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USDA Approval of Genetically Engineered Sugar Beets Ruled Unlawful by Federal Court

by Ethan Huff, citizen journalist

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(NaturalNews) On September 21, a California federal district court found that the USDA's 2004 approval of Monsanto's genetically engineered "Roundup Ready" sugar beets was unlawful. The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) deregulated GMO sugar beets without preparing an Environmental Impact Statement. Plaintiffs in the case, filed in January 2008, include the Center for Food Safety, the Organic Seed Alliance, the Sierra Club, and High Mowing Seeds.

Failing to account for cross-pollination of the GMO [seeds](#) with nearby fields of conventional and organic varieties was one of many unreasonable deficiencies cited by the court in the original [USDA](#) approval of the crop. Plaintiffs in the case are also emphasizing in no uncertain terms that they will not tolerate the continued pandering to the likes of [Monsanto](#) by the USDA. The USDA's job is to protect America's growers, [farmers](#), and consumers, not multinational corporations who patent genetically-altered seeds.

When Monsanto originally began marketing its "Roundup Ready" GMO sugar beet seeds, it enticed farmers with promises that the [crops](#) could be doused with [herbicide](#) up to five times a year without killing the crop. What it failed to disclose was the potential for entire crop fields to be cross-contaminated with genetically modified seeds, devastating the availability of untainted conventional and organic crops. The [environmental impact](#) of using GMO seeds is tremendous and could wipe out the non-GMO crops entirely.

Another issue not addressed by APHIS is the fact that continual applications of glyphosate, the herbicide marketed by Monsanto as Roundup, has led to the growth of Roundup-resistant [weeds](#) commonly referred to as "superweeds". Similar to [antibiotic](#) "superbugs" that become resistant to antibiotics, these superweeds require ever-increasing amounts of not only Roundup but other more potent, toxic herbicides just to keep them under control. There are currently millions of U.S. land acres that are infested with superweeds.

An independent analysis of USDA data by the former Executive Director of the National Academy of Sciences' Board on Agriculture, Dr. Charles Benbrook, has revealed some startling information. Between 1996, when "Roundup Ready" genetically engineered crops were first introduced, and 2004, herbicide use in the U.S. has increased by 138 million pounds.

A 2008 study conducted at the University of Caen in France found that Monsanto's Roundup concoctions triggered the death of human embryonic, placental, and umbilical cells in vitro. The dilution levels used in the study were far below the recommendation levels used in [agriculture](#) and were meant to replicate the amount ingested due to residue left on [food](#).

Despite the tremendous victory this case represents, there is still the unfortunate reality that the lead defendant in the case was USDA head Thomas Vilsack, an Obama hand pick who heavily supports genetic engineering. Other appointments to top USDA positions under the Obama administration include many former Monsanto executives, perpetuating the Bush-era legacy of revolving-door [politics](#) that favors corporate agribusiness and GMOs at the expense of food freedom and consumer protection.

In his ruling, Judge Jeffrey S. White has scheduled a meeting on October 30 to deliberate the remediation phase of the case that may include injunctive relief against the use of GE [sugar](#) beets.

Sources:

[Victory! Court Finds USDA Violated Federal Law by Allowing Genetically Engineered Sugar Beets on the Market - The](#)

[Genetically Engineered Sugar Beet Approval Illegal, Judge Rules - Environment News Service](#)

[Glyphosate Formulations Induce Apoptosis and Necrosis in Human Umbilical, Embryonic, and Placental Cells - American Chemical Society](#)

[Genetically Engineered Crops, Obama Administration, USDA: Food Politics - gourmet.com](#)

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About the author

Ethan Huff is a freelance writer and [health](#) enthusiast who loves exploring the vast world of natural foods and health, digging deep to get to the truth. He runs an online health publication of his own at <http://wholesomeherald.blogspot.com>.

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