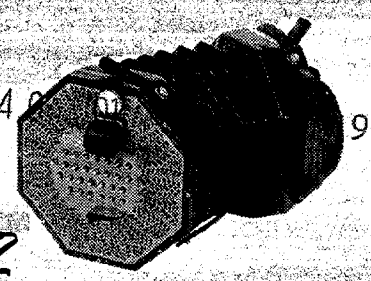
Tim Jennings



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FDA Commissioner Jane Henney
Dockets Management Branch (HFA 305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fisher,s Lane, rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Ms. Henney

I am writing to express my strong disapproval of the FDA's continuing hands-off stance towards evaluating the safety of genetically modified foods.

The difference between conventional breeding practices and genetic engineering is like the difference between chemistry and nuclear physics. As in the late 40s, we are faced with the prospect of lots more power, lots more danger, and very little knowledge of what could go wrong. Think of the problems we face with our weapons and our waste. Now think about what would have happened if the government had left the field open and unregulated.

I can see two reasons why we're proceeding this heedlessly in the face of such real danger. One is the scientist's longing for knowledge and power. This factor by itself is quite capable causing harm-- it is how the Gypsy Moth caterpiller came to the New World, for example. But the danger is increased exponentially when scientific desire is joined by the corporate drive for profit at all costs. The danger is in the "kept" nature of modern science, being put to serve the money-lust that has been ignited in our corporations at the prospect of life-- life itself-- becoming their intellectual property.

This situation is scary, disgusting and shameful. It's also quite natural, of course. But so is self-preservation.

Please take a moment to think outside the box. Think of your children, think of the world. If it's been hard to put the nuclear genı back into the lamp, think of the danger posed by radically new self-replicating organisms, set loose into the environment by organizations that (regardless of how their PR guys spin their motives and activities) are forbidden to hold anything dear but short-term profit.

This is the kind of thing government is supposed to do: where business is incapable of regulating itself, which I believe it has shown itself to be in this case, our governments must move in to protect all of us, including the corporations themselves, from the consequences of their unchecked drives.

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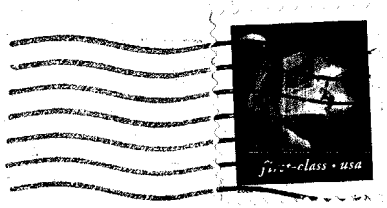

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