

new publications

Fighting FTAs: The growing resistance to bilateral free trade and investment agreements

bilaterals.org, BIOTHAI and GRAIN (editors)

This book, of about 100 pages, available on the internet and in hard copy from February 2008, is the result of a remarkable collaborative effort between many grassroots activists throughout the world. The origins of the publication date back to July 2006 when FTA Watch, a large Thai coalition, held in Bangkok the first international strategy workshop for grassroots activists fighting bilateral free trade and investment agreements (FTAs).

Many who attended the workshop said that they had gained a great deal from sharing experiences, and wanted to keep the process going. In early 2007

GRAIN and bilaterals.org agreed to draw up a "big picture" view of what the FTA deals were about. They were soon joined by BIOTHAI, a member of FTA Watch, which also wanted to continue sharing experiences between national struggles. The three groups called on people who had come to the Bangkok workshop, and further afield, to join the effort.

Many responded, putting together accounts and analyses of the struggles against FTAs in different parts of the world. While there is a huge diversity in these experiences, there is a lot of commonality too. Where accounts could not be shared in writing, the organisers

arranged some audio interviews which will be available on the publication's website, along with several anti-FTA films, and other resources.

While the book is being published first in English, Spanish and French, groups are welcome to translate it into other languages and otherwise reproduce it as they wish. Copies will be available from GRAIN. If you are interested in receiving copies or distributing within your networks and associations, please contact us with your full particulars at: fightingftas@grain.org.

<http://www.fightingftas.org>
<http://www.combatiendolostic.org>

Good Crop/Bad Crop – Seed Politics and the Future of Food in Canada

Devlin Kuyek, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 978 1 897071 21 2

The author of this book is a researcher at GRAIN, so perhaps it is not surprising that he has written a book that deals with a subject central to GRAIN's concerns: the takeover over the global seed industry by transnational companies. Examining the experience of his home country, Canada, Kuyek looks at the way seeds have become increasingly commodified and plant breeding dominated by corporate priorities. He says that Canadian farmers should look

at experiences in the developing world, where peasant farmers are organising to regain control over seed supplies in their struggle to ensure food sovereignty and their futures.

"Few of us ever see the seeds of our food. They are small and easily overlooked in spite of their multitudes and our utter dependence on their survival and continuing evolution. But while most of us were not looking, certain interests

were busy capturing and transforming the seeds we depend upon. Their goal: corporate control and profit. Kuyek tells the story of the privatisation of the seed in highly readable prose backed by his usual impeccable research. This story is of crucial importance for anyone concerned about the corporate control of food and the seeds it comes from."

Brewster Kneen, *The Ram's Horn*, November 2007

La Vía Campesina – Globalization and the Power of Peasants

Annette Aurélie Desmarais, Pluto Press, ISBN 978 1 55266 225 0

In 1993, 46 farm leaders from various countries met in Belgium to develop a strategy to challenge the devastation caused to their communities by a neoliberal international economic agenda. Over the next decade they and millions of peasants and small farmers around the world set up La Vía Campesina – Spanish for the "The Peasant Way" – to forge a radical force of opposition. Where did they find the capacity and strength

to challenge multinational agribusiness and international institutions whose power and influence increasingly dictate national government policy? This book accompanies La Vía Campesina in a struggle to keep people on the land, producing food and culture, and building viable communities.

"La Vía Campesina captures the struggles, proposals and actions of a movement

that embraces a new understanding of solidarity among farmers, peasants, farm workers, indigenous peoples and rural women in the North and the South as they engage in a common struggle against the neoliberal, free-trade and pro-corporatisation policies."

Paul Nicholson, farm leader with the Coordination Paysanne Européenne, Regional Coordination of La Vía Campesina for Europe.

PANAP (Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific) has produced a series of booklets on issues of interest to GRAIN readers. One covers the scandal of Liberty Link, a GM variety of rice, developed by Bayer CropScience, a

German agribusiness giant, which was at the centre of a worldwide scare caused by the contamination of rice crops. Another looks at the importance of rice in the lives of Asian people and examines the impact of globalisation. And another

describes how the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has wreaked destruction for rice farmers in Asia. The booklets are available, free of charge, at

<http://www.panap.net/223.0.html>

