

The Honorable Dan Glickman
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th and Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

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Dear Secretary Glickman,

I am writing to ask that the USDA immediately cease negotiations to license the Terminator technology to a Monsanto subsidiary (Delta and Pine Land Co.). I also urge the USDA to abandon its worldwide patent applications on this immoral and dangerous technology.

The Terminator technology (US patent #5,723,765) is a genetic technology that renders farm-saved seed sterile. This technology has no agronomic benefit and should never see the commercial light of day. The Terminator violates Farmers' Rights and threatens agricultural biodiversity. The Terminator isn't about improving agriculture, it is about sterilizing seeds, wresting control of seeds and plant breeding from farmers, and fattening Monsanto's profits. According to Delta and Pine Land, Monsanto stands to make as much as US \$1.5 billion per year using the Terminator to force farmers to return to the commercial seed market every year. This is not progress; it is a threat to global food security and an egregious use of public research money.

As a public agency dedicated to promoting agriculture, USDA should be taking steps to safeguard the rights of farmers to save seed, not designing technologies to eliminate those rights. In light of the alarming rate of consolidation in the seed industry, I urge USDA to launch a public inquiry into the impacts of seed industry consolidation on farmers and food security.

The Terminator is an anti-farmer, anti-biodiversity technology - paid for by public money - and in large part aimed, according to USDA and Delta and Pine Land, at farmers in developing countries. USDA and Monsanto have indicated in Patent Cooperation Treaty documents that they intend to pursue patents on the Terminator in at least 87 countries. National applications are moving forward - or have issued - in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Africa, most European countries, and probably more jurisdictions.

Scientists warn that, under certain conditions, the trait for seed sterility will flow, via pollen, from Terminator crops to surrounding plants, making the seeds of neighboring plants sterile. Given the profound risks to food security and the environment, especially in the biodiversity-rich South, the Terminator patent embodies the kind of threat to public morality described in Article 27(2) of the WTO TRIPs agreement.

The Terminator technology is a dead-end for farmers and a threat to food security worldwide. It is morally unacceptable, and it must be banned. I respectfully urge you to stop the Terminator technology and cease negotiations for its commercial development.

Sincerely,

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CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number:

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