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Triste cosa es no tener amigos, pero más triste ha de ser no tener enemigos porque quién no tenga enemigos señal es de que no tiene talento que haga sombra, ni carácter que impresione, ni valor temido, ni honra de la que se murmure, ni bienes que se le codicien, ni cosa alguna que se le envidie. A sad thing it is to not have friends, but even sadder must it be not having any enemies; that a man should have no enemies is a sign that he has no talent to outshine others, nor character that inspires, nor valor that is feared, nor honor to be rumored, nor goods to be coveted, nor anything to be envied. -Jose Marti

From the desk of Craig B Hulet?

US President Barack Obama inked his name last Tuesday to the bill, H.R. 933, and in doing so signed off on a deal that essentially prevented a government-wide shut down. In doing as much, though, the president approved a provision that lets the companies that make genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and genetically engineered (GE) seeds step over legal hurdles in the future regarding lab-made products that may later be proven to be dangerous or deadly to the population

Russia Warns Obama: Monsanto



Russia Warns Obama: Monsanto

Posted: May 28th, 2013

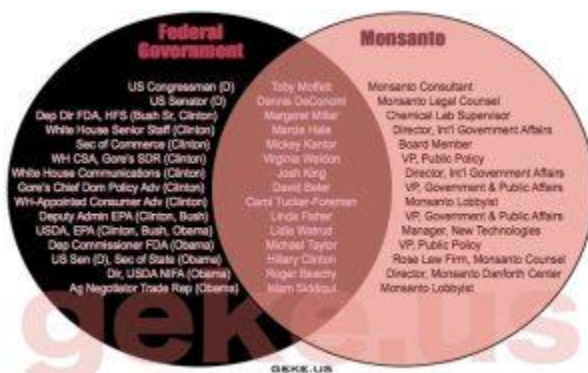
The shocking minutes relating to President Putin's meeting this past week with US Secretary of State John Kerry reveal the Russian leaders "extreme outrage" over the Obama regimes continued protection of global seed and plant bio-genetic giants Syngenta and Monsanto in the face of a growing "bee apocalypse" that the Kremlin warns "will most certainly" lead to world war.

According to these minutes, released in the Kremlin today by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation ([MNRE](#)), Putin was so incensed over the Obama regimes refusal to discuss this grave matter that he [refused for three hours](#) to even meet with Kerry, who had traveled to Moscow on a scheduled diplomatic mission, but then relented so as to not cause an even greater rift between these two nations.

At the center of this dispute between Russia and the US, this MNRE report says, is the "undisputed evidence" that a class of neuro-active insecticides chemically related to nicotine, known as [neonicotinoids](#), are destroying our planets bee population, and which if left unchecked could destroy our world's ability to grow enough food to feed its population.

So grave has this situation become, the MNRE reports, the full European Commission (EC) this past week instituted a two-year precautionary ban ([set to begin on 1 December 2013](#)) on these "[bee killing](#)" pesticides following the lead of Switzerland, France, Italy, Russia, Slovenia and Ukraine, all of whom had previously banned these most dangerous of genetically altered organisms from being used on the continent.

Two of the most feared neonicotinoids being banned are [Actara](#) and [Cruiser](#) made by the Swiss global bio-tech seed and pesticide giant [Syngenta AG](#) which employs over 26,000 people in over 90 countries and ranks third in total global sales in the commercial [agricultural seeds](#) market.



Important to note, this report says, is that Syngenta, along with bio-tech giants Monsanto, Bayer, Dow and DuPont, now [control nearly 100%](#) of the global market for genetically modified pesticides, plants and seeds.

Also to note about Syngenta, this report continues, is that in 2012 it was [criminally charged in Germany](#) for concealing the fact that its genetically modified corn killed cattle, and [settled a](#)

[class-action lawsuit in the US for \\$105 million](#) after it was discovered they had contaminated the drinking supply of some 52 million Americans in more than 2,000 water districts with its “gender-bending” herbicide Atrazine.

To how staggeringly frightful this situation is, the MNRE says, can be seen in the report issued this past March by the American Bird Conservancy ([ABC](#)) wherein they [warned our whole planet is in danger, and as we can, in part, read:](#)

***“As part of a study on impacts from the world’s most widely used class of insecticides, nicotine-like chemicals called neonicotinoids, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has called for a ban on their use as seed treatments and for the suspension of all applications pending an independent review of the products’ effects on birds, terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, and other wildlife.*”**



***“It is clear that these chemicals have the potential to affect entire food chains. The environmental persistence of the neonicotinoids, their propensity for runoff and for groundwater infiltration, and their cumulative and largely irreversible mode of action in invertebrates raise significant environmental concerns,”* said Cynthia Palmer, co-author of the report and Pesticides Program Manager for ABC, one of the nation’s leading [bird conservation](#) organizations.**

ABC commissioned world renowned environmental toxicologist Dr. Pierre Mineau to conduct the research. The 100-page report, “The Impact of the Nation’s Most Widely Used Insecticides on Birds,” reviews 200 studies on neonicotinoids including industry research obtained through the US Freedom of Information Act. The report evaluates the toxicological risk to birds and [aquatic systems](#) and includes extensive comparisons with the older pesticides that the neonicotinoids have replaced. The assessment concludes that the neonicotinoids are lethal to birds and to the aquatic systems on which they depend.

“A single corn kernel coated with a neonicotinoid can kill a songbird,” Palmer said. “Even a tiny grain of wheat or canola treated with the oldest neonicotinoid — called imidacloprid — can fatally poison a bird. And as little as 1/10th of a neonicotinoid-coated corn seed per day during egg-laying season is all that is needed to affect reproduction.”

The new report concludes that neonicotinoid contamination levels in both surface- and ground water in the United States and around the world are already beyond the threshold found to kill many aquatic invertebrates.”



Quickly following this damning report, the MRNE says, a large group of group of American beekeepers and environmentalists sued the Obama regime over the continued use of these neonicotinoids stating: [“We are taking the EPA to court for its failure to protect bees from pesticides. Despite our best efforts to warn the agency about the problems posed by neonicotinoids, the EPA continued to ignore the clear warning signs of an agricultural system in trouble.”](#)

And to how bad the world’s agricultural system has really become due to these genetically modified plants, pesticides and seeds, this report continues, can be seen by the EC’s proposal this past week, following their ban on neonicotinoids, in which they plan to criminalize nearly all seeds and plants not registered with the European Union, and [as we can, in part, read:](#)

“Europe is rushing towards the good ol days circa 1939, 40... A new law proposed by the European Commission would make it illegal to “grow, reproduce or trade” any vegetable seeds that have not been “tested, approved and accepted” by a new EU bureaucracy named the “EU Plant Variety Agency.”

It’s called the Plant Reproductive Material Law, and it attempts to put the government in charge of virtually all plants and seeds. Home gardeners who grow their own plants from non-regulated seeds would be considered criminals under this law.”



This MRNE report points out that even though this EC action may appear draconian, it is nevertheless necessary in order to purge the continent from continued contamination of these genetically bred “seed monstrosities.”

Most perplexing in all of this, the MRNE says, and which led to Putin’s anger at the US, has been the Obama regimes efforts to [protect pesticide-producer profits](#) over the catastrophic damaging being done to the environment, and as the Guardian News Service detailed in their 2 May article titled [“US rejects EU claim of insecticide as prime reason for bee colony collapse”](#) and which, in part, says:

[“The European Union voted this week for a two-year ban on a class of pesticides, known as neonicotinoids, that has been associated with the bees’ collapse. The US government report, in contrast, found multiple causes for the collapse of the honeybees.”](#)

To the “truer” reason for the Obama regimes protection of these bio-tech giants destroying our world, the MRNE says, can be viewed in the report titled [“How did Barack Obama become Monsanto’s man in Washington?”](#) and which, in part, says:

“After his victory in the 2008 election, Obama filled key posts with Monsanto people, in federal agencies that wield tremendous force in food issues, the USDA and the FDA: At the USDA, as the director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Roger Beachy, former director of the Monsanto Danforth Center. As deputy commissioner of the FDA, the new food-safety-issues czar, the infamous Michael Taylor, former vice-president for public policy for Monsanto. Taylor had been instrumental in getting approval for Monsanto’s genetically engineered bovine growth hormone.”

Even worse, after Russia [suspended the import and use of an Monsanto genetically modified corn](#) following a study suggesting a link to breast cancer and organ damage this past September, the [Russia Today News Service reported on the Obama regimes response:](#)

“The US House of Representatives quietly passed a last-minute addition to the Agricultural Appropriations Bill for 2013 last week – including a provision protecting genetically modified seeds from litigation in the face of health risks.

The rider, which is officially known as the Farmer Assurance Provision, has been derided by opponents of biotech lobbying as the “Monsanto Protection Act,” as it would strip federal courts of the authority to immediately halt the planting and sale of genetically modified (GMO) seed crop regardless of any consumer health concerns.

The provision, also decried as a “biotech rider,” should have gone through the Agricultural or Judiciary Committees for review. Instead, no hearings were held, and the piece was evidently unknown to most Democrats (who hold the majority in the Senate) prior to its approval as part of HR 993, the short-term funding bill that was approved to avoid a federal government shutdown.”

On 26 March, Obama [quietly signed this “Monsanto Protection Act” into law](#) thus ensuring the American people have no recourse against this bio-tech giant as they fall ill by the tens of millions, and many millions will surely end up dying in what this MRNE report calls the greatest agricultural apocalypse in human history as [over 90% of feral \(wild\) bee population in the US has already died out, and up to 80% of domestic bees have died out too.](#)

‘Monsanto Protection Act’: Obama Signs Order That Protects Maker of Genetically Modified Crops

Mar. 31, 2013 7:47pm [Tiffany Gabbay](#)



A biotech rider included in spending bill HR 933 and signed by President Obama on Tuesday will require the Agriculture Department to approve the growing, harvesting and selling of genetically modified crops, Fox News [reports](#).

The Monsanto Protection Act has been met by White House protests and no less than two petitions, including one by the group [Food Democracy](#) that has garnered more than 250,000 signatures over concerns that back-room deal was struck with food growers at the expense of Americans' health.

Senator John Tester told Politico that the deal with Monsanto, the world's largest producer of genetically modified seeds and crops, will only benefit big corporations.

"These provisions are [giveaways](#), pure and simple, and will be a boon worth millions of dollars to a handful of the biggest corporations in this country," he said.

The National Farmers Union, the American Civil Liberties Union, Stonyfield Farms and Nature's Path also claim to oppose the rider, FN reports.

Critics are blasting Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski in particular, claiming she allowed the rider to be included without conducting a proper hearing first.

Andrew Kimbrell, executive director of the Center for Food Safety, said the situation is a "hidden backroom deal."

“Sen. Mikulski turned her back on consumer, environmental and farmer protection in favor of corporate welfare for [biotech companies](#) such as Monsanto,” he said. “This abuse of [power](#) is not the kind of leadership the public has come to expect from Sen. Mikulski or the Democrat majority in the Senate.”

On Friday, however, Mikulski’s office did issue a statement maintaining that the rider was included in the bill in fall 2012, before she became chairwoman.

“Senator Mikulski understands the anger over this provision,” the statement reads. “She didn’t put the language in the bill and doesn’t support it either.”

FN points out that back in December 2012 the Stonyfield [website](#) seemed to validate Mikulski’s claim that the rider was added before her appointment to the committee.

“Even if the courts find that a (genetically engineered) crop shouldn’t be planted until more research is done about its safety, no one could stop that crop from being planted, even temporarily,” the blog post stated. “This provision clearly tells us that Congress thinks public health and safety should take a back seat to the expansion of GE crops. The good news is it’s not too late to tell Congress that this is one holiday surprise we don’t need.”

[Millions March Against Monsanto: A Global Awakening Covered Up By The Media](#)



Daisy Luther

[Activist Post](#)

Over 2 million people peacefully took to streets around the world to protest the poisoning of the global food supply by the biotech giant, Monsanto.

Not surprisingly, the mainstream media has been pretty quiet about the event.

After relentless phone calls and emails by protesters, some coverage has finally been achieved, preventing the event from being completely blacked out. The same article was published throughout global media, including Yahoo, CTV, Huffington Post, ABC News, and the UK Guardian. The article downplayed the magnitude of the March and the importance of the cause:

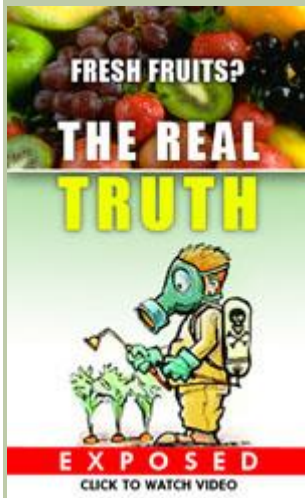
Protesters rallied in dozens of cities Saturday as part of a global protest against seed giant Monsanto and the genetically modified food it produces, organizers said.

Organizers said “March Against Monsanto” protests were held in 52 countries and 436 cities, including Los Angeles where demonstrators waved signs that read “Real Food 4 Real People” and “Label GMOs, It’s Our Right to Know.”

Genetically modified plants are grown from seeds that are engineered to resist insecticides and herbicides, add nutritional benefits or otherwise improve crop yields and increase the global food supply. ([Huffington Post](#))

[Discover](#) even published a hit piece, calling the event “cartoonish”:

The only thing that’s truly being poisoned is the biotech debate by such rhetoric. I’m also willing to bet that organizers are being as truthful about the number of marchers as they are about the science on genetically modified foods...Nonetheless, there does seem to be many people who buy the notion that dangerous GMOs are being foisted on the world by Monsanto.



The truth of the matter is, over two million people marched in more than 50 countries around the globe (See [RT's excellent timeline](#) of the global event). Despite the grudging media coverage in the mainstream, a sleeping giant has awakened. Many people will no longer accept that what lines grocery store shelves is safe to eat.

We know that we have been sold out, betrayed by the politicians that were duly elected to represent the wishes of their constituencies. The day before the event, the [US Senate shot down a bill](#) that would have allowed individual states to require labeling of GMOs. We are fighting a company with billions of dollars, links to the FDA, the USDA and the Supreme Court, and a whole bunch of sketchy politicians in their back pockets. They have fought a [sneaky social media war against us](#), and will continue to pull out all the stops to marginalize the movement against them.

So...

We have to keep the momentum going that we have achieved with the March Against Monsanto. Don't let it end on May 25, 2013. The only way to defeat Monsanto and the rest of the biotech industry is by spreading information far and wide. We clearly cannot rely on the mainstream media to do this, as evidenced above. So we must use social media, alternative media, and word of mouth.

[Print off some labels](#) and put them in the grocery store. Organize your own pickets and hand out flyers in front of the grocery store, letting people know what they're buying. Go to farmers markets and [support your local growers](#). Sow the [seeds of revolution](#) by growing as much of your own food as possible. Most of all, [vote with your wallet](#) and don't buy ANYTHING that puts money into the pockets of companies that support GMOs or that fought against California's Proposition 37, which would have called for the labeling of GMOs.

Mysterious, Massive Disappearance/Death of US Honey Bees – Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)

Filed Under [Environment Matters](#)

Are honey bees the canary in the mineshaft?



Albert Einstein made the statement "If honey bees become extinct, human society will follow in four years." He was speaking in regard to the symbiotic relationship of all life on the planet. All part of a huge interconnected ecosystem, each element playing a role dependant on many other elements all working in concert creating the symphony of life. Should any part of the global body suffer, so does the whole body.

Many people would be surprised to know that 90% of the feral (wild) bee population in the United States has died out. Recent studies in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have shown that bee diversity is down 80 percent in the sites researched, and that "bee species are declining or have become extinct in Britain." The studies also revealed that the numbers of wildflowers that depend on pollination have dropped by 70 percent. Which came first, the decline in wildflowers or the decline in pollinators, has yet to be determined. If bees [continue](#) to die off so would the crops they support and with that would ensue major economic disruption and possibly famine.



In the US, bee keepers are experiencing unprecedented die offs of bees some losing as much as 80% of their colonies. Commercial beekeepers in 22 states have reported deaths of tens of thousands of honeybee colonies. So far the cause remains unexplained and somewhat mysterious. It is being called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and is causing agricultural honeybees nationwide to abandon their hives and disappear and raising worries about crops that need bees for pollination. It's a kind of mass suicide in the bee world. "There have been cases where there have been these die-offs of bees before, but we have never seen it to this level," said Maryann Frazier, a Pennsylvania State University entomologist. "One operation after another is collapsing."



Bees have done quite well for millions of years, in the last 60 years that began to change. In recent years, beekeepers have been losing 25 percent of their hives each winter. Thirty years ago, the rate was 5 percent to 10 percent, said Keith Tignor, the state apiarist for Virginia.

The unusual phenomenon was first noticed by eastern beekeepers starting last fall. Researchers, including some connected with the Penn State [University College of Agricultural Sciences](#), have identified some of the possible contributors, but have not yet found a single cause. Initial studies on bee colonies experiencing the die-offs have revealed a large number of disease organisms, with most being "stress-related" diseases but without any one agent as the culprit. Climate chaos and extreme weather seem to be a major factor.

It is hard to tell if wild honey bee populations have been affected by the CCD disorder because Varroa mites have "pretty much decimated the wild honey bee population over the past years," said Maryann Frazier of The Pennsylvania State University Department of Entomology. "This has become a highly significant, yet poorly understood problem that threatens the pollination industry and the production of commercial honey in the United States... Because the number of

managed honeybee colonies is less than half of what it was 25 years ago, states such as Pennsylvania can ill afford these heavy losses.”

Dennis van Engelsdorp, acting state apiarist with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture said “Every day, you hear of another operator, It’s just causing so much death so quickly that it’s startling.”

Lee Miller, director of the Beaver County extension office, said the deaths appear to be stress-related, but that stress could come from several sources. Dennis van Engelsdorp of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture said that initial studies found a large number of disease organisms present, with no one disease being identified as the culprit. And while studies and [surveys](#) have found a few common management factors among beekeepers with affected hives, no common environmental agents or chemicals have been identified.

University of California Davis entomologist Eric Mussen specializes in bees. He thinks the answer lies in last summer’s lack of wild flowers, nationwide. Janet Katz, a beekeeper in Chester, NJ, says the weather is having a major impact, “The weather last season was not cooperative,” she said. “Over the course of the season it was too wet, too dry, too hot and too cold, all at the wrong times.” Bees store honey every autumn — a hive needs 60 pounds to survive the winter — but with this year’s warm weather, they ate a lot, and beekeepers had to supplement with sugar syrup.

Florida apiarists say citrus growers are compounding the problem by spraying pesticides to kill off a dangerous pest that menaces fruit trees, wiping out bees at the same time. While a combination of problems is putting the bee population in peril, it’s the phenomenon of the animals suddenly deserting their hives, never to return, that has observers most baffled.

“There have been cases where there have been these die-offs of bees before, but we have never seen it to this level,” said Maryann Frazier, a Pennsylvania State University entomologist. “One operation after another is collapsing.”

At stake is the work the honeybees do, pollinating more than USD 15 billion worth of US crops, including Pennsylvania’s apple harvest, the fourth-largest in the nation, worth USD 45 million, and New Jersey’s cranberries and blueberries.

While a few crops, such as corn and wheat, are pollinated by the wind, bees help pollinate more than 90 commercially grown field crops, citrus and other fruit crops, vegetables and nut crops. Without these insects, crop yields would fall dramatically and some tangerines and pecans would cease to exist. Agronomists estimate Americans owe one in three bites of food to bees.”

All of the following are dependant on bees, apples, pears, tangerines, peaches, soybeans, pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, cherries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, carrots, broccoli and avocados. And do we realise bees pollinate almonds? California has the biggest almond groves in the world, supplying 80 percent of the nuts on the market; they currently have to import millions of bees to pollinate the groves.

There are several unusual things about the phenomena and one common factor that cannot be attributed to be the direct cause but may be an “aggravating other conditions” factor and that is temperature fluctuations.

No single cause drought chemicals/pesticides, mites, bacteria, a fungus or virus seems to be common to all the events or even indicated as a cause in any single event. Extreme weather and temperature fluctuations seem to play a major role stressing the bees and weakening their immune systems.

There are no bee bodies; they simply all disappear, all adult bees are simply gone, sometimes leaving a queen and a few young hatched workers. This is unheard of, since normally a bee colony will do almost anything to protect its queen.

The hive is left intact, with capped cells of honey and bee bread.

Another unusual factor is that bees sensing a dying colony nearby aren't going in right away and killing the other bees and robbing the hive of honey, like they usually do for example when the bees have died of parasites or disease.

- Researchers have also noted few signs of damage from wax moths and small hive beetles taking advantage of dead colonies.

According to David Tarpy, a bee specialist at NC State, “Bees die all the time, although this year seems to be worse than normal.” The difference now is that none of the “usual suspects” are to blame, Tarpy said. “That’s what makes it problematic.” Also, unlike when bees are killed by some other causes (disease, mites), there are no dead bees littering the bottom of a hive. The bees are simply gone, he said, or perhaps a queen and a few younger bees remain, but the adults have disappeared.

Reports of the situation began to come in over the fall and winter, but scientists don't yet have an answer. It might be a disease, a pest or an environmental factor or even a combination of effects making bees vulnerable to an existing problem. Now, the bees have sealed themselves inside the hives to stay warm, and the keepers can't open the structures until spring. Neither entomologists nor growers can say what will happen when the 2007 growing season for most of the country's crops starts. As a result, some people are really worried.

Diana Cox-Foster, a professor of entomology at Penn State University, has been working on the problem for months now. She says the die-off is unprecedented, and she's made some dramatic discoveries. For example, the normally resilient bees she dissected showed traces of not one or two diseases, but nearly every disease known to affect them over the past century. They had all the diseases at once, a sign their immune systems have been compromised. “The bees are immuno-compromised, being stressed somehow,” she said. Some could be related to the severe weather swings we've seen over the past few years. But many questions remain unanswered.

She and the other scientists working on the CSI-style case don't think this is just a cyclical thing. It's uncommon, unusual, and frightening to everyone associated with the often-overlooked industry. No one is sure just how bad it will be when the hives are opened in late march.

Where does milk come from? “The bees pollinate the alfalfa, which feeds the cows, which give the milk. Honeybees are one of the main links in our world. They really need to be nurtured.” Jerry Hayes of the Florida Department of Agriculture worries the bee is the canary in the mine shaft, “telling us something is happening that will have ramifications for us down the road. “I think the bees are so stressed, they are saying, ‘I give up,’” said Hayes, Since the mid-1980s, parasitic mites have been devastating the honey bee population across the country, including the South-eastern US. In North Carolina, the number of kept beehives in the state has dropped by 44 percent, and about 95 percent of wild bees have been wiped out, according to North Carolina State entomologist David Tarpy.

A series of hurricanes in 2004, including Katrina in 2005, destroyed thousands of honey bee colonies, decimating the vital Gulf Coast bee industry. Many of the pollinators for other parts of the country traditionally came from these beekeepers. The economic impact of these storms, especially Katrina is yet to be determined.

“Replacing the Gulf Coast bee colonies, although highly important, is not enough. It is obvious that the huge losses suffered during the past 16 years must be dealt with to provide security for our future honey bee-dependent food supplies. It will take a well-defined series of coordinated efforts by all components of the beekeeping industry and the involvement of local, state and federal governmental entities to solve this potentially disastrous situation,” says John Roberts, a beekeeper and President of Nature Technics Corporation.

There has been a sixty-year decline in pollinators. The honeybees and native bees may live in far more harmony than cats and dogs, but the modern world has not been in harmony with them. The last 60 years have been rough on all pollinators. In the 1940s there were over five million managed colonies of honeybees in the United States. Today there are just over two million, and their numbers are declining, both in North America and worldwide.

The entire world now faces a decline of native pollinators. Over 100 species of birds and more than 80 mammals that pollinate are considered threatened or extinct by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), a network that includes scientists, experts, government agencies and non-governmental organizations from around the world. Each country has its own tale to tell. In southern India, nearly all of the native bees died in the 1990s when they became infected with an imported virus. In Iraq, smoke from the burning oil wells during the Gulf War decimated most of the country’s bee colonies.

In summary plants and animals remote in the scale of nature are bound together by a web of complex relations resulting from dependencies we have yet to fully understand. Every creature seems to play a role even, parasites serve a purpose. We are just beginning to understand the beneficial symbiotic relationship between the human body and certain bacteria. We are dependant on many other species and any failure of one part of the ecosystem can create a domino effect causing disruption throughout the entire chain of life. All plants and animals are vulnerable to climate chaos which seem to be having a major impact. Whether or not we are responsible for climate chaos is not as important an issue as to how humanity will adapt. It could also be that our methods centred on mass production and factory farming are in conflict with

nature, as we can see in the case of avian flu, we may be creating a world of pestilence having forgotten that we are part of nature and there is a natural order, balance and harmony that needs to be maintained in the dance of life. Like any species in nature that gets out of hand, nature has a way to keep it in check, and humankind may be the next species in line for severe adjustment or even step-by-step eradication.

By Richard Thomas Gerber

Switzerland puts in place partial ban of 'bee-killing' pesticide

The Swiss government is enacting partial restrictions on the use of pesticides linked to dying bees. This follows a ruling by the European Commission to restrict neonicotinoid chemicals—made largely by two companies, one which is Swiss-based Syngenta—used on crops. The company along with some experts say there is a lack of sufficient data that these pesticides kill bees, but other researchers and environmental groups disagree. WRS’s Alex Helmick talks to Eva Reinhard, deputy director of the Federal Office of Agriculture, and Marianne Künzle, from environmental group Greenpeace Switzerland:



Bees gather on a [honeycomb](#). A growing number of urban beekeepers’ associations are trying to encourage bees to make their homes in cities, as pesticides and crop monocultures make the countryside increasingly hostile. (REUTERS/Lisi Niesner)

GM foods not served in Monsanto cafeteria

Last Updated: Friday, November 10, 2000 /

The fight to ban [genetically modified foods](#) has won more converts -- some employees of Monsanto the company that is doing the most to promote GM products.

The Independent newspaper reports that there is a notice in the cafeteria of the Monsanto pharmaceutical factory is High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, advising customers "as far as practicable, GM soya and maize (has been removed) from all food products served in our restaurant. We have taken the steps to ensure that you, the customer, can feel confident in the food we serve."

The notice was posted by the Sutcliffe Catering Group.

Monsanto confirms the authenticity of the notice, but company spokesman Tony Coombes says the only reason for the GM-free foods is because the company "believes in choice." Coombes says in other Monsanto locations employees are happy to eat GM foods because they are "sprayed with fewer [chemicals](#)."

Adrian Bebb with Friends of the Earth says the notice in the Buckinghamshire plant is hard to misinterpret. "The public has made its concerns about GM ingredients very clear - now it appears that even Monsanto's own catering firm has no confidence in this [new technology](#)."

Birds, Bees, and Aquatic Life Threatened by Gross Underestimate of Toxicity of World's Most Widely Used Pesticide

Posted by Dave on March 20, 2013

American Bird Conservancy Publishes New Report Charges EPA Ignored Staff Warnings, Approved Widespread Use of Dangerous Pesticides

Washington, D.C. March 19, 2013) As part of a study on impacts from the world's most widely used class of insecticides, nicotine-like chemicals called neonicotinoids, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has called for a ban on their use as seed treatments and for the suspension of all applications pending an independent review of the products' effects on birds, terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, and other wildlife.

"It is clear that these chemicals have the potential to affect entire food chains. The environmental persistence of the neonicotinoids, their propensity for runoff and for groundwater infiltration, and their cumulative and largely irreversible mode of action in invertebrates raise significant environmental concerns," said Cynthia Palmer, co-author of the report and Pesticides Program Manager for ABC, one of the nation's leading [bird conservation](#) organizations.

ABC commissioned world renowned environmental toxicologist Dr. Pierre Mineau to conduct the research. The 100-page report, "[*The Impact of the Nation's Most Widely Used Insecticides on Birds*](#)," reviews 200 studies on neonicotinoids including industry research obtained through the US Freedom of Information Act. The report evaluates the toxicological risk to birds and aquatic systems and includes extensive comparisons with the older pesticides that the neonicotinoids have replaced. The assessment concludes that the neonicotinoids are lethal to birds and to the aquatic systems on which they depend.

“A single corn kernel coated with a neonicotinoid can kill a songbird,” Palmer said. “Even a tiny grain of wheat or canola treated with the oldest neonicotinoid -- called imidacloprid -- can fatally poison a bird. And as little as 1/10th of a neonicotinoid-coated corn seed per day during egg-laying season is all that is needed to affect reproduction.”

The new report concludes that neonicotinoid contamination levels in both surface- and ground water in the United States and around the world are already beyond the threshold found to kill many aquatic invertebrates. Data on surface water contamination from [surveys](#) to date, most notably from California and from the Canadian Prairies, indicate that concentrations of several of the neonicotinoid insecticides are high enough to be causing impacts in aquatic food chains. Data from other jurisdictions such as the Netherlands show even higher levels of contamination.

The report also identifies procedural deficiencies in how the US Environmental Protection Agency assesses aquatic impacts. “EPA risk assessments have greatly underestimated this risk, using scientifically unsound, outdated methodology that has more to do with a game of chance than with a rigorous scientific process,” the report says.

First introduced in the 1990s in response to widespread pest resistance and health concerns linked to older pesticides, the neonicotinoid insecticides quickly became top sellers in global pesticide markets. Now the most widely-used insecticides in the world, it is difficult to [find pest control](#) commodities that do not contain one or several of the neonicotinoid insecticides. California alone has registered nearly 300 neonicotinoid products.

EPA scientists have repeatedly documented serious concerns about the persistence, mobility and toxicity of the products, and yet [the Agency](#) continues to grant registrations allowing the chemicals to be used for an ever-widening range of crops and non-agricultural use sites.

EPA and other regulatory agencies worldwide have underestimated the toxicity of these compounds to birds partly because the [risk assessment](#) methods fail to account sufficiently for interspecies variation in toxicity. For example, risk assessments underestimate acute risk by up to 10 fold for bird species beyond mallard ducks and bobwhites, the two usual test species. As for aquatic invertebrates, EPA has underestimated the toxicity of the neonicotinoid imidacloprid by over an order of magnitude because of the Agency’s failure to consider data from the peer-reviewed literature. EPA has grossly underestimated the toxicity of the other neonicotinoids as well, in part due to the Agency’s reliance on their standard test species, *Daphnia magna*, a freshwater flea which happens to be uniquely insensitive to neonicotinoids.

Given that a single neonicotinoid-coated seed can kill a bird, it is also important that seeds marketed for home bird feeders remain free of these chemical treatments. In response to sporadic wild bird seed contamination incidents, ABC has monitored bird seed sold by Walmart, Home Depot, Lowes and Target. To date, ABC’s independent bird-seed testing efforts have focused on older products such as the organophosphorous and carbamate pesticides. The neonicotinoids are a candidate for future testing.

The report also charges that there is no readily available biomarker for neonicotinoids as there is for cholinesterase inhibitors such as the organophosphorous pesticides.

“It is astonishing that EPA would allow a pesticide to be used in hundreds of products without ever requiring the registrant to develop the tools needed to diagnose poisoned wildlife. It would be relatively simple to create a binding assay for the neural receptor which is affected by this class of insecticides,” said Dr. Mineau. The ABC report calls on EPA to require that registrants of acutely toxic pesticides develop the tools necessary to diagnose poisoned birds and other wildlife.

Neonicotinoids’ toxicity to bees and other insects has brought them the most attention thus far and has dominated recent concerns of regulatory institutions worldwide. The serious risk to bees should not be understated, as one-third of the U.S. diet depends on these insect pollinators. The ABC assessment makes clear, however, that the potential environmental impacts of neonicotinoids go well beyond bees. The report urges EPA to expand its registration review of neonicotinoids to include birds, aquatic invertebrates, and other wildlife.

Originally published: [American Bird Conservancy](#).

Monsanto’s Contributions to US House and Senate Candidates

[May 26, 2013](#) by [admin](#)

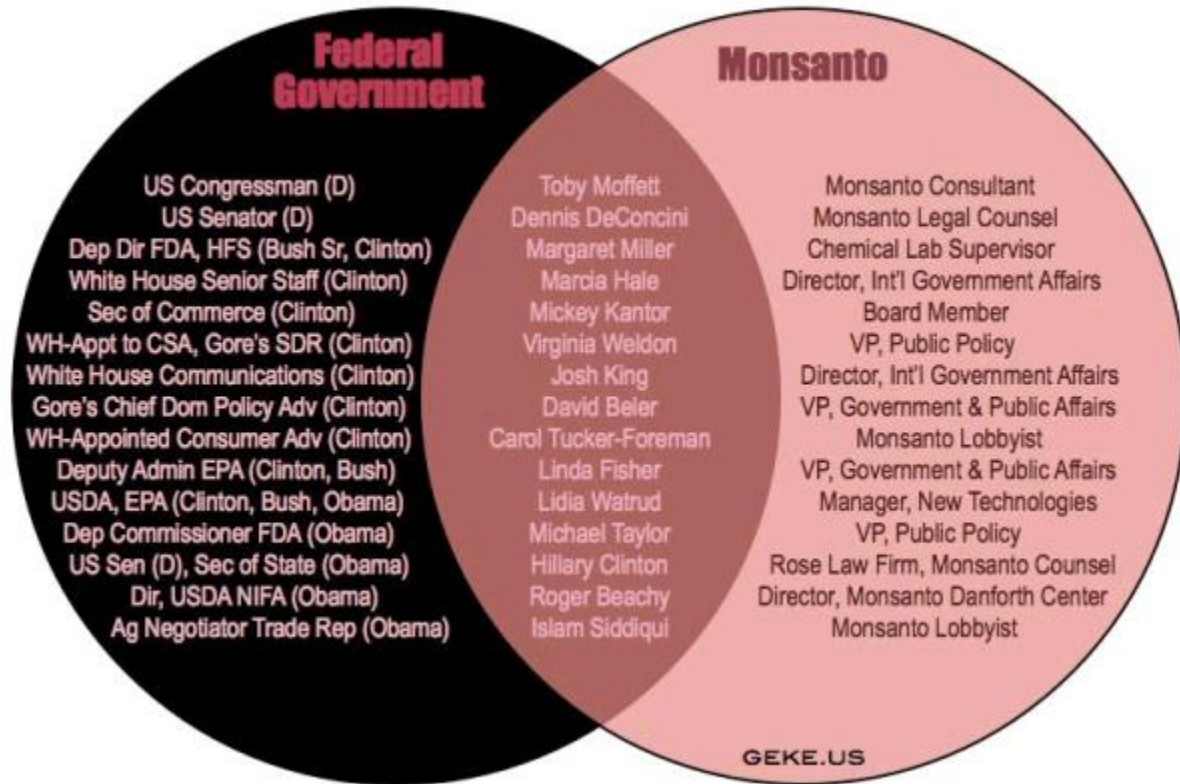
The amounts allocated under official provisions to candidates in support of their House or Senate election campaign are by no means large.

What is striking, however, is that the contributions are spread out and include a large number of both [Republicans](#) and Democrats.

Whoever wins, Monsanto has the support of the White House, the Senate and the House, not to mention key appoints in the US Department of [Agriculture](#) (USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). “While there are numerous points of overlap between Monsanto and the United [States Government](#) under the Obama administration, the three most important connections are that of Michael Taylor, Roger Beachy, and Islam Siddiqui—all three of these Monsanto affiliates were appointed to high level positions within the government by the Obama administration.”

For further details see the incisive article by Josh Sager [Monsanto Controls both-the-White House and the US Congress](#)

M.Ch., GR.Ed.



House	
Total to Democrats: \$72,000	
Total to Republicans: \$190,500	
<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Total</u>
Barrow, John (D-GA)	\$2,500
Bishop, Sanford (D-GA)	\$5,000
Boehner, John (R-OH)	\$10,000
Braley, Bruce (D-IA)	\$5,000
Camp, Dave (R-MI)	\$5,000

House
Total to Democrats: \$72,000
Total to Republicans: \$190,500

<u>Recipient</u> ▾	<u>Total</u> ▾
Cantor, Eric (R-VA)	\$10,000
Clay, William L Jr (D-MO)	\$10,000
Cleaver, Emanuel (D-MO)	\$5,000
Conaway, Mike (R-TX)	\$2,000
Courtney, Joe (D-CT)	\$4,500
Crawford, Rick (R-AR)	\$2,500
Fincher, Steve (R-TN)	\$8,000
Gardner, Cory (R-CO)	\$7,500
Goodlatte, Bob (R-VA)	\$4,500
Graves, Sam (R-MO)	\$5,000
Griffin, Tim (R-AR)	\$1,000
Guthrie, Brett (R-KY)	\$1,000
Hanabusa, Colleen (D-HI)	\$5,000
Hannemann, Mufi (D-HI)	\$1,000

House
Total to Democrats: \$72,000
Total to Republicans: \$190,500

<u>Recipient</u> ▾	<u>Total</u> ▾
Hartzler, Vicky (R-MO)	\$3,000
Holden, Tim (D-PA)	\$1,000
Huelskamp, Tim (R-KS)	\$2,500
Hultgren, Randy (R-IL)	\$2,500
Jenkins, Lynn (R-KS)	\$2,500
Johnson, Timothy (R-IL)	\$3,000
King, Steven A (R-IA)	\$2,500
Kingston, Jack (R-GA)	\$7,000
Kinzinger, Adam (R-IL)	\$3,500
Kissell, Larry (D-NC)	\$5,000
Labrador, Raul (R-ID)	\$2,000
LaMalfa, Doug (R-CA)	\$1,000
Landry, Jeff (R-LA)	\$1,000
Latham, Tom (R-IA)	\$10,000

House
Total to Democrats: \$72,000
Total to Republicans: \$190,500

<u>Recipient</u> ▾	<u>Total</u> ▾
Loebsack, David (D-IA)	\$5,000
Long, Billy (R-MO)	\$2,500
Lucas, Frank D (R-OK)	\$10,000
Luetkemeyer, Blaine (R-MO)	\$5,000
Lungren, Dan (R-CA)	\$1,000
McIntyre, Mike (D-NC)	\$1,000
Neugebauer, Randy (R-TX)	\$1,000
Noem, Kristi (R-SD)	\$1,000
Nunes, Devin (R-CA)	\$3,500
Owens, Bill (D-NY)	\$2,000
Peterson, Collin (D-MN)	\$10,000
Rogers, Hal (R-KY)	\$7,500
Rokita, Todd (R-IN)	\$5,000
Roskam, Peter (R-IL)	\$1,000

House
Total to Democrats: \$72,000
Total to Republicans: \$190,500

<u>Recipient</u> ▾	<u>Total</u> ▾
Schilling, Bobby (R-IL)	\$3,000
Schock, Aaron (R-IL)	\$5,000
Shimkus, John M (R-IL)	\$5,000
Simpson, Mike (R-ID)	\$10,000
Smith, Adrian (R-NE)	\$5,000
Stutzman, Marlin (R-IN)	\$5,000
Thompson, Bennie G (D-MS)	\$10,000
Thompson, Glenn (R-PA)	\$1,000
Upton, Fred (R-MI)	\$5,000
Valadao, David (R-CA)	\$2,500
Wagner, Ann L (R-MO)	\$10,000
Walden, Greg (R-OR)	\$1,000
Walorski, Jackie (R-IN)	\$2,500
Womack, Steve (R-AR)	\$1,000

Senate
Total to Democrats: \$37,500
Total to Republicans: \$85,000

<u>Recipient</u> ▾	<u>Total</u> ▾
Akin, Todd (R-MO)	\$3,500
Baucus, Max (D-MT)	\$1,000
Berg, Rick (R-ND)	\$10,000
Blunt, Roy (R-MO)	\$10,000
Boozman, John (R-AR)	\$5,000
Casey, Bob (D-PA)	\$2,500
Chambliss, Saxby (R-GA)	\$5,000
Fischer, Deb (R-NE)	\$5,000
Gillibrand, Kirsten (D-NY)	\$1,000
Grassley, Chuck (R-IA)	\$2,000
Hatch, Orrin G (R-UT)	\$5,000
Hirono, Mazie K (D-HI)	\$1,000
Johanns, Mike (R-NE)	\$1,000
Klobuchar, Amy (D-MN)	\$5,000

Senate
Total to Democrats: \$37,500
Total to Republicans: \$85,000

<u>Recipient</u> ▾	<u>Total</u> ▾
Landrieu, Mary L (D-LA)	\$1,000
Lugar, Richard G (R-IN)	\$3,000
McCaskill, Claire (D-MO)	\$5,000
McConnell, Mitch (R-KY)	\$10,000
Moran, Jerry (R-KS)	\$2,500
Nelson, Ben (D-NE)	\$13,000
Rehberg, Denny (R-MT)	\$2,000
Risch, James E (R-ID)	\$3,500
Roberts, Pat (R-KS)	\$9,000
Stabenow, Debbie (D-MI)	\$8,000
Thompson, Tommy G (R-WI)	\$5,000
Wicker, Roger (R-MS)	\$1,000
Wilson, Heather A (R-NM)	\$2,500

Based on data released by the FEC on March 25, 2013.

Monsanto Controls both the White House and the US Congress

No Matter Who Wins the Presidential Election Monsanto Benefits

By [Josh Sager](#)

Global Research, May 26, 2013

theprogressivecynic.com 1 October 2012

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#)

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*This incisive article by **Josh Sager** published one month before the November 2012 US presidential elections carefully documents how Monsanto has cornered the US political system.*

Whoever gets in, Monsanto's interests will be served.

Moreover, Monsanto also controls key appointments to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

In the 2012 presidential election, the American people will have to choose between incumbent President Barack Obama (D) and Mitt Romney (R). With this choice, the American public will determine who sets the tone for national policy and is given [power](#) over the executive branch of our government. There are many ways to look at the prospective presidential candidates, but one is to look at their past actions and affiliations in order to predict how they will act in the future; in this article, I will discuss the past actions of both current President Barack Obama and candidate Mitt Romney in relation to the agro-giant Monsanto Corporation.

As Obama has already served a term as president, there is little guessing required to predict what he will do in regard to Monsanto if he is given a second term—his actions speak louder than any speeches. A politician may rhetorically support one thing during speaking engagements, but what truly matters are their actual policy choices rather than scripted comments. Throughout his first

term, President Obama has presided over the passage of several Monsanto-friendly legislative initiatives and has appointed numerous people associated with Monsanto to high-level [positions](#).

Monsanto-Friendly Legislation



During Obama’s four years as president, the federal government had several opportunities to pass legislation and executive initiatives which affect Monsanto. Of these federal initiatives, the 2010 African hunger plan and the 2012 Farm Bill present the most important examples of the Obama administration’s friendly attitude towards Monsanto.

In 2010, the Obama administration pushed a humanitarian initiative focused upon increasing the food supply of poor areas of Africa—while the ideals of this program are admirable, the execution presents an incredible opportunity to agro-business conglomerates like Monsanto. In order to solve the hunger problem in Africa, the Obama administration has partnered with large industrial farming and GMO operations, under the aegis that these organizations can produce large amounts of food quickly.

By giving several billion dollars to agro-businesses, one of which is Monsanto, the “Southern Africa FY 2010 Implementation Plan” intends to promote the expansion of these businesses into the provision of food for Africa. In focusing on promoting industrial, mono-crop farming and genetically modified goods rather than [investing](#) in local farms, the Obama administration created a situation where Monsanto is able to increase its profits. As a partner in the Obama administration’s Africa program, Monsanto will be given subsidies to expand into the African

farming market. This expansion is aimed at increasing food supplies in Africa, but it will have the unintended consequence of promoting Monsanto's takeover of the [African food](#) markets.

Once Monsanto gains a foothold in the [African food](#) market—which is likely given the level of subsidies offered by the US government—they will be able to crowd out local farmers and capture the truly massive African food market; Monsanto is able to supply far more crops than any local farmer and at a lower price, thus it will likely reduce the competitiveness of local farmers. This capturing of the African food market by Monsanto means that more food will be available, but it will be supplied by Monsanto rather than small African farms and the local farmers of Africa will gradually begin to go out of business. Put plainly, Monsanto will crowd local African farmers out of the market and will [make a profit](#) that would be more beneficial in the hands of local African farmers and in the local African economy.

It is clear that Monsanto sees the Africa hunger plan as beneficial to its business, as Hugh Grant—the current Monsanto CEO—said this in response to the Africa initiative: “I’m delighted to be here taking part in this conversation as I believe public and private sector commitment is necessary and able to support a transformation in African agriculture.” The transformation that Grant envisions is one where large-scale industrial farming takes over from smaller, local farms, and provides mass-produced crops. In such a situation, hunger decreases, but it is multi-national corporations rather than local farmers which do this farming and garner most of the profits.

On the issue of GMO labeling, Obama is rhetorically supportive of mandating GMO products to be labeled, but his administration has been largely silent on the issue. During the creation of the 2012 Farm Bill, there was a fight over mandating that genetically modified foods be labeled. Despite Obama's supposed support for such labeling, his administration was essentially silent on the issue during this fight and, as a result, no mandate was passed. Currently, there is no federal regulation that ensures that all GMOs are labeled, and there doesn't appear to be any possibility that such regulation is going to be passed in the immediate future.

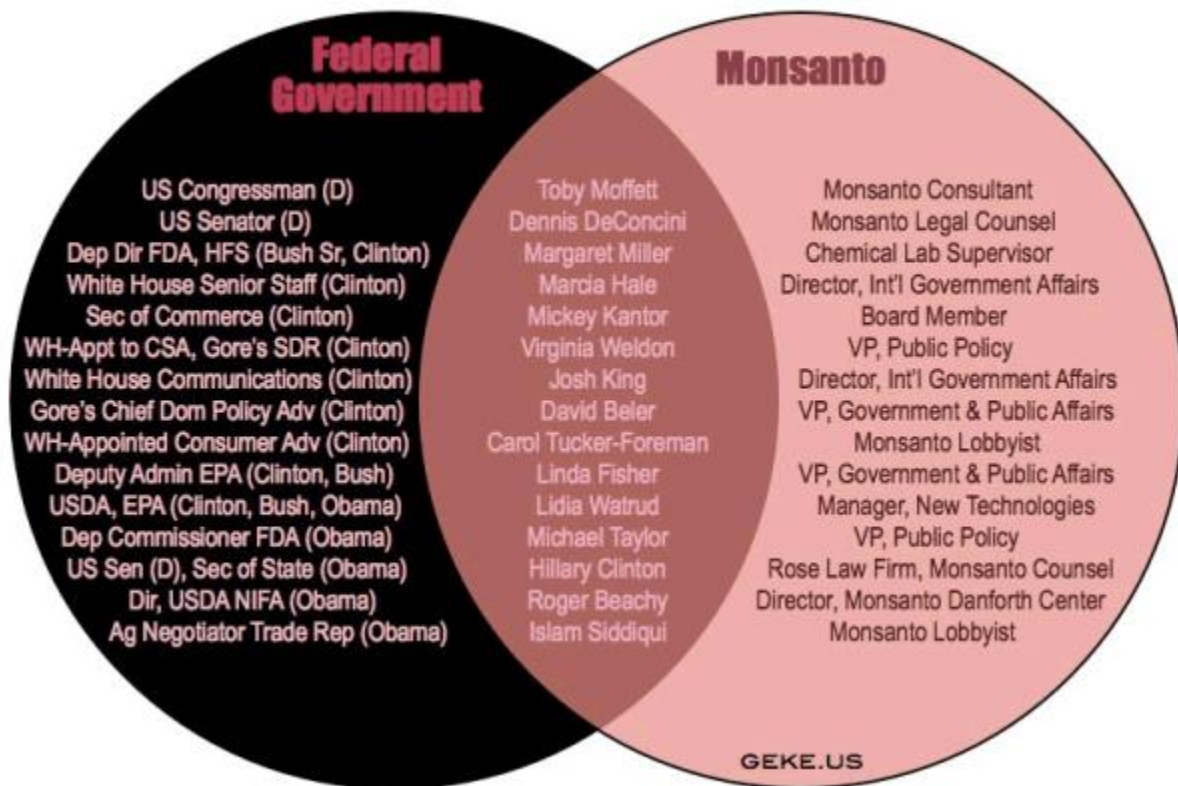
The aforementioned “Farm Bill” includes several [policy changes](#) which are immensely advantageous to Monsanto. While this is an issue that primarily involves the legislature rather than the Obama administration, it bears mentioning that the Obama Administration has been essentially silent on the proposed policy changes and appears unlikely to veto the bill if it passes the legislature. The Farm Bill would be an immense boon to Monsanto, as it would streamline the approval process of its GMO crops and would limit the ability of the federal government to regulate its commerce to the Department of Agriculture.

In totality, legislation passed under the Obama administration has been beneficial to large agribusinesses, one of which is Monsanto. Very little has been done to increase regulation on GMO producers and several laws have been passed that directly benefit such corporations.

Government Appointment of Monsanto Associates

Monsanto is a very large business and has control over a significant amount of the agro-business and genetically modified organism markets. Both the agricultural and GMO markets involve large public safety concerns (ex. food safety), thus Monsanto is heavily affected upon federal regulations (or potential regulations) on its business—the largest of which come from the United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] and the Food and Drug Administration. If regulations and labeling requirements are increased, Monsanto’s profits are directly impacted; conversely, if, such regulations are kept low, then corporations like Monsanto make a larger profit.

Due to the vested interest that Monsanto has in controlling regulation that affects its business, it has both donated to politicians and promoted the appointment of people who work for them to positions within the American government. As of yet, Monsanto has been successful in keeping its regulatory burdens low and getting its representatives into positions within the US government. The infiltration of regulatory agencies by corporate actors that is referred to here is called the “regulatory revolving door”. Individuals who work for industry go to work for the government, make public regulations, and then return to the private sector after leaving the public service. The following info-graphic gives a few examples of the revolving door between Monsanto and the United States government:



All Credit for this Venn diagram goes to Geke.us

While there are numerous points of overlap between Monsanto and the United States Government under the Obama administration, the three most important connections are that of Michael Taylor, Roger Beachy, and Islam Siddiqui—all three of these Monsanto affiliates were appointed to high level positions within the government by the Obama administration.

The Obama administration appointed Michael Taylor, the previous vice president of Monsanto and a current Monsanto lobbyist, to a high level advisory role at the Food and Drug Administration [FDA]. It is virtually inarguable that this appointment constitutes a massive boon for Monsanto and an undeniable conflict of interest for Taylor. Given the fact that Taylor is a lobbyist for Monsanto and is being paid by the agro-giant, it is reasonable to assume that his advice to the FDA is focused upon helping his employer reduce its regulatory burden and improve its profitability. It isn't a secret who Taylor worked for and we can assume that the Obama administration knew who they were appointing when they did it.

Roger Beachy, the Director of the Danforth Plant Science Center (a Monsanto organization), was appointed by the Obama administration as the Director of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. NIFA is a department of the USDA which focuses on funding research and innovation in the field of agriculture as well developing more efficient ways to produce food. As the major grant-writing division of the USDA, the NIFA department has the ability to grant or reject agricultural research grants. By giving Beachy the Directorship of the NIFA, the Obama administration gave a Monsanto associate the most powerful position in the organization which allocates agricultural research grants. Needless to say, this appointment is a great boon for Monsanto and bad news for any group which disagrees with the agri-business giant.

Islam Siddiqui, a Monsanto lobbyist, was appointed to the post of Agriculture Trade Representative by the Obama administration. Trade representative are tasked with promoting trade of goods within their appointed field (ex. Agricultural trade reps promote the export of American crops). As Monsanto has a controlling interest in American corn production, the appointment of a Monsanto lobbyist to the position of trade representative is a large boon for the corporation. Siddiqui's government job is to promote the export of American crops and his Monsanto job is to promote the sale of Monsanto crops—it is undeniable that these two jobs present a conflict of interest and will only lead to Siddiqui representing Monsanto's interests as though they are the interests of the United States.

Appointment of Elena Kagan

The justices that a president appoints to the Supreme Court is one of their most enduring and important contributions to the United States that every president gives the country. During his first term, President Obama appointed two Justices, one of whom was Elena Kagan, the former Solicitor General of the United States. During her time as the Solicitor General, Kagan filed a brief in support of Monsanto.

In 2007, Monsanto was brought to court by growers of alfalfa in California—these growers alleged that their crops were being cross-pollinated with, and thus contaminated by, Monsanto’s GMO crops. After winning an initial legal victory and securing an injunction on Monsanto’s planting of its modified alfalfa, Monsanto appealed the ruling and the case eventually reached the Supreme Court. Despite the fact that the United States government had no interest in the Monsanto alfalfa case, Kagan, the solicitor general wrote an “amicus” brief in favor of Monsanto’s position.

Nobody knows why the Solicitor General’s office decided to get involved in the Monsanto alfalfa case, but it was an unusual act by a supposedly neutral body; there was no rational reason for the US government to get involved in this case. While we don’t know the reason for this brief, it does make many believe that Kagan may be sympathetic to Monsanto’s corporate interests.

Candidate Mitt Romney has a very long history with Monsanto and has shown a willingness to work with the agro-conglomerate if elected president. Throughout much of his business career, Romney was heavily involved with the internal operations of the Monsanto Corporation. During Romney’s private sector experience at Bain Capital, he worked for and had a significant amount of influence upon the activities of the Monsanto Corporation. In addition to the business connection between Romney and Monsanto, several officers of the Monsanto corporation have held private relationships with Romney and have contributed to his political aspirations.

Romney’s Business Connections with Monsanto

In 1977, Bain Capital—the company that Romney ran, and in which he made most of his money—was starting out as a corporate consulting firm; Monsanto was among the first major clients of Bain. The multi-million dollar relationship between Bain Capital and Monsanto lasted from 1977 to 1985 and had significant effects on both corporations. Bain Capital, and its officers, made large amounts of money through its relationship with Monsanto and gained a significant client with which to base its consulting practice upon. Monsanto was given business advice by Bain and the corporation’s recent successes in GMO produce are traceable back to the suggestions that Romney made to Monsanto administrators.

According to Dr. Earl Beaver, Monsanto’s Waste Director during much of the 1970s and 80s, Romney was one of the major proponents of Monsanto’s shift into the biotechnical and bioengineering industry. In response to the massive scandal surrounding Monsanto’s part in the creation of “Agent Orange” (a powerful chemical weapon that was used during the Vietnam War), Romney suggested to Monsanto Administrators that they focus on businesses that had lower levels of controversy surrounding them than the creation of chemical weapons—this shift would reduce the negative press received by the company and would help improve the public perception of the company (thus helping them make more money). The creation of bioengineered organisms was a developing industry during the late 20th century and Monsanto—partly on Romney’s advice—began to invest in their GMO production divisions as a new industry.

Patrick Graham, a founding member of Bain Capital, said the following about Romney's work with Monsanto: "The most important contribution Bain made to Monsanto was concluding that the biggest opportunity was to bring an entirely new value product, namely biotech and herbicides, to the whole farming industry in America, soybeans and stuff."

If the officers who worked at Monsanto are to be believed, Romney had significant influence on the corporate decision-making for Monsanto and it is his advice that convinced the company's leadership deciding to focus on GMO creation rather than simply pesticides. Romney saw a move into GMOs as a way to move away from the controversies of Agent Orange and DDT, thus improving the perception of the company.

While there are many ways that people could look at Romney's history (those who dislike GMOs will blame him for helping create the largest GMO creator, while those who worked with Monsanto would likely thank him for the profitable business advice), there are two things that one can be reasonably certain about a Romney presidency and Monsanto:

1. Romney suggested that Monsanto shift its industry to GMO creation, thus it is undeniable that he sees GMOs as a good investment; if he didn't see GMO's as a good way to make money he would never have suggested that Monsanto enter into GMO creation during his tenure as a consultant. Romney's private sector support for GMOs will shade all of Romney's policies in favor of GMOs and will make it very difficult to convince him to support any anti-GMO bills.
2. Romney worked for Monsanto for years and has numerous contacts within the company. If Romney is elected, Monsanto will get unprecedented access to the president, if only due to the fact that Romney's experience in agriculture was shaped by his work at Monsanto with Bain (his agriculture experience comes solely from Monsanto and not from working around other farming organizations). We see this access already, in the selection of several high-level Monsanto agents for advisory posts in the Romney campaign.

Monsanto Connections Within the Romney Campaign

Romney and his campaign have had significant contact with the Monsanto Corporation and have received support from Monsanto officers. While Romney has yet to hold a national office (his governorship in MA didn't expose him to lobbying by many agri-business groups), his campaign for president has shown high levels of cooperation with the agri-business industry as well as the corn lobby.

Arguably the most significant aspect of the Romney campaign's involvement with Monsanto comes from his appointments to his "[Agricultural Advisory](#)" committee. This committee, which is tasked with advising Mitt Romney on all issues relating to agriculture and agri-business, is staffed by "experts" on the field. The experts who staff Romney's advisory committee come directly from the agro-business industry and represent a huge level of cooperation between Romney and big agri-business.

Randy Russell, a top lobbyist for Monsanto Co., has been appointed to this committee and will likely remain on if Romney wins the election. Russell's involvement in Romney's agricultural advisory committee represents a direct line between the Romney campaign (and thus his presidency) and the Monsanto Corporation. The simple fact that the top lobbyist for Monsanto has been given an advisory job with the Romney campaign is not unprecedented, but it does pose the worrying question: Where does the Romney agricultural policy begin and the lobbying efforts of Monsanto end?

In addition to Russell, the Agricultural advisory Committee is staffed with numerous other agri-business supporters:

Chuck Connor – The former leader of the Corn Refiners Association; this is the largest interest group for ethanol and corn syrup producers within the United States.

Bill Even – The former head of the DuPont Chemical “high-tech seed” division, which manages DuPont's GMO seed business.

Chris Policinski – The CEO of “Land O Lakes” and a party to the 2007 GMO alfalfa case in California.

Tom Nassif – The leader of the Western Growers Association who has been the recipient of thousands of dollars in donations from the Monsanto Fund.

Tom Johanns – A senator from Nebraska who has taken nearly \$10,000 in campaign contributions from Monsanto and who advocated in favor of blocking GMO labeling during the early 2000s push by the EU to mandate disclosure.

Partisanship and Money

The presidential election is important, but it does not exist in a vacuum—the views of a candidate's party are extremely important to the eventual policy that they will push for in the legislature. The modern Republican Party has become focused upon the policies of reducing corporate taxes and reducing regulations on industry. Tax cuts and deregulation of industry standards are both immensely beneficial to large corporations, such as Monsanto. While it has significant control over regulators through its revolving-door appointees, Monsanto is still vulnerable to regulations on its business.

Of the two major American political parties, the Republicans promote deregulation, while the Democrats support regulatory increases (or sometimes simply retention of current regulations). If elected, it is virtually certain that Romney will sign off on his party's platform of deregulation and tax cuts. Nothing in his history has indicated that Romney will buck his party on issues of legislation, and it appears that a Romney presidency would allow the Republican legislature to pass pro-corporate legislation without fear of veto.

In the last electoral cycle, the Republicans in the legislature have taken \$226,000 from Monsanto Co., while Democrats have taken only \$90,500 (for a full list, sorted by candidate, follow this [link](#)). It is clear that the Republicans, as a party, are friendlier to Monsanto's interests than the Democrats and would likely have more favorable policy outcomes if the Republicans had control over policy.

Conclusion

When all things have been considered, it is undeniable that Monsanto has significant influence over both major parties in the United States—the only real difference between the candidates is how deep this influence goes. Regardless of whether it is Obama or Romney who becomes the next president, it appears that Monsanto will continue to have significant power in Washington politics and will retain a very high level of lobbying influence.

Opinion Based Conclusions

Past this point, the article focuses on my analysis of Romney and Obama's involvement with Monsanto and is largely opinion.

When all things are taken into account, a Romney presidency is likely better for Monsanto than an Obama presidency: Obama has shown an unwillingness to confront Monsanto, but Romney appears to have a much deeper connections to Monsanto and be more willing to promote things that will actively benefit the company. Here are a few areas of comparison between the Romney and Obama presidencies in regard to Monsanto:

Donations: While it is often difficult to unravel the massive web of political money, much of which has been filtered through SuperPACs, we know that Romney has taken significantly more money from agro-businesses than Obama. According to OpenSecrets.org, Mitt Romney has taken \$4,075,531 in campaign contributions from America agribusinesses, while Barack Obama has only taken \$1,377,503 from these interests. As you can see, both candidates are in bed with agribusiness corporations to some degree, but Romney has taken nearly 3X the money that Obama has from this particular industry. It is important to note that these numbers are likely far lower than the actual amounts donated because a majority of the money which is spent by SuperPACs is dark money, where there is no source disclosure. The massive disparity in agribusiness fundraising between the candidates points to the preference of these corporations that Romney get the presidency. As corporations donate money to politicians as an investment and to sway policy in their favor, it is clear that they prefer the Romney vision to the Obama vision.

Partisanship: The president is important, but the legislature is where policy is made; as such, the party affiliations of the presidential candidates can be extremely determinative of the policy that will be passed. Romney is a Republican and Obama is a democrat, and the winner of the presidency will likely be able to sway the national agenda in favor of their party. In the last electoral cycle, the Republicans in the legislature have taken \$226,000 from Monsanto Co., while Democrats have taken only \$90,500 (for a full list, listed by candidate, follow this [link](#)). The Republican Party is

based in the center of the country and the south, much of which is dependent upon farming for its primary industry—due to this dependency upon agricultural interest, the Republicans are far more politically friendly towards agribusiness than the Democrats and more likely to support companies like Monsanto.

In addition to the partisan funding disparity, it bears mention that the Republican Party is unified around the ideals of lowering taxes and reducing regulations. Reducing corporate taxes and removing regulations (ex. FDA rules), benefits large corporations and their owners, thus these corporations tend to support Republicans more than Democrats.

A Romney presidency will allow the Republicans to pass corporate friendly legislation without fear of veto. This streamlining of the legislative process reduces the difficulty of passing laws (and removing regulations) that benefit Monsanto, and will lead to more favorable outcomes for the corporation—It appears that Monsanto knows this, and has invested its political contributions accordingly.

Regulation: Neither Obama nor Romney appears to be willing to take on agribusiness interests in order to increase regulations, but there is a key difference in their stances: Obama is largely neutral in his actions towards regulations on Monsanto, while Romney is actively invested on deregulating the industry.

Appointments: Both Obama and Romney have shown their willingness to appoint corporate agents to high level advising positions within the government—Obama appointed Michael Taylor to the FDA and Romney has named several Monsanto lobbyists as his agricultural advisory board. At this point, we don't know who would be worse in regard to appointments, but neither choice is particularly encouraging.

US Official apologizes for letting Monsanto poison Americans

Tuesday, 02 April 2013



The blowback caused by a new law that lets [biotech companies](#) like Monsanto escape litigation is so tremendous that a senior senator from Maryland has offered the public an apology.

US Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) has issued a statement expressing her regret for letting this year's Agriculture Appropriations bill — an annual continuing resolution spending act — be signed into law. "Senator Mikulski understands the anger over this provision. She didn't put the language in the bill and doesn't support it either," begins a statement from her office dated Friday, March 29.

As we reported earlier, US President Barack Obama inked his name last Tuesday to the bill,

H.R. 933, and in doing so signed off on a deal that essentially prevented a government-wide shut down. In doing as much, though, the president approved a provision that lets the companies that make genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and genetically engineered (GE) seeds [step](#) over legal hurdles in the future regarding lab-made products that may later be proven to be dangerous or deadly to the population.

Included in the bill is a rider, Section 735, which says [federal courts](#) cannot intervene and halt [biotech companies](#) from [planting](#) and selling GMO goods to the public, even if testing proves them to be potentially hazardous to the greater public. Because the legislation largely shields agriculture giants Monsanto from litigation, it has been dubbed by its critics the “Monsanto Protection Act.” But even after more than 250,000 people signed a [petition](#) asking the White House to intervene and ensure the bill was not passed, Pres. Obama nonetheless approved it last week.

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