

# EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

**Dear Earthtalk:** What is the "Monsanto Protection Act" and why are environmentalists so upset about it?  
 — Rita Redstone, Milwaukee, WI

The so-called Monsanto Protection Act is actually a provision (officially known as Section 735) within a recently passed Congressional spending bill, H.R. 933, which exempts biotech companies from litigation in regard to the making, selling and distribution of genetically engineered (GE) seeds and plants.

President Obama signed the bill and its controversial rider into law in March 2013 much to the dismay of environmentalists. It means that Monsanto and other companies that supply the majority of the nation's crop seeds can continue to produce GE products regardless of any potential court orders stating otherwise.

Opponents of GE foods believe that

giving such companies a free reign over the production of such potentially dangerous organisms regardless of judicial challenge is a bad idea—especially given how little we still know about the biological and ecological implications of widespread use of GE crops.

Today more than 90 percent of the corn, soybeans, cotton, sugar beets and canola planted in the U.S. are derived from seeds genetically engineered by Monsanto and other companies to resist pests and thus increase yields.

Aviva Shen of the ThinkProgress blog reports that, instead of reducing farmers' use of toxic pesticides and herbicides, GE seeds are having the opposite effect in what has become a race to keep faster and faster developing "superweeds" and "superbugs" at bay.

With Congress and the White House refusing to regulate GE crops, the court system has remained a last line of defense for fighting the widespread adoption of genetic engineering—until now, that is, thanks to H.R. 933.

Monsanto isn't the only seed company heavy into genetic engineering, but it is the biggest and most well-known and spends millions of dollars each year on lobbyists to keep it that way.

Critics point out that the company has spent decades stacking government agencies with its executives and directors. "Monsanto's board members have worked for the EPA, advised the U.S. Department of Agriculture and served

on President Obama's Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations," reports the group Food & Water Watch.

"The prevalence of Monsanto's directors in these highly influential positions begs a closer look at how they're able to push the pro-GE agenda within the government and influence public opinion."

"The judicial review process is an essential element of U.S. law and serves as a vital check on any Federal Agency decision that may negatively impact human health, the environment or livelihoods," reports Food Democracy Now!

"Yet this provision seeks an end-run around such judicial review by preemptively deciding that industry can set its own conditions to continue to sell biotech seeds, even if a court may find them to have been wrongfully approved."

Another concern of safe food advocates now is getting the government to require food makers to list GE ingredients clearly on product labels so consumers can make informed choices accordingly.

"Not only is [GE] labeling a reasonable and common sense solution to the continued controversy that corpora-



More than 90 percent of U.S.-grown corn, soybeans, cotton, sugar beets and canola are derived from seeds genetically engineered by Monsanto and other companies to resist pests. (iStockPhoto)

tions like Monsanto, DuPont and Dow Chemical have created by subverting our basic democratic rights," adds Food Democracy Now!, "but it is a basic right that citizens in 62 other countries around the world already enjoy, including Europe, Russia, China, India, South Africa and Saudi Arabia."

CONTACTS: ThinkProgress, [www.thinkprogress.org](http://www.thinkprogress.org); Food & Water Watch, [www.foodandwaterwatch.org](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org); Food Democracy Now! [www.fooddemocracy.org](http://www.fooddemocracy.org).

EarthTalk® is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E - The Environmental Magazine ([www.emagazine.com](http://www.emagazine.com)). Send questions to: [earthtalk@emagazine.com](mailto:earthtalk@emagazine.com).

## POST A TO Z BUSINESS CARD DIRECTORY 503-244-6933

**"WE MAKE HOUSES HAPPY!"**  
 Sarah Anderson, 10  
**Stan Anderson Builders, LLC**  
 SPECIALIZING IN KITCHENS, BATHROOMS & ROOM ADDITIONS.  
 Call today for an appointment:  
**503-901-1009**  
 STAN ANDERSON BUILDERS, LLC  
[WWW.STANANDERSONBUILDERS.COM](http://WWW.STANANDERSONBUILDERS.COM)  
[STANANDERSONBUILDERS@MSN.COM](mailto:STANANDERSONBUILDERS@MSN.COM)

**CZ BECKER COMPANY**  
**WOOD FLOORS**  
 A Family Owned Business Since 1982

- Restoration Repairs & Refinishing
- State of the Art Dust Containment
- Installation of New Wood Floors
- Environmentally Friendly Finishes

**503.282.0623**  
**czbecker.com**

**Your Mow & Go Service**  
 Average lawn mowing less than \$25 with over 10,467 served. We offer free estimates, serve the Portland metro area & we do not require a contract. Save by signing up today & get your lawn into shape for summer fun!

**Clean Cut**  
 of SouthWest Portland  
 (503) 244-2314  
[info@cleancut1.com](mailto:info@cleancut1.com)  
[www.cleancut1.com](http://www.cleancut1.com) Lic # 370189-91 Fully Insured

**KEITH DAVIS CONSTRUCTION, LLC** Over 30 years experience  
 - KITCHEN & BATHROOM REMODEL  
 - HISTORIC & WHOLE HOUSE RENOVATION  
 - DECKS, WINDOWS, MAINTENANCE & MORE

503.329.9212 | [kdcllc@mac.com](mailto:kdcllc@mac.com)  
[keithdavisconstruction.com](http://keithdavisconstruction.com) | CCB#173455

**Julia Fitzgerald**  
 phone: 503-244-6905  
 fax: 503-244-4569  
[julia@juliafitzgeraldcpa.com](mailto:julia@juliafitzgeraldcpa.com)  
[www.juliafitzgeraldcpa.com](http://www.juliafitzgeraldcpa.com)  
 6663 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy #52, Portland, OR 97225

**Julia Fitzgerald, CPA, PC**

A professional resource for your home business or small business.  
 QuickBooks® • Taxes • Business Development

Decks • Stairs • Rails • Trellises • Screens • Benches

**DECKS**

I live in the neighborhood. CCB#173192  
 Davis Hart • 503-888-4342 • [DecksbyDavisHart.com](http://DecksbyDavisHart.com)

**Mary McGill LLC, MA, LPC, LMT**  
 Counseling  
 The Way of the Heart™ Training

2929 SW Multnomah Blvd., #104  
 Portland, OR 97219  
 503.771.1789  
[heartscall@spiritone.com](mailto:heartscall@spiritone.com)  
[www.heartscall.com](http://www.heartscall.com)

**503-244-6933**

**Your Ad Here**  
**Just \$69/month for a Year!**

**The Southwest Post**  
 Portland

Ann Slocum-Edmond  
 Optometric Physician

Heather Dudzik  
 Optician

Annie Wolf  
 Optometric Physician

**HILLSDALE EYE CARE**  
 1522 SW SUNSET BLVD  
 PORTLAND OREGON 97239  
 PH 503 - 473 - 8039  
 FAX 503 - 473 - 8952  
[WWW.HILLSDALEEYE.COM](http://WWW.HILLSDALEEYE.COM)

**Great Interior/Exterior Specials!**

**503-799-2809**  
**David Humphrey**  
[dghumphrey@comcast.net](mailto:dghumphrey@comcast.net)  
 CCB# 44033  
 Lead Certified LBPR44033  
 See Website for Portfolio and specials!  
**HumphreyPainting.com**

**Heidi L. Jackson**  
 Certified Creative Grief Coach

Supporting your life journey after loss ~

503-351-5937  
[HLJackson2@aol.com](mailto:HLJackson2@aol.com)  
[www.heidijackson.net](http://www.heidijackson.net)

**Kathleen W. McDonald**  
 Licensed Massage Therapist ~ Reiki Master  
 Therapy ~ Consultation ~ Classes

503-869-8429  
[kathleenwmcDonald@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenwmcDonald@gmail.com)  
 Fanno Creek Clinic ~ 503-452-0915  
 LMT #1781 since 1984