

# CBAN

CBAN.CA

## ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023



RESEARCH EDUCATE MOBILIZE

**2023** started with the resignation of the President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), as demanded by the National Farmers Union, following revelations that a CFIA proposal to remove government GMO regulation was written by the biotechnology and pesticide lobby group CropLife.

Despite sustained pressure from farmers and consumers to maintain government safety assessments of all GMOs, in May, the Minister of Agriculture bowed to industry pressure and allowed corporate self-regulation for most future gene-edited seeds. The year ended with a media exposé of the corporate-government “Tiger Team” that designed this plan to remove government regulation.



However, 2023 also saw two very significant positive results from our campaigning:

GM salmon production in Canada ended, and the *de facto* global ban on GM trees in industrial plantations was upheld.

In 2023, CBAN organized many public events and meetings on genetically modified trees, and we continued to provide presentations and information on genetic engineering to diverse audiences. We ended the year by publishing our own newspaper.



# Democracy and (De)Regulation

While our actions across the country delayed the federal government’s decision by two years, in May 2023, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food removed transparency and government environmental risk assessments from most future gene-edited GM seeds. This followed a similar decision in 2022 from Health Canada to remove government safety assessments from gene-edited GM foods.

We reject this corporate control. We will fight back against this corporate control of our food and seeds. We will continue to protect our environment against the risks of GMOs and to work in solidarity with farmers to fight back against corporate control over farming.

“Your actions, and integrity and determination made a big difference here. Thanks for doing what you do!”

– Katie Ward, President, National Farmers Union

There was scant media reporting of this entire issue but CBAN’s opinion article was published in the Parliamentary newspaper, *The Hill Times*. A National Farmers Union article in the major farm paper *The Western Producer* also referred farmers to CBAN’s consultation guide for more information.



We also met with officials in Health Canada and the CFIA, staff in the Minister of Health’s office, and some Members of Parliament.

Our work supported public engagement and increased the profile of concerns over genetic engineering and corporate lobbying, highlighted the failures of GM crops, and provided public education on the new genetic engineering techniques of gene editing.



CBAN supported a national day of action in March, where farmers’ calls to the minister jammed the phone lines.

We will stop this corporate takeover of our food system. Read our response at [www.cban.ca/declaration](http://www.cban.ca/declaration). [www.cban.ca/NoExemptions/Publications](http://www.cban.ca/NoExemptions/Publications)

# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

In October, CBAN published its first-ever edition of a newspaper! It was designed for farmer conferences and other public outreach. We distributed 9000 newspapers across the country. [cban.ca/newspaper](http://cban.ca/newspaper)

We continued to make presentations to the public, at university classes, and farmer conferences. CBAN regularly contributes articles to the *Watershed Sentinel* magazine.

In 2023, we corrected Bayer’s own website about GMOs in Canada, which had an incorrect list of genetically modified foods for sale. We also corrected a media story that misreported that GM apples were on the market in Canada. Check the list of GM foods on the market at [cban.ca/gmfoods](http://cban.ca/gmfoods)



All the news that's fit to print! Seen here is food systems expert Brewster Kneen, and many CBAN member group representatives.

# GM TREES

In 2023, CBAN achieved a globally significant win when the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) upheld its ban on genetically modified (GM or genetically engineered) trees in its forest certification scheme. Biotech tree developers have been campaigning for years to end this ban and they were about to succeed. CBAN spearheaded a short-term campaign with allies from around the world and, as a result, FSC certification continues to be a major obstacle to the commercial release of GM trees globally.

This is really great news indeed!! We need such good news stories, now more than ever!! Thank you very much for holding all of this together and for including us in this important work. However, as you also indicate, the struggle is not over and wish you all the best with your onward work and are available to assist you wherever we can in the future.

– Mariam Mayet, Executive Director, African Centre for Biodiversity

Throughout 2023, we also implemented important work to challenge the proposal to release a genetically engineered blight-tolerant American chestnut tree – this would be the first GM plant to be purposefully released into the wild. We organized a series of meetings with representatives from five First Nations in southwestern Ontario, in the range of the American chestnut. We were also invited to provide information on GM trees to a gathering of Indigenous elders in Ontario. We organized three public events with a global expert on GM trees and risk assessment, Dr. Ricarda Steinbrecher, and held two workshops for environmental and social justice groups. The year ended with a surprise announcement from the key organization supporting the GE American chestnut project: The American Chestnut Foundation withdrew their support because studies show the GM tree does not actually work, though the developers still want to release it.



In the spring, CBAN was invited to participate in an international strategy meeting in Brazil on GM trees and we were given the opportunity to learn about the environmental and social impacts of industrial tree plantations. We visited Indigenous, Quilombola, and MST (Landless Worker Movement) communities who are fighting the expansion of already-massive eucalyptus tree plantations and we reported back to Canadians.

Thanks to a special grant, in October we produced a publication called “International Bulletin: Genetically Engineered Trees” in eight languages.



## PRESS RELEASES

Researchers Disown Their Own Genetically Engineered Tree

December 12, 2023

Expert Panel Commissioned by Health Canada Urges Caution on Gene-Edited Insects for Pest Control

November 8, 2023

Newly released e-mails show extent of industry influence over Health Canada decision to gut regulatory oversight of GM foods

September 27, 2023

Federal government allows biotechnology companies free reign in the food system, removes safety checks on corporate science and denies transparency to farmers and food companies

May 3, 2023

Forest Stewardship Council Backs Away from Genetic Engineering Following Global Campaign Calling on them to Uphold their Ban on GE Trees

April 4, 2023

AquaBounty to stop producing GM salmon in Canada, as world's first GM food animal struggles to find a market

February 7, 2023



## FEEDBACK FROM THE PUBLIC:

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all you do!!!! I really thought it needed to be known how much I appreciate the work you do. It is just so important.

Thank you for your always meticulous research and information dissemination.

Great communication!

Thank you for a great presentation last Thursday! The students really appreciated it and so did I!

Thank you for your dedicated work.

This is a very important topic and THANK YOU for putting this information together!! I will definitely donate.

We're glad to count CBAN as a fierce ally in this space.

I like how you Canadians tighten things up and get right to the heart of the matter!

Again I wish to reiterate that your work is ultra-important and I appreciate your efforts very much!!!

Thank you for the newspapers. We are excited to share this information with our customers and educate them even more on GM Foods.

Just wanted to pass along some nice feedback from one of our members that received the newspaper. He said it was "just fantastic, very eye opening, and please give the people involved in the research a HUGE PAT ON THE BACK".



# Thank You!

## TO OUR FUNDERS IN 2023

including donating businesses  
and organizations:

Alberta Organic Producers Association

Canadian Health Food Association

[www.chfa.ca](http://www.chfa.ca)

Ceres Trust

[www.cerestrust.org](http://www.cerestrust.org)

The Edith and Bernard Ennis Foundation

GEKKO Foundation

Grassroots Foundation

Inter Pares

[www.interpares.ca](http://www.interpares.ca)

MakeWay Foundation

Nature's Path Foods

New Roots Herbal Inc.

[www.newrootsherbal.com](http://www.newrootsherbal.com)

SaskOrganics

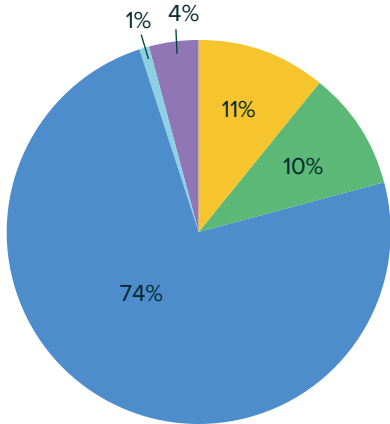
[www.saskorganics.org](http://www.saskorganics.org)

Thank you to all the  
individuals who donated  
in 2023.



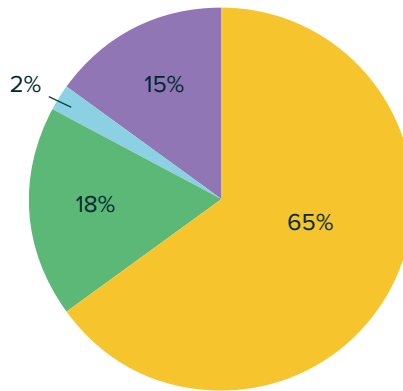
# FINANCES

## 2023 CBAN Revenue \$392,083



- Individuals
- Supporters (Businesses & Associations)
- Grants
- Member fees
- Other

## 2023 CBAN Expenses \$290,245



- Staffing
- Program & Campaign Costs
- Office expenses
- MakeWay Core Supports Contribution\*

\*MakeWay Core Supports Contribution: CBAN is a project on the shared platform of the MakeWay Charitable Society which provides governance, human resources, financial, and grant management. 12% of revenue is allocated to support these costs. MakeWay has full fiduciary and governance responsibility for CBAN.

**The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)** brings together 16 groups 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 of MakeWay's shared platform.** MakeWay Charitable Society (previously named Tides Canada) is a registered Canadian charity.

### 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

