

The introduction of genetically modified (GM) soy into the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia) was a defining moment of the last twenty years of agriculture in the region, ushering in a new era of rural industrialisation based on the use of agrichemicals and GM seeds. There is no historical precedent for the speed with which these changes occurred, or for the impacts they have had.



With the twentieth harvest of glyphosate-resistant GM soy in the Southern Cone (approximately 175 million tonnes) now underway, we have prepared this poster in order to present twenty arguments for the eradication of this crop, once and for all.

1 In Argentina, it was approved illegitimately by an agency (the National Advisory Commission on Agricultural Biotechnology, or CONABIA) stacked with representatives of the chemical corporations. And its expansion into the other Southern Cone countries was intentionally illegal: its imposition in Brazil and Paraguay resulted from the expansion of illegal planting on a mass scale. There was never a democratic debate about its approval and release.

2 Its imposition resulted in a green desert extending over 54 million hectares, christened the "United Republic of Soybeans" by the multinationals.

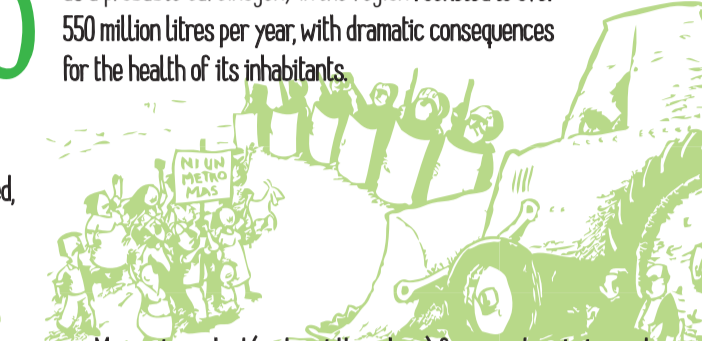
3 With the introduction of GM soy, the use of glyphosate (recently reclassified by the World Health Organization as a probable carcinogen) in the region rocketed to over 550 million litres per year, with dramatic consequences for the health of its inhabitants.

4 Millions of peasants were displaced and thousands more had to give up producing local food, being unable to coexist with GM soy.



5 Hundreds of peasants were criminalised, persecuted, and murdered in their struggle to defend the land from being taken over by soy monoculture.

6 Millions of hectares of native forest were destroyed throughout the Southern Cone, logged and ploughed to make way for soybeans.



7 Monsanto pushed (and is still pushing) for amendments to seed laws so that it can control and monopolise seeds. In Argentina, it has waged a fifteen-year lobbying campaign for amendments allowing it to collect royalties from every grower who saves seed for replanting.



20 years of GM soy in the Southern Cone
20 years of GM crops, agrottoxins,
and environmental devastation
20 reasons for a definitive ban

8 Disease and death have spread through the region due to the increased use of agrottoxins, arousing resistance on the part of the "sprayed communities".

9 Governments that attempted to rein in the spread of soy and GM crops were outmaneuvered, Paraguay being a paradigmatic case of such political interference.

10 Soils have been depleted and destroyed by this extractive form of agriculture, with an unprecedented loss of nutrients.

11 Land ownership has become highly concentrated. The paradigmatic case is again that of Paraguay, where 0.4% of landowners have grabbed 56% of the land.

13 An alliance between the corporate groups rolling out soybean monoculture and the mass media has been consolidated, with the result that there has been little debate or publicity about the impacts of this model.

14 Herbicide-resistant crops have proven to be an agronomic failure. Dozens of weeds have developed glyphosate resistance, requiring the spraying of ever larger quantities of this and other herbicides.

12 Grazing, formerly practiced in rotation with agriculture, has been displaced into much more fragile ecosystems (the Amazon, the Paraguayan Chaco, wetlands, etc.), causing devastation in these areas.

16 Every comparative study performed to date has found GM soy varieties to be less productive than conventional varieties.

17 The food safety of GM soybeans has never been demonstrated. Doubts have not been quelled by the biased studies submitted by the corporations. Every day, the fallacy of "substantial equivalence" becomes harder to maintain.

15 The science underpinning the development of GM crops has been widely questioned for its mechanistic approach and oversimplification of complex genomic systems.

19 Hundreds of millions of consumers around the world have essentially been force-fed GM soy, since it has been incorporated into highly processed foods without their knowledge or consent.

20 The whole GM soy production chain has caused greenhouse gas emissions to skyrocket, exacerbating the worldwide climate crisis.

18 The mass production of GM soy has driven an expansion in industrial meat production, with grave worldwide environmental, health, and climate impacts.

Notes

- 4 - By 2007, in Paraguay alone, the advance of soybean monoculture had driven 143,000 peasant families off the land, while in Argentina it had caused an exodus of over 200,000 farmers and rural labourers.
- 5 - In Paraguay, from 2013 to 2015, 4105 people were evicted by the police in connection with land conflicts. In Brazil, the year 2016, with 60 deaths (a 20% rise over the previous year), became the most violent year in the countryside since 2003, when 71 people were assassinated for their part in promoting agrarian reform and defending their traditional lands.
- 6 - In the Paraguayan Chaco, 650,000 hectares have been deforested every year in the last ten years. In Argentina, in the seven years from 2007 to 2014, 2,107,208 hectares were deforested.
- 8 - In southern Santa Fe province (Argentina), health studies conducted by the Faculty of Medicine of the National University of Rosario found the cancer rate in 2013 to be nearly double the national average (397.4 versus 217 per 100,000 inhabitants). In Brazil, 34,147 reports of intoxication with agrotoxins were recorded between 2007 and 2014.
- 9 - In 2012, in the midst of a land conflict in Curuguaty, in Paraguay, in which 17 people were killed, and under corporate fire for the limits he was placing on agribusiness (rescinding the approval of GM maize, placing limits on the spraying of agrotoxins), President Lugo was hastily deposed in an illegitimate parliamentary coup.
- 10 - In Argentina, the soy monocrop is causing accelerated soil depletion, with a loss of 19–30 tonnes of soil due to improper crop management, farming on steep slopes, and climatic conditions. The “virtual” water exported in the beans amounted to 42.5 billion cubic metres for the 2004–2005 season.
- 11 - In Argentina in 2010, over 50% of soy production was controlled by only 3% of growers on holdings of over 5000 hectares. In Uruguay, in the same year, 1% of growers owned or controlled 35% of the area under soybeans.
- 12 - In Paraguay, the bulk of livestock expansion is taking place in the Chaco on the ancestral land of the original peoples. There are now more than 10 million head of cattle on some 23 million hectares.
- 14 - During the 2010–2011 season in Argentina, approximately 256 million litres of glyphosate were used, representing a 1200% within the space of only five years.
- 16 - According to a review of over 8200 soy variety trials conducted in the United States, Roundup Ready GM crops exhibit a 6–10% yield deficit as compared with non-GM varieties. Similar studies are lacking for the Southern Cone.
- 18 - At least half the meat produced in Argentina comes from feedlots.
- 20 - A 2016 state of the environment report for Argentina found that 44% of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by deforestation and monoculture.

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