asia and Europe.

**ALFALFA IS AN UNSUNG HERO IN FARMING:** Alfalfa is one of the most widely planted crops in Canada. It is planted on about 30% of cropland in Canada, and at least 22% of cropland in Ontario.

TAKE ACTION



# HOW WOULD GM ALFALFA CONTAMINATE FARMERS FIELDS AND OUR FOOD?

## IF GM ALFALFA IS RELEASED, CONTAMINATION WOULD BE UNAVOIDABLE!

Since alfalfa is a perennial plant that is pollinated by bees, GM alfalfa would inevitably cross-pollinate with non-GM and organic alfalfa, threatening the livelihoods of family farmers across Canada. If its introduced, GM alfalfa would ruin export markets for alfalfa products, contaminate family farms, make it more difficult for farmers to control weeds, and threaten the future of organic food and farming in Canada.

### ALFALFA IS POLLINATED BY BEES

Alfalfa is insect-pollinated, which means that its flowers depend on insects, mainly leafcutter bees, honeybees and other native pollinators, for cross-pollination. Since we can't control where bees travel, we can't stop contamination!

### ALFALFA IS A PERENNIAL

Alfalfa is a deep-rooted perennial crop. Perennial means that the plant survives for more than one year, and can re-grow from persistent roots.

### ALFALFA HARVESTS MAY BE DELAYED

If GM alfalfa is not harvested before plants bloom, the risk of contamination becomes even higher. The realities of farming mean that farmers may have to delay harvesting due to weather, equipment failures, or other unforeseen circumstances.

### ALFALFA'S TINY SEEDS CAN EASILY ESCAPE

Seeds will spill and escape when they're planted, harvested or hauled. They may get left behind in farm equipment. We can't avoid human error and alfalfa seeds are tiny!

### ALFALFA CAN GROW WILD

Alfalfa grows well on roadsides and in ditches. When it is grows wild, its called feral alfalfa. Nobody is responsible for managing feral plants and they increase the risk of contamination.

## HOW CAN I TAKE ACTION?

### WRITE LETTERS – NO POSTAGE REQUIRED!

to your **Member of Parliament**

(you can search for your MPs contacts using your postal code at [WWW.PARL.GC.CA](http://WWW.PARL.GC.CA))

and to the **Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz**

[GERRY.RITZ@PARL.GC.CA](mailto:GERRY.RITZ@PARL.GC.CA) • TEL: 613-995-7080 • FAX 613-996-8472

or by mail: Hon. Gerry Ritz, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

For a sample letter or to **SEND A LETTER INSTANTLY** through CBAN's website, **VISIT [WWW.CBAN.CA/ALFALFA](http://WWW.CBAN.CA/ALFALFA)**

Groups and Businesses can sign the statement against GM alfalfa. **[WWW.CBAN.CA/ALFALFA](http://WWW.CBAN.CA/ALFALFA)**

Check for the latest actions and news at **[WWW.CBAN.CA/ALFALFA](http://WWW.CBAN.CA/ALFALFA)**

See CBAN's April, 2013 report – *The Inevitability of Contamination from GM Alfalfa Release in Ontario* for more information on how contamination will occur. **[www.cban.ca/alfalfaONreport](http://www.cban.ca/alfalfaONreport)**

