

ground show that GMOs don't actually increase yields, and thirty years of peer-reviewed research from the Rodale Farming Systems trial shows that organic farming can match their yields and do even better in times of flood and drought ... all without toxic chemicals, synthetic fertilizers and patents. We also know that the wealthiest countries waste almost half of the food they produce, meaning that the world produces enough food to feed nearly fourteen billion people right now. And it's no secret that most GMOs go into making the worst food on the planet, devoid of the nutrients we need for real health, or into ethanol production – not into feeding the poor. But they tell the lie so well, exploiting the poor to prey on our emotions, that most of us believe it without looking beyond their slick thirty-second advertisements.

Are we surprised that the industry is lying to us? A giant corporation only focused on profit and securing markets for further growth is almost beholden to itself and its shareholders to lie if lying means profit. I don't want to become a jaded, pessimistic person, always thinking the worst, but I also don't want to be a fool either. And not being a fool in the current climate of "corporatocracy" means assuming that giant corporations monopolizing the market are probably lying to us and abusing power. That isn't being cynical; it's just common sense.

Chavannes wasn't deceived by the promises of increased yield and profit, miracle seeds and wonder chemicals. He knew, as we all know, that these companies aren't asking themselves "What's good for this society, for people's health, for the earth?" No, the questions they are asking are "What will increase profit? How can we produce more in a shorter amount of time, eliminate competition, ensure repeat customers and make more money?"

The new reality of the world is that giant chemical companies are feeding us and our families. And those questions of profit and growth are the ones they're paying attention to, not the ones concerning you or your family or this land we all share and live on.

Maybe corporate greed and corruption aren't enough to deter people from a cheap hamburger because, well, there will always be selfish monsters abusing power, but we still have to eat, right? Perhaps the death of the family farmer under the current paradigm of big industry and corporate consolidation within the food system doesn't really hit home enough to make a change?

But I would hope that the potential health risks would at least cause parents to stop feeding their children GMOs until all the data is in. Long-term, independent studies show damage to rat livers and kidneys when fed an exclusive GMO grain diet, and new findings link Monsanto's "Roundup" weed killer to Parkinson's disease and cancer.

With peer-reviewed, independent studies coming out with real results that contradict the industry's short-term studies, it seems safe to say that all is not well with this genetically altered food. Should we really allow ourselves to be a part of this experiment? And even if you're willing to take the risk, do you have

the right to subject your fellow citizens or children to it?

How can we live without destroying the sources of our life?
- Wendell Berry

Once you know about GMOs, it is not an issue you can stay on the fence about, because you eat every single day. There's no way out, because what you eat shapes the world around us. What you eat makes you a participant in a larger system, one that interacts with the planet, whether you like it or not.

In his book, *The Unsettling of America*, Wendell Berry writes "In order to understand our own time and predicament and the work that is to be done, we would do well to shift the terms and say that we are divided between exploitation and nurture."

"HOW WE EAT DETERMINES, TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, HOW THE WORLD IS USED."

- WENDELL BERRY

That is the real divide in our food system, in energy, in consumerism and in our relationships with one another. If you choose to ignore GMOs and the giant corporations

taking over our food because it's overwhelming or you like the convenience and affordability of their products, then you've chosen to participate in the system of exploitation.

Those of us who do not live on and from the land, must stand in solidarity with farmers here and around the world who choose the way of nurture – understanding the interconnectedness of all life and embracing a way of living that regenerates soil, seed and life, so we have something to pass on to our children.

If you choose to be a "nurturer" rather than an "exploiter," then there are simple, powerful, practical ways to live out that philosophy. First, vote with your fork; second, demand labeling for GMOs and stand up for your right to know; and, third, participate in our democracy and help promote fair food and farm policies, creating the systemic changes necessary for true sustainability.

On a personal level, which collectively can grow into national significance and create real change, you can vote with your fork. Don't buy GMOs or any products that come from the biotech and agrochemical industry. Buy organic, local, seasonal food. Shop at farmers' markets and join a Community Supported Agriculture program (CSA). It will be tough making the transition, and it will cost more, but this is something you can start doing today.

To make this first step achievable, we have to fight for the labeling of GMOs, and that fight is happening in states across the country right now. The biggest push happened in the fall of 2012 with California's Proposition 37. Over six million people voted for their right to know, but the pesticide and junk food industry (companies like Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Dupont and Monsanto) spent over a million dollars a day on deceptive ads in the last month to narrowly defeat the proposition. However, no one in the movement saw it as a defeat. They had exposed the industry's fear of labeling and willingness to spend millions to keep us in the dark, and they raised consciousness across the nation,

