



# CBAN ANNUAL REPORT



2019

RESEARCH EDUCATE MOBILIZE [CBAN.CA](http://CBAN.CA)

# RESEARCH

## GM CONTAMINATION

In March, we published the report “GM Contamination in Canada: The failure to contain living modified organisms,” in English and French.

The report is the first to document the details and impacts of all the known contamination incidents in Canada involving genetically engineered (genetically modified or GM) crops and animals. Over the almost two and half decades of GM commercialization in Canada, we have observed the escape of four GMOs: GM canola and GM flax, as well as experimental GM wheat and GM pigs.

The costs of GM contamination and escape incidents include the temporary or permanent loss of export markets, lower crop prices, the loss of access to grow a particular crop, and the loss of some farm-saved seed.

Our report concluded that, once released into our environment, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can be difficult or impossible to control or recall.

We sent a copy of the report to all MPs. We also presented the results to the Canadian Organic Trade Association conference and provided copies to farmers at the National Farmers Union convention, Organic Connections in Saskatoon, and the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario conference.



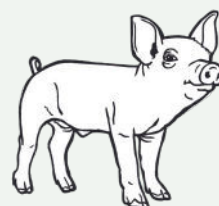
CANOLA



FLAX



WHEAT



PIGS



Our report was published with the Organic Agriculture Protection Fund of SaskOrganics, which was founded to pay the expenses for a Class Action lawsuit on behalf of all certified organic grain farmers in Saskatchewan against Monsanto and Aventis (Bayer). The farmers sought compensation for damages caused by genetically engineered canola and an injunction to prevent Monsanto from introducing GM wheat in Saskatchewan.

[www.cban.ca/ContaminationReport2019](http://www.cban.ca/ContaminationReport2019)

> Saskatchewan organic grain farmer Arnold Taylor and Marla Carlson, Executive Director of SaskOrganics, 2019.



## GOLDEN RICE

In November, we released a new report on “Golden Rice,” a rice that has been genetically engineered to produce beta carotene, which the body can convert into vitamin A. Our report found that Golden Rice has low and variable levels of beta-carotene, the beta-carotene degrades significantly during storage and cooking, and it has not been adequately tested for bioavailability.

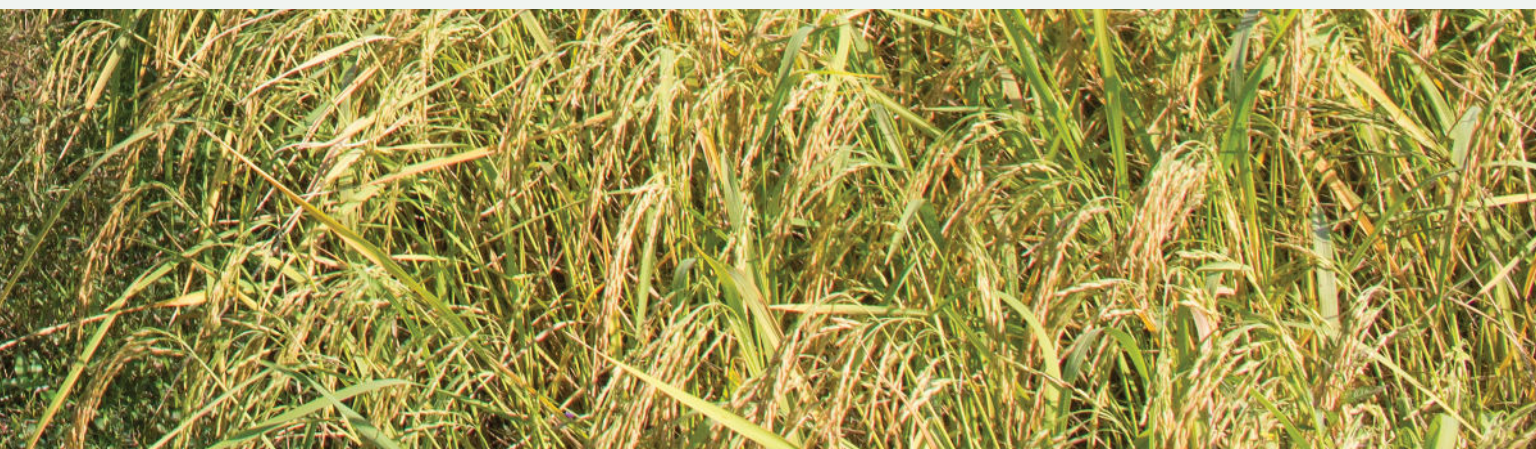
Our updated report was particularly important because, in 2018, Health Canada approved Golden Rice as safe to eat, even though it will not be sold in Canada. In December, shortly after our report was published, the Government of the Philippines approved Golden Rice for human consumption, becoming the first country in the Global South to do so.

Despite these safety approvals, the rice’s ability to provide vitamin A remains unevaluated by governments, and it has not yet been approved for growing.

*“This is a safety approval for a product that is not yet demonstrated to work as promised,” said CBAN researcher Taarini Chopra, in a CBAN press release. “This approval sounds like a step forward for Golden Rice, but it doesn’t make the product any more effective.”*

In 2019, we continued to exchange information with the pan-Asian network called the *Stop Golden Rice! Network*, which includes many farmer organizations.

[www.cban.ca/goldenrice](http://www.cban.ca/goldenrice)





CBAN's Coordinator Lucy Sharratt testifies at the House of Commons Agriculture Committee. April, 2019.

# CAMPAIGNS

## LABELLING

In April, CBAN testified in front of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, to press for mandatory labelling and stronger regulation of genetically engineered foods. Our testimony was part of the committee's study, "Public perception of and public trust in the Canadian Agricultural Sector." We stressed three recommendations: regulatory reform focused on transparency, mandatory labelling, and zero-tolerance for contamination from unapproved GMOs. Throughout 2019 we stressed the need for mandatory labelling when discussing the GM salmon.



## GM SALMON

In April 2019, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada approved the production of GM salmon at a land-based facility at Rollo Bay in P.E.I. This decision followed an initial approval in 2013 that was challenged in the courts.

Throughout 2019, CBAN communicated directly with the seafood industry. CBAN and the Quebec network Vigilance OGM were present together at the North American Seafood Show in March (Boston) and at the Canadian International Seafood Show in September (Montreal).

In 2019, we:

- Issued three press releases on the GM salmon and generated wide coverage in mainstream and seafood industry media throughout the year.
- Called for a seafood industry boycott of all AquaBounty's salmon eggs in order to eliminate the risk of any accidental mixing of the company's GM and non-GM salmon eggs, both produced at the same facility in P.E.I.
- Organized an information picket outside the Canadian International Seafood Show in Montreal, where we spoke to members of the public and show attendees.
- Organized and spoke at a panel event at the Canadian International Seafood Show called "What is the impact of genetic engineering on





Information picket outside the Canadian International Seafood Show with Vigilance OGM, Montreal. September, 2019.

the seafood market?” that included seafood industry speakers.

- Organized a bilingual public panel called “Replacing Nature: The challenges of genetically modified salmon” including ecologists working in aboriginal fisheries management.
- Published a factsheet on the GM salmon in English and French - and in Spanish at the request of the youth of the international peasant movement *La Via Campesina*.

In response to a CBC Radio interview with CBAN’s Coordinator, CBC contacted AquaBounty and reported “AquaBounty considers labelling genetically modified salmon.” In response to CBAN’s panel at the Canadian Seafood Show in September, *SeafoodSource* media contacted AquaBounty and reported “AquaBounty planning to label GM salmon in the US.”

The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance now says that they are considering supporting mandatory GM food labelling.



Lucy Sharratt, CBAN Coordinator, with Thibault Rehn, Vigilance OGM Coordinator, at the Seafood Expo North America in Boston, March, 2019, at the Government of Panama’s booth where we were told AquaBounty would soon shut down their Panama plant. GM salmon was shipped from Panama to Canada 2017-2019.

## PESTICIDES

**C**BAN partnered with the group Prevent Cancer Now to jointly call for a comprehensive review of the environmental, health and economic impacts of using herbicide-tolerant crops. Almost 100% of all the GM crops grown in Canada are genetically engineered to be herbicide-tolerant.

We made this call in response to Monsanto’s request for government approval of a GM corn that can tolerate applications of four herbicides; and is the first to be tolerant to both 2,4-D and dicamba.

*“We need to evaluate the impacts of the whole system, not just assess individual products one by one,”* said Lucy Sharratt, CBAN’s Coordinator, in a related press release.

## GENOME EDITING

**N**ew genetic engineering techniques called genome editing, or gene editing, are getting a lot of attention.

In January, CBAN organized a workshop called “Future GMOs” at the Guelph Organic Conference for farmers, consumers and organic sector leaders, featuring scientist Jonathan Latham, PhD (Ithaca, NY), editor of *Independent Science News* and former genetic engineer, along with Dag Falck from Nature’s Path Foods. We discussed the science, risks and regulations and why use of the new techniques pose an urgent risk to the organic sector.

We also published an introductory flyer on gene editing and a new webpage on our website: [www.cban.ca/geneediting](http://www.cban.ca/geneediting).

# EVENTS & PRESENTATIONS

In 2019, CBAN staff and volunteers made presentations to farmer organizations, organic industry groups, seafood industry representatives, community groups, university classes, and public gatherings.

We also organized a public event on the GM salmon in Montreal, as well as a panel for the seafood industry at the Canadian International Seafood Show.

## Publications

- Report & Summary Factsheet: "GM Contamination in Canada: The failure to contain living modified organisms"
- Pamphlet: "Intro to Gene Editing"
- Factsheet: "'Golden Rice' – GM Vitamin-A Rice"
- Factsheet: "Genetically Modified Crops and Herbicides"
- Factsheet: "Genetically Modified Salmon"

## Media Outreach

In 2019, CBAN was widely quoted in mainstream and farm press. We also provided background information for many journalists.

- On gene editing, CBAN was quoted in *The Western Producer* and our Coordinator was interviewed for a documentary on CBC Radio's *The Sunday Edition*.
- When the government approved GM salmon production, CBAN was quoted in a Canadian Press article that was picked up in *The Globe and Mail*, *Global News*, *CTV*, and other outlets across the country. At that time, CBAN's Coordinator spent almost two hours in total on various CBC Radio shows across the country discussing the GM salmon and labelling.
- We were also quoted on the need for labelling in *The Guardian PEI*, *The Journal Pioneer*, and *The Epoch Times*, as well as in international and industry press such as *The Japan Times*, *GenomeWeb*, and *Seafood Source*.
- CBAN Member group Vigilance OGM was also widely quoted on labelling in the French-language press including in the *Journal de Montreal* and *La Presse*, and via multiple interviews on Radio Canada.



1. From left to right: Heather Lee, No More GMOs Toronto & CBAN Steering Committee; Lucy Sharratt, CBAN Coordinator; Maureen Kirkpatrick, The Big Carrot & CBAN Steering Committee; Mary Lou McDonald, Save Food Matters, at the Canadian Organic Trade Association summit in Ottawa, Nov. • 2. Tanmayo Krupansky volunteers at the CBAN booth, Canadian Health Food Association tradeshow, Toronto, Sept. • 3. Taarini Chopra, CBAN researcher, talks with a farmer at the National Farmers Union convention, Winnipeg, Dec. • 4. CBAN Coordinator Lucy Sharratt at the CBC Radio studio in Halifax, April. • 5. CBAN's Coordinator at the CBC Radio studio in Toronto, Dec. • 6. Heather Lee of CBAN's Steering Committee & CBAN member group No More GMOs Toronto, with Lucy Sharratt, CBAN's Coordinator, Guelph Organic Conference, Jan.

## Press Releases

- GM "Golden Rice" Approved as Safe to Eat in Philippines But Ability to Provide Vitamin A Remains Unevaluated. December 20.
- Environmental Groups Call for Seafood Industry Boycott of AquaBounty's Salmon Eggs to Prevent Mix-Ups at Fish Farms. September 12.
- Call to Re-think Genetically Engineered Herbicide-Tolerant Crops. August 22.
- First Canadian Case of Insect Resistance to Genetically Engineered Corn Discovered. June 10.
- Minister Approves First Commercial GM Fish Factory: Groups raise concerns over transparency and environmental risk. April 2.
- New Report Documents Impacts of GM Contamination in Canada: Groups call for deregistration of genetically modified alfalfa. March 26.
- GM Salmon: Allegations of misleading advertising not to be addressed by Canadian Food Inspection Agency. February 8.





Our panel event “What is the impact of genetic engineering on the seafood market?” at the Canadian Seafood Show featured, from left to right: Kathleen Allen, Aquaculture Stewardship Council; Frantz Perrot, Lagoon Seafood; Lucy Sharratt, CBAN; Thibault Rehn, Vigilance OGM. Sept. 26, Montreal.



Speakers at “Replacing Nature: The Challenges of Genetically Modified Salmon,” from left to right: Thibault Rehn, Vigilance OGM; Lyne Morissette, Ecologist; Catherine Lambert Koizumi, Mi’gmaq Maliseet Aboriginal Fisheries Management Association; Pierre Jenniss, Malécite Viger First Nation; Lucy Sharratt, CBAN. Sept. 26, Montreal.



“Future GMOs” panel members, from left to right: Johnathan Latham, Independent Science News; Lucy Sharratt, CBAN; Dag Falck, Nature’s Path; with facilitator Heather Lee of No More GMOs Toronto. Guelph Organic Conference, January 27, 2019

## Feedback to CBAN in 2019

### From the public:

Grateful thanks for CBAN's high quality work.

I would like to make a donation to your organization which is doing such fantastic work trying to make our society a better one.

You and your team are amazing!

Thank you for all your hard work - it is VERY much appreciated!

How rich! How wide-reaching! This is truly impressive. Thank you – this represents tons of work on your part.

Thank you for all the work you do to keep us informed and try to protect us. It is so greatly appreciated!

### From other groups:

So grateful for your coordination and work on this.

I really appreciate the meeting summaries you’ve provided. They are very concise and useful.

A journalist was asking me questions about this topic and you have the answers. :)

I really appreciated your leadership on this, it will certainly benefit the campaign!

I can confidently speak for the board in saying that we're all very grateful for the committed work of CBAN.

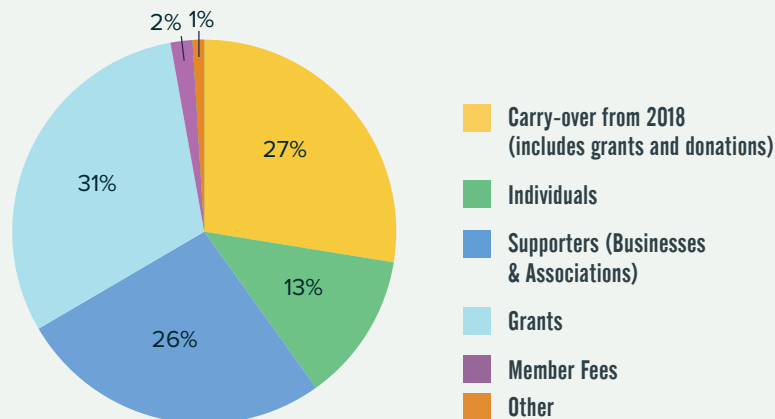
## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS IN 2019

The Bernard and Edith Ennis Foundation  
The Big Carrot Natural Market, Toronto  
Booch Organic Kombucha  
Canadian Health Food Association  
Tides Canada Foundation — Dragonfly Fund  
Inter Pares  
New Roots Herbal  
McGregor-Sinclair Ecology and Peace Fund  
Sunnyside Natural Market, Calgary

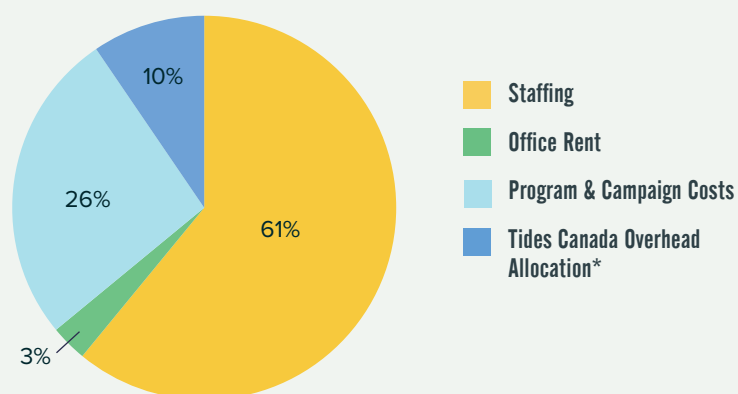
**Thank you to the 81 individuals who donated to support our work in 2019!**

## FINANCES

### 2019 CBAN Revenue \$189,458



### 2019 CBAN Expenses \$158,581



\*Tides Canada Overhead Allocation: CBAN is a project on Tides Canada's shared platform which provides governance, human resources, financial, and grant management. A portion of our revenue - 10% of revenue from individual donations, and 12% from grants - is allocated to overhead to support these costs. Tides Canada has full fiduciary and governance responsibility for CBAN.

### We honour the life and work of **ISOBEL MARY SINCLAIR MCGREGOR**

who died in 2019. For a decade, Isobel took action with CBAN. She also often provided encouraging messages to CBAN staff.

CBAN is grateful for the support of the **McGregor-Sinclair Ecology and Peace Fund** over many years.

Thank you, Isobel, for your inspiring commitment and generosity.

**The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)** brings together 16 organizations to research, monitor and raise awareness about issues relating to genetic engineering in food and farming. CBAN members include farmer associations, environmental and social justice organizations, and regional coalitions of grassroots groups.

**CBAN is a project on Tides Canada's shared platform**, which is a registered charity in Canada.  
[www.tidescanada.org/our-solutions/shared-platform/](http://www.tidescanada.org/our-solutions/shared-platform/)

### CBAN MEMBERS:

Canadian Organic Growers, Check Your Head, Council of Canadians, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, Ecology Action Centre, GE Free BC, GMO Free PEI, Greenpeace Canada, Growers of Organic Food Yukon, Inter Pares, National Farmers Union, No More GMOs Toronto, Organic Agriculture Protection Fund of SaskOrganics, SeedChange, Union Paysanne, Vigilance OGM.