

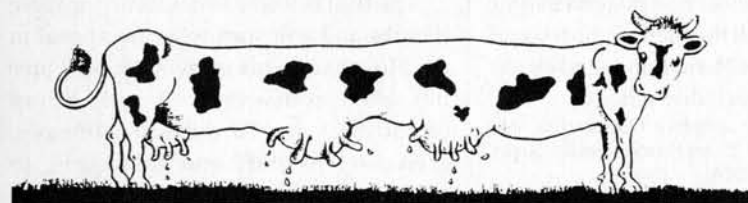
# The Ecologist

May/June 1994

## CAMPAIGNS

### BST Foisted on Consumers

The decision by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to permit the marketing of rBST, a genetically-engineered growth hormone developed for the dairy industry, has created controversy both in the US and elsewhere. Recombinant bovine somatotropin, produced by the Monsanto chemical company, has been described as "crack for cows... it revs their system and forces them to produce a lot more milk—but it also makes them sick".



rBST is an artificial "version" of the naturally-occurring BST hormone. Injected into a cow every two weeks, it is designed to increase milk yields by between 5 and 20 per cent. Field tests have begun in India, China, Zimbabwe and other countries, while Australia, New Zealand and Canada have banned it. The EU's current moratorium on rBST is threatened by GATT and could be lifted at the end of the year.

US activists have reacted to the FDA's decision to licence rBST by entering shops in cow costumes and pouring milk, yoghurt and cheese onto the floor. The 73 "milk dumps" organized by the Pure Food Campaign have raised major public and retailer opposition to rBST — 200 producers and retailers now say they will not sell milk from rBST cows. Now that GATT has all but removed governments' power to impose bans on products, consumer pressure may be the only way to stop them being sold.

GATT only permits bans if there is "strong scientific evidence to prove that they would cause an unacceptable hazard to human, animal or plant health and safety." Advice included by Monsanto in

its rBST product, Posilac, confirms the likely danger to animals: "Cows injected with Posilac are at an increased risk for clinical mastitis... use of Posilac may result in increased digestive disorders such as indigestion, bloat and diarrhoea... [and] reduced pregnancy rates in injected cows". Over a third of EU dairy cows already suffer from mastitis.

Consumers are also concerned that rBST may endanger milk-drinkers' health. Dr Samuel Epstein of the University of Illinois has expressed "grave concerns

about the risks of breast cancer in humans" and accused the FDA of "gerry-mandering the evidence".

Consumer resistance to rBST is strong. One US dairy company found its sales of milk labelled rBST-free jumped 20 per cent in three weeks, but it is now being sued by Monsanto. The FDA claims that labelling could be misleading because there is "no significant difference" between milk from rBST-treated and untreated cows, although researchers claim a test for rBST could easily be developed. The British government also opposes labelling, although the National Farmers Union, animal welfare groups, consumer groups and many supermarkets oppose the introduction of rBST unless consumers can choose to avoid it.

Although rBST is a production aid, not a medicine, the UK Agriculture Minister, Nicholas Soames, says "the approval of rBST or any other medicinal product should be based solely on the existing criteria of safety, quality and efficacy." In other words, the social and economic implications of approving a drug which will increase milk yields and lower demand are being ignored.

The EC already has a 15 per cent surplus of milk, and it has been officially estimated that introducing rBST without labelling

could reduce dairy product consumption by 11 per cent. Overproduction induced by rBST would add \$116 million to US milk price support payments in 1995, according to the US Federal Office of Management and Budget, and up to 30 per cent of US dairy farmers could be forced out of business within three years.

The US decision to allow rBST sales is subject to a two-year monitoring period, and the EU is watching developments there closely. The UK government does not want to offend the biotechnology industry, which it estimates may be worth £60 billion in Europe by the year 2000. However, these are the only interests which want the product, and many large retailers in the UK and US have responded to consumer pressure saying they will not stock unlabelled rBST milk.

**WRITE TO:** Your retailer and parliamentarian expressing concern that rBST is unnecessary and dangerous. In the UK, the Ministry of Agriculture will hold a consultation on BST later this year.

**CONTACT:** BST Concern, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH, Tel: 071-638 0606.

Pure Food Campaign, 1130 Seventh St, N.W., Suite 630, Washington DC 20036, USA. Tel: +1 202 466 2823.

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#### The Ecologist CAMPAIGNS

This section highlights current campaigns, suggests how to support them and gives updates on feature articles. Send details of any campaigns to:

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## Dutch Dump Dung In India

INDIAN activists are creating a stink about a plan to dispose of surplus Dutch cow and pig dung in India.

Dutch company Seaswan B.V. calls manure "envirodung", and has spent £170,000 on feasibility studies for its project, while Madras-based EID Parry has signed a statement of intent to form a joint venture with Seaswan. The Agricultural Counsellor from The Netherlands embassy in India has said "the most cost-efficient way to dispose of surplus manure is being developed" — a logic that has apparently found favour with the European Commission and the World Bank. Indian politicians are, however, asking The Netherlands to drop the plans.

Gujaratis are angry that the state would gain only 150 jobs from a \$150 million investment. Some Indian critics fear that new strains of bacteria and other pests might be brought to India by the wet dung, a product that they do not consider to be a priority import.



They suggest that India should produce more fodder for and dung from its own cattle. At present 600 million tonnes of dung are produced annually in India; most of it used as fuel and fertilizer. The Save Bombay Committee also wants the government to promote the use of the 100,000 tonnes of biodegradable organic waste produced daily in Indian cities.

The Netherlands has 4.9 million cattle, 93 million chickens and 13.9 million pigs. The cassava, soya and other feeds from the South which they consume take up twice the acreage used for agriculture in The Netherlands. This meat overproduction is an advanced form of resource colonization: raw materials come from the South, all the value is added and profit taken in The Netherlands and excess waste dumped back down South.

**CONTACT:** Save Bombay Committee, c/o Kayjay Engineers, 123 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023, INDIA.

WISE, PO Box 18185, 1001 ZB Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS, E-MAIL: wiseamster@gn.apc.org

## Engineered Plants For Sale?

OVER 1,000 small-scale field tests of genetically-engineered organisms have taken place in the US and EU, and the first application has been lodged in Britain to sell a genetically-engineered, herbicide-resistant plant to farmers.

Plant Genetic Systems, a Belgian company, wants to market in Britain a type of oilseed rape that has been genetically-engineered to produce a 20-25 per cent greater yield and is resistant to glufosinate herbicide. A French company has applied for a licence to market a bio-engineered tobacco which is herbicide-resistant, while Hoechst and other chemical companies are developing crops that are tolerant to their own herbicides.

Herbicide-resistant crops will allow more herbicides to be used on farms, and critics fear engineered crops might cross with related species and spread uncontrollably. The same genetic system is likely to be used in many varieties of bio-engineered hybrids, increasing the

risk of disease epidemics.

There have been over 1,000 field tests of genetically-engineered organisms in the US and EU. One field of genetically-engineered potatoes in The Netherlands was dug up in protest by a group called "The Very Angry Potatoes". Groups in other countries have pledged similar actions if their governments grant licences to the genetic engineering barons.

● The latest draft of the EU Council of Ministers' directive on patenting of life will allow farmers some rights to grow their own seeds but refuses them the right to breed from patented animals without paying royalties.

**GENETHICS NEWSLETTER** has just been launched in the UK. It lists permitted releases of bio-engineered plants, bacteria and viruses and has analysis of genetic engineering/biotech issues and campaigns. Contact: GenEthics News, 90 Kynaston Rd, London N16 0ED.

**REPORT AVAILABLE:** The Union Of Concerned Scientists has produced a major report on environmental risks of bio-engineered crops. Contact: UCS, 1616 P St., N.W., Suite 310 Washington DC 20036, USA.

## McCensorship

TWO UNWAGED environmentalists are to appear in court in the UK on charges of libelling US hamburger giant McDonalds. Helen Steel and Dave Morris have been denied legal aid and access to key McDonalds documents; their trial will be without a jury, because McDonalds' lawyers claimed the public would find its scientific evidence "too complex".

Steel and Morris are members of London Greenpeace, an independent collective founded in 1970. After they handed out a factsheet critical of McDonalds' record on the environment, animal welfare, customer health, advertising and employee treatment, the company hired four agents to infiltrate their meetings and obtain documents, before serving libel writs to force the factsheet's withdrawal.

The trial is likely to continue for three months and will start when an appeal to the House of Lords on reinstating a jury has been considered. It will be an opportunity for 70 defence witnesses, including ex-staff and managers, to publicize what occurs behind the scenes at McDonalds.

In the past, many individuals, groups and newspapers have backed down under the threat of the \$20 billion a year company's legal muscle. These include a former assistant state attorney general of Texas, who wanted to bring a case to stop McDonalds claiming its food is "nutritious". Steel and Morris say they are persevering because "McDonalds spends a fortune on advertising. We are determined to expose the truth about its business and to defend the public's right to criticize and campaign against multinationals."

The intimidation of the two McLibel defendants has not stopped half a million leaflets being distributed outside McDonalds shops since the start of the legal proceedings in 1990. This activity will continue.

**PICKET YOUR** local McDonalds on "Free Speech Day", 21 May. For leaflets or more information, contact: McLibel Support Campaign, c/o London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9DX, Tel: 071-837 7557.

**THE CAMPAIGN** needs funds to pay transport costs for witnesses. Make cheques to McLibel Support Campaign.

**IN THE USA,** a UK Free Speech Support Campaign has been launched. Tel: +1 703 237 2249.



## Basel Waste Victory

GREENPEACE hailed the decision in March by the Basel Convention to ban all exports of toxic waste from OECD countries to non-OECD countries as "a striking victory for global environmental justice".

The parties to the Convention agreed that it will become illegal from 1998 to ship any hazardous waste to Southern countries, including that for "recycling" (see *The Ecologist*, March/April 1994).

Leading up to the Basel meeting, Greenpeace toured countries which receive waste and staged actions in waste-producing countries. At Tilbury docks, UK, a Greenpeace team prevented A. Cohen & Co. from exporting five containers of lead acid batteries to Brazil. Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) was also forced to halt a shipment of waste to Mexico.

Earth First! activists dumped rotting fruit and vegetables outside RTZ's offices in London to demand that the company accept responsibility for shipping to Oruro, Bolivia 600 tonnes of waste containing high levels of lead, arsenic, chromium and other heavy metals from RTZ's disused tin smelter in Humberside.

Three directors of British multinational Thor Chemicals are facing culpable homicide charges in South Africa after two of their workers died from mercury poisoning. Wastes from the US, UK and other European countries have been incinerated at the Thor plant in Cato Ridge, a poor area near Durban. An African National Congress delegation recently discovered 16,000 barrels of mercury waste there. At least half of this is thought to have come from the UK where Thor used to process waste until 1987, when its plant was shut down after pressure from the UK Health and Safety Executive and workers who claimed to be suffering from mercury poisoning.

In Albania, EURONATURE has discovered a dump of 4,000 tonnes of pesticides containing mercury as well as toxic agents such as paraquat, DDT and camphechlor. The importers from Germany claim that Albania will use the chemicals as pesticides, but the country uses only 66 tons of pesticides per year.

**CONTACT:** Greenpeace, Canonbury Villas, London N1 2PN, UK, Tel: 071-354 5100.

EURONATURE, Güttinger Str. 19, D-7760 Rodlfzell, GERMANY.

## Environment "Aid" Hits Polish Forests

A US\$4.5 MILLION grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for biodiversity conservation in Bialowieza Primateval Forest, Poland, has not helped protect it. Indeed, the grant is dwarfed by the subsequent US\$146 million World Bank loan to the Polish forestry industry.

The Bialowieza Forest straddling the Polish-Belarusian border, dates back to 8000BC and covers about 580 km<sup>2</sup>. A biosphere conservation strategy was drawn up to gain the GEF grant, but the Chief of the Bialowieza Forest Department says even if it is implemented "generally we will continue with present levels of cutting". Four or five more logging companies have recently moved into the area for the first time.

Local people are suspicious of the conservation plans, as they have not been consulted, and because aid will not be used to compensate them if they lose the income from a tree-cutting tax which was introduced in 1991 in place of communist state support. Thus, the mayor of Bialowieza says that the conservation strategy would threaten plans for a new primary school, the conversion of coal-fired central heating to gas and a new waste disposal system.

GEF money has gone towards computers, pollution monitoring and salaries of scientists carrying out specialist research studies. Researcher Anna Adhemar comments "scientists are seen as upper-class outsiders, viewed with mistrust by the locals . . . These people have been dictated to for a long time — first by rich landowners, then by Nazis, the communists and centralized forestry and now in the form of internationally-financed conservation plans, represented at the local level by scientists."

**CONTACT:** Anna Adhemar and Jesper Petersen, Baggesensgade 19.4 th, 2200 Copenhagen N, DENMARK, Tel: +45 35 37 8920.

### Clayoquot Cancelled

Scott Ltd, the largest UK toilet paper manufacturer, has cancelled contracts with companies that are clearcutting Clayoquot Sound temperate rainforest in Canada. Kirsten Denker of Greenpeace, which had threatened to run national adverts linking Scott with the logging of Clayoquot, commented "turning thousand year-old trees into toilet paper is madness. We hope this will be the first of many cancelled contracts for Canadian rainforest products in the UK."

## World Bank Displacement Denials

**THE WORLD BANK'S** resettlement review, released in April, claims that as 10 million people are evicted every year by all development projects, the displacement of two million by current World Bank projects is not too serious.

The review was announced in 1992 to dampen criticism of the Bank's continued funding of the Sardar Sarovar dam, yet the Bank claims that its talks with the government of Gujarat have resulted in an "improved resettlement policy" there. This ignores the failure of Gujarat to implement its compensation policies. For example, in defiance of a High Court ruling, it recently closed the sluice gates on the Sardar Sarovar dam without warning those people whose houses, fields and fisheries were destroyed. Over 100,000 people losing land to the Sardar Sarovar canal have still not been recognized as

"project-affected".

Many non-government organizations are demanding that the Bank should not fund any projects involving resettlement, as it has failed to implement its policy of minimizing the numbers evicted and consulting with and compensating people who end up being moved.

Campaigners' ideas for exposing the Bank's record include writing letters to aid ministers on silhouettes of human beings cut out from old newspaper, fasts, and performances such as walking through a doorway or packing a suitcase two million times.

**CONTACT:** The Ecologist, Agriculture House, Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DU. EDF, 1875 Connecticut Ave, N.W., 10th Floor, Washington DC 20009, USA.

**FOR DETAILS** of the Alternative Forum at the IMF/WB meeting in Madrid in September, contact Aedenat, Campomanes 13-28013 Madrid, SPAIN.

## UK Roads Slowed, Resistance Grows

CUTS IN the roads programme announced by the UK government in March have not satisfied critics, as many of the most damaging schemes will still go ahead.

In East London the anti-M11 protests have gone from strength to strength, and industry sources now estimate that work is five months behind schedule. Activists have also slowed work awarded in March to Amey Construction, Amey Roadstone Corporation and ACE Securities on a road being built through Solsbury Hill, near Bath. It claims to be a bypass but is part of the Trans-European Road Network.



**ROADS ACTIONS:** Trans-European Networks conference, London June 15-16. For details of an action at this, contact: Road Alert, PO Box 371, Southampton SO9 7BS, Tel: 0703 237 809.

Save Our Solsbury, 39 Bailbrook Road, Bath, Tel 0225 319 911.

A11 action camp, Norwich Environment Network, The Greenhouse, Norwich NR2 1RN.

Vallée d'Aspe action, 22 May. Contact: Sepanso, 2 rue de Tilleul, 64400 Gurmançon, FRANCE.

**BIKE TOUR** in Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands to protest against centralised distribution in Europe. From July 20, contact: Gerbrand, c/o Jongeren Milieu Aktief, Oude Gracht 42, 3511 AR Utrecht, THE NETHERLANDS.

**VIDEO AVAILABLE:** Small World Media has produced a video of the M11 campaign, the effects on protesting of the Criminal Justice Bill and non-violent direct action. CONTACT: Small World, 3 Ashbrook Road, London N19 3DF.

## Olympian Struggle Against Golf

THE GLOBAL Anti-Golf Movement's conference in March supported the struggle of groups in Japan opposing the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics.

For "16 days of glory" large amounts of public money are being invested in golf and ski resorts, the Bullet Train railway project and hotels. Campaigners allege that the Kokudo Group owned by Mr Yoshiaki Tsutsumi will be the only major beneficiary. Kokudo's existing golf developments, such as that at Maui, Hawai'i, have caused severe environmental and social problems.

The Movement continues to demand that no international aid or other government money be used to promote golf tourism or related infrastructure.

● In Ciyajanti, Indonesia, 329 families were forced off their land by a golf development. Now, farmers in Citereup, Bogor, West Java are being forcibly dispossessed of land to make way for a golf tourism resort. Many farmers and human rights activists have been arrested.

FOR MORE anti-golf campaign information, contact: GAG'M, 1047 Naka, Kamogawa, Chiba, JAPAN 296-01, Tel: +81 47097 1011.

## Bakun Launched

A TEAM of four major Canadian engineering firms, including Hydro-Quebec, visited Malaysia in March to discuss the 2,400 MW Bakun hydroelectric project which was officially launched by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in January.

It is to be built in Sarawak, but some of the power will be transmitted under the sea to peninsular Malaysia via 650km long cables. About 200,000 hectares of forest will be cleared for the dam and more than 5,000 people will be directly affected. Over 3,300 signatures have been collected from indigenous communities opposed to the scheme. The project has been awarded to Ekran Bhd company.

CONTACT: Sahabat Alam Malaysia, 19, Jalan Kelawai 10250 Penang, MALAYSIA.

## Cardiff Bay Pledge

PEOPLE ARE pledging that they will protest against the building of the Cardiff Bay Barrage, due to start in June.

Protests have already been held against the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation (CBDC) and the contractors Balfour Beatty and Costain. CBDC believes that flooding the salt-water mud flats will make the area more attractive to investors, but the main beneficiaries of this £153 million scheme would be the developers and contractors, not the economy or people of Cardiff. A nationally-important site for wintering waterfowl would be lost, and chemicals from the blocked rivers would cause pollution problems.

TO SIGN the pledge to use lawful means to stop the dam being built, write to Cardiff FoE, 30 Windway Road, Victoria Park, Cardiff CF5 1AG.

## NUCLEAR NEWS ●●

### ● SUPERPHENIX RESTARTS

In February, the French government announced that it would reopen the Superphénix fastbreeder nuclear plant, supposedly to research the disposal of nuclear waste. Opponents believe this is a move to open the plant by stealth, as Superphénix could only deal with a fraction of the 10 tonnes of plutonium produced yearly by France's nuclear reactors. Superphénix cost £3.3 billion to build but, due to a leaky cooling system, has run at full capacity for only 174 days since 1986. Campaigners are calling for its permanent closure and recently held a month-long march to Paris from Malville, where the plant is sited.

CONTACT: Européens Contre Superphénix, 4 Rue Bodin, 69001, Lyon, FRANCE.

### ● URANIUM CONFERENCE

There will be a counter-conference and actions in Brussels when the Uranium Institute (UI) holds its mid-term meeting there from May 16-19. The UI claims to promote the use of uranium for "peaceful purposes" and comprises mining companies, electricity utilities, and nuclear fuel processors including Mitsubishi, BNFL, EDF, Cogema, Cameco and others including Siemens which is currently the target of a boycott because of its promotion of nuclear power.

CONTACT: Motherearth, Zilverhof 19, 9000 Ghent, Belgium, Tel: 32 9 233 3268, Fax: 32 9 233 4924, e-mail: motherearth@gn.apc.org  
Siemens Boycott, Postfach 61 02 85, D-10924, Berlin, GERMANY.

### ● SELLAFIELD SOLSTICE

Surround Sellafield With Sanity For Solstice will consist of a camp and non-violent direct actions from 18-20 June at Sellafield nuclear power station in response to the decision to open Thorp, the UK's plutonium production plant.

CONTACT: SHUT SELLAFIELD, Dept. 66, 1 Newton St. Manchester M1, Tel: 0706 371 387.

### ● TEMELIN CAMP SOON

In March the US Export-Import Bank gave its final approval to \$317 million in loan guarantees for work by Westinghouse to complete the Temelin nuclear reactor in the Czech Republic. Protests against the unsafe Russian-designed plant will continue with a protest camp this summer.

PROTEST CAMP, all July, contact: Hnutí Duha, Jakubské nám 7, 60200 Brno, CZECH REPUBLIC.