



November 18, 2009

Hon. Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

RE: Urgent request to meet regarding your statements on Terminator technology

Dear Minister Ritz,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network to request a meeting to discuss the issue of Terminator technology, technically called Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURTS) and commonly referred to as “suicide seeds”, - seeds genetically engineered to be sterile after first harvest.

We would like to discuss this important issue and provide you with information in order to address incorrect statements on Terminator technology that, according to a quote in the Manitoba Cooperator (November 5), you made to Chinese officials.

Your statements referred to the current use of Terminator in canola. However, this is factually incorrect as Terminator has not been commercialized, or field-tested, in any country, including Canada. Additionally, and most importantly, there is an international moratorium on Terminator at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity – a moratorium that was established in 2000 and strengthened in 2006.

Terminator technology is extremely dangerous and is highly controversial across the world. Throughout 2006 and 2007, thousands of Canadians sent postcards and letters to the Prime Minister expressing their concern over Terminator, requesting that the international moratorium be maintained and strengthened, and asking for a Canadian ban on this technology.

We are concerned that your statements on Terminator are raising further alarm about Canada’s regulation of genetically modified (GM) crops and foods on the world stage. We are also concerned that such comments are adding to the growing international suspicion of Canadian GM regulation of and Canadian exports, at a time of market crisis for farmers that is directly related to genetically modified crops. As you know:

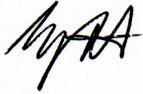
- Europe has closed its doors to Canadian flax due to contamination with GM flax.
- Canada approved the eight-trait GM corn “SmartStax” in a way that is not consistent with European regulations.
- Monsanto withdrew its submission for approval in Europe of the high lysine GM corn LY038 that is approved in Canada, because European authorities requested additional food safety data.

We urge you to clarify the Government's position on Terminator technology, and to state the Government's opposition to Terminator and support of the UN moratorium.

We ask that you also write to Chinese authorities to correct the information and state the Government's opposition to any application of Terminator technology.

A delegation from our Network stands ready to meet with you as soon as your schedule permits. We hope you accord this request the urgency it so deserves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Sharratt', written in a cursive style.

Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator

