

seeds from year to year. If a farmer is caught doing so, the full weight of the corporation, often through "free trade" agreements under the WTO, will descend upon him. This is true even if he unknowingly has saved seeds from a crop that has been accidentally contaminated with GMOs.

Why should it be left to Mendocino County or other localities to ban these crops? Where is the state or the federal government? There seems to be no political will for protecting our farmland. Localities are left to band together and protect themselves. And time is running out.

The challenges to the legality of such a measure can come in many guises and from different directions. State governments do not look favorably on the counties making independent decisions, and the federal government feels the same way about the states taking independent actions. The resulting conflicts—called "crises of jurisdiction"—define the gray areas where local democracy can triumph. If Mendocino voters pass this ballot measure, they are saying: "The county is the level at which we choose to make this decision."

Corporations may choose to sue the county using the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution to argue that only the federal government can regulate interstate commerce. They might go to the WTO or look to NAFTA, claiming restraint of trade or loss of future profits. Or they may pressure the state legislature to exert control over its "disobedient" county. Perhaps a local farmer will be encouraged to bring a suit claiming that he is being denied his right to grow GMO crops. It would be surprising if corporations did nothing to challenge such a law.

As citizens of the United States, we must not only be prepared for challenges to our local control over our food, health, economy and environment but also be prepared to direct our local, state, and federal representatives and law enforcement agencies to stand up to the challenges. We need to educate ourselves and think through what it means for the people to assert their rights to make democratic decisions about what is best for them and what they choose to value. We can take inspiration from the people around the world who are standing together to say no to GMOs.

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The International Forum on Globalization www.ifg.org and the Center for Food Safety have recently released a map depicting worldwide regulation, prohibition and production of genetically modified crops and foods (i.e. countries that require regulation and labeling of genetically engineered foods or have proposed legislation to do so, have a ban on growing genetically engineered crops, or have signed the Biosafety Protocol). You can purchase the 27" x 19" map for \$4 each. Contact Suzanne York for details at syork@ifg.org.

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will be altered and expanded as debate and discussion around FTAA continue. It aims to establish concrete and viable alternatives to the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Free Trade Kit www.web.net/~comfront/freetkit.htm

This kit was prepared by Common Frontiers, a multi-sector working group which confronts, and proposes alternatives to, the social, environmental and fiscal effects of economic integration in the Americas.

FTAA Information Clearinghouse and Archive

www.tao.ca/~ridefree/ftaa/

The Information Clearinghouse and Archive on the FTAA presents actions, organizing and information resources on the resistance to the FTAA.

Global Trade Watch www.citizen.org/trade/ftaa/

Global Trade Watch (GTW) was created in 1993 to promote government and corporate accountability in an area on which few public interest groups were focused: the international commercial agreements shaping the current version of globalization. GTW is still the only U.S. organization focused full-time on globalization issues. This page presents in-depth information, fact sheets, action alerts and other useful information on debates and issues surrounding the FTAA.

Center of Concern

www.coc.org/focus/women/ftaa.html

The work at the Center of Concern during the past several years has been directed at analysis of globalization through the lenses of gender, class and race, with a concern for human rights, especially economic and social rights. This page contains information, analysis and resources on the FTAA and its impact on women's rights.

FTAA Official Site

www.alca-ftaa.org

The official site of the FTAA is accessible in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French languages.

Stop CAFTA

www.cispes.org

The US/Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) is a free trade agreement currently being negotiated by the United States and Central America. President Bush has referred to CAFTA as a top priority for his administration, as it will help move forward FTAA. CAFTA would roll back labor and human rights throughout Central America and the United States. It would move the FTAA process forward. "Corporate Globalization" (neoliberalism) gives corporations and market forces control over people and free trade agreements like CAFTA make this happen.

This article originally appeared on Women's Human Rights net. See the website for the complete text, with references: www.whrnet.org. The Women's Human Rights net is a project of the Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org) an international membership organization connecting, informing and mobilizing people and organizations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. Reach them at: 96 Spadina Ave., Suite 401, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5V 2J6. Phone number: (416) 594-3773.