

Dear Organic Community Member,

We write to you as long-time organic community members who care, as we are sure you do as well, about protecting our collective organic integrity. We need to consider how best to use the aftermath of the recent USDA decision to de-regulate RR alfalfa to create a “teachable” moment for all of us to rally around the kinds of long-term and lasting solutions needed to actually create “peace in the valley”.

We fully understand all of the hurt feelings, our despair, and our fear and loathing. However, we have vetted enough. Now is the time to turn not on each other but toward cooperating on common solutions.

The National Organic Coalition has issued a [white paper](#) to USDA laying out a Seven-Point Plan, which spells out concretely what is needed to help frame and guide the debate on the possibility of “coexistence” between organic and GMOs. [see <http://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org/GMO/GMOContaminationPrevention.pdf>]

We are calling for your strong support for the development of a workable and comprehensive [National GMO Contamination Prevention Plan](#) that includes these seven points:

1. Establishment of a fully distinct and separate USDA Public Cultivar and Breeds Institute to ensure that farmers have elite public cultivar and breeding choices that are not genetically modified and that germplasm collections are free of GMO contamination.
2. Creation of a *Contamination Compensation Fund* funded by GMO patent holders and based upon their strict liability. This would provide immediate assistance to all farmers and other supply chain participants contaminated by GMOs, pending further necessary remedies of law and equity. Such a Fund would establish costs associated with the prevention of GMO commingling and contamination from seed to table and would include both perpetual type costs as well as identity preserved price differential costs for organic and other non-GMO crops.
3. Ongoing GM crop regulation, including the complete elimination of deregulated GM crop status; including prior deregulations such as corn, cotton, canola and soy and on-going oversight and public evaluations of compliance and enforcement.
4. Comprehensive, independent, longitudinal studies on the health impacts of eating GMOs and on the environmental and socio-economic impacts of release prior to GM crop approvals.
5. Prohibition on the growing of GM crops that are deemed too promiscuous to prevent GMO Contamination.
6. Mitigation of food security risks associated with the concentration of any sector of our food system in the hands of a few companies or with the use of one food production technology or patented seeds or genotypes to the near exclusion of all others.

7. Institution of an immediate labeling protocol for all GM crops, products, and ingredients in close collaboration with other agencies as required.

This seven-point plan, continuing support for the critical and on-going legal challenges, and continuous calls to the White House by members of the public can constitute the beginning of comprehensive strategy to win a lasting peace.

If we all cooperate, the new Farm Bill is looming and can provide opportunities to move this platform forward.

We strongly urge the Organic Community, which includes both the movement and the industry, to re-focus our anger, passion and talents back toward solving our common problems – we should remain tough on our principles but not on our fellow travelers.

Now is the time not only to unite but to create winning solutions.

This is our “teachable moment” – let’s use this to our advantage!

Sincerely,

Michael Sligh
Elizabeth Henderson
Liana Hoodes
Steve Gilman

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