

# **Genetic Engineering Action Network**

## **Local Organizing Toolkit**

### **Introduction**

Dozens of countries around the world have been concerned about genetic engineering in agriculture for many years now. Here in the United States, the movement to resist genetic engineering is relatively new. Awareness about the hazards that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) pose to public health, the environment, and the livelihood of American farmers is now beginning to grow. With this increased understanding and alarm come new opportunities for concerned citizens to take action, and lessons to be learned from community victories being won across the country to resist genetic engineering.

Community organizing around any issue is a powerful way to build connections with the people who live near you and to lay the foundation for collaborative action that can help people work together to increase local control of the food supply and the environment over the long term. Genetic engineering is an issue that has special power to bring diverse constituencies in a community together. Farmers, indigenous rights activists, native plant groups, wildlife and endangered species preservationists, food activists, parents, students, and consumer groups are only a few of the sectors of the population that have a stake in protecting themselves from the risks and consequences of genetic engineering in agriculture.

The Genetic Engineering Action Network (GEAN) seeks to support and further the work of those organizations and individuals working to address the risks to the environment, biodiversity and human health, as well as the socioeconomic and ethical consequences of genetic engineering. GEAN recognizes the importance of sharing the resources available in our network with emerging activists and grassroots groups that are now springing up across the country.

The GEAN Steering Committee and staff were asked by GEAN affiliates to provide a package of materials that can help individuals develop local groups; help established grassroots groups take on winnable, strategic campaigns; and bring together materials that will assist the success of local efforts in communities across the country. The materials included in the Local Organizing Toolkit will inevitably expand over time as the movement grows.

This toolkit is structured to provide resources around a few main themes, from general guidance on how to develop a local group to specific resources on four grassroots campaigns. Some of these resources are fully fleshed out (like the sample campaign target and tactics), and others point you to places on the internet where you can find some of the strongest information that has already been developed around these topics.

Please note that GEAN is a large and diverse collection of organizations, and the statements and materials presented in this toolkit do not necessarily reflect those of all of GEAN's affiliate organizations.

For more information please contact the Genetic Engineering Action Network at 563-432-7484 or [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org).

## Acknowledgements

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The GEAN Steering Committee and National Coordinator guided and implemented this project with the help of volunteers and GEAN affiliates, while making the information in the toolkit available at key opportunities in campaigns.

In the duration of the Toolkit compilation, Steering Committee members and staff have changed yet all have supported this project. For a complete list of GEAN Steering Committee members, visit [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org).

Noli Hoye, GEAN National Coordinator February 2005-February 2006  
Stephanie Weisenbach, GEAN National Coordinator March 2006-present

Organizations whose materials are referenced in the Local Organizing Toolkit:  
*(See more specific credits at the end of each section in the toolkit)*

20/20 Vision [www.2020vision.org](http://www.2020vision.org)

Benton Foundation [www.benton.org](http://www.benton.org)

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture [www.calgefree.org](http://www.calgefree.org)

Consumer Policy Institute/Consumers Union [www.consumersunion.org](http://www.consumersunion.org)

Occidental Arts and Ecology Center [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org)

Environmental Commons [www.environmentalcommons.org](http://www.environmentalcommons.org)

Evergreen [www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca)

Fenton Communications [www.fenton.com](http://www.fenton.com)

Foundation Center [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)

GMO-Free Hawaii, [www.gmofreehawaii.org](http://www.gmofreehawaii.org)

Grassroots Fundraising Journal [www.grassrootsfundraising.org](http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org)

Green Media Toolshed [www.greenmediatoolshed.org](http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org)

Institute for Responsible Technology [www.responsibletechnology.org](http://www.responsibletechnology.org)

Institute for Social Ecology's Biotechnology Project [www.social-ecology.org](http://www.social-ecology.org)

Midwest Academy [www.midwestacademy.com](http://www.midwestacademy.com)

Organic Consumers Association [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility [www.oregonpsr.org](http://www.oregonpsr.org)

SmartMeme [www.smartmeme.com](http://www.smartmeme.com)

The Foundation Center [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)

Western Organization of Resource Councils [www.worc.org](http://www.worc.org)

*(See a full list of GEAN affiliates at [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org))*

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# **Chapter 1: Develop a Local Group**

## **Introduction**

Why is community organizing so important? Because social change takes place and is most effective when people work together in an organized way. This gives us the power we need to achieve the changes we want. Forming and working in a local group can also create new connections in our communities and build a culture of collaborative action that can lay the foundation for long-term change.

### **You Can Make a Difference**

In a true democracy, people would have a real voice in the decisions affecting their lives. Politics would be a dynamic, active, creative process in which people participate meaningfully. Governments and corporations would be directly accountable to the people they affect.

Unfortunately, many of us feel that we have no voice in governing our society and that a few powerful individuals and corporations have too much power and influence. We may be too busy to participate, we may lack information, or we may be discouraged. We may think that no one else feels the way we do.

Despite all these obstacles, people do act, and their actions do create change. The changes that have most improved peoples' lives in this century were not gifts given to us by "experts," but the hard-won results of organizing by "ordinary" people. Large-scale victories that we read about in history books, including progress in the civil rights movement, women securing the right to vote, and the establishment of environmental protection laws were not won by a handful of well-known activists but by the hard work of countless individuals working for change in their own communities.

When we act as individuals our actions may seem small and unimportant, but when we act collectively in our community - neighborhood, workplace, school, small town, county, state, bioregion, wherever our community exists, - anything is possible.

Making the decision to participate in public life is no small thing. It demands commitment, sacrifice, and an openness to change. The rewards are many: new skills, a sense of purpose, work that is enjoyable and meaningful, awareness of how our society operates, and a feeling of community that comes from working together with others for the vision of a better world.

This chapter of the toolkit focuses on ways to form and maintain active, effective, and supportive community groups, the building blocks of democracy.

# Starting a Group: First Steps

## Research Existing Groups

The idea of forming a new group to work on genetic engineering and other issues can be very exciting. Before deciding to start a new group, though, it is helpful to find out if a group already exists with a similar purpose to what you have in mind. Check with GEAN to find out if there are other GE activists in your area or local groups near the place that you live by calling 563-432-6735 or emailing [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org). You can also see if there is a directory that lists groups in your community or region, browse the web, review lists of organizations at the closest library, and look for posters on local bulletin boards.

If there are established organizations doing the work you want to do, it might be better to join that group. Another option is to start a local chapter of a state or national organization, like the Sierra Club, or if a local chapter already exists, form a committee in the group that will focus on genetic engineering issues. However, even if there are other like-minded organizations around, you may have a different set of priorities or wish to use different strategies, and therefore, want to start a new group.

Whatever the situation, it is helpful to talk to other grassroots organizers to learn what has already been done on the issue and what has and has not worked. After this background work, you may decide to start a group or local chapter of an existing group.

## The First Meeting

To start a local group to resist genetic engineering, you may want to arrange a meeting for a small group of people you know who share your interests and concerns. The goal of this initial meeting could be to plan a more public meeting or event to launch the group in the community. You can identify people for the initial meeting by word of mouth or small-scale advertising.

At the first meeting, spend time getting to know each other. Why did everyone come? What concerns them about genetic engineering? This is a good way to start building connections with one another and to help everyone understand the variety of reasons that people get involved. You may be surprised by the range of interests and concerns that bring people to this issue.

## Plan a Public Education Event

Consider what would be the best kick-off for the group. Because genetic engineering is a relatively new issue to most Americans, you may want to start by holding a public education event, which you can follow up with the first organizational meeting for the new group. Since there are so many reasons to be concerned about genetic engineering, a well-planned educational event can be a great motivator to bring people into the movement. You can give a short presentation followed by questions and answers, show a movie and hold a discussion afterwards, or invite a guest speaker.

### *Consider your Community*

As you begin to plan this public event, think about potential members of your group. Who in the community shares an interest in the issue? How does genetic engineering affect different peoples' lives? Who might we be forgetting to include that we do not normally interact with?

From this discussion, make a list of potential supporters and all the concerns you share with each one. This can help you to plan a more persuasive approach to people.

For genetic engineering activist groups, it is important to involve farmers in your work from an early stage and listen to their concerns. Farmers are, in many ways, most directly impacted by genetic engineering, and it is important that they are a part of this movement. There are many other groups to consider when doing outreach for your first public meeting: parents, native plant groups, indigenous groups, environmental groups, safe food groups, public health advocates, and university sustainable agriculture researchers. Make an effort to think of a wide-ranging and diverse group of people to invite to the first public meeting, representing as many different sectors of your community as you can (farmers, scientists, parents, people of different races, ages, and classes, a balance of men and women, etc). Do not wait until later meetings to try to make the group more diverse; start from the very beginning.

### **Organize the Event**

With your community in mind, begin planning the details and logistics of the meeting. Set a date, find a meeting location, and plan publicity. Also, decide on who will facilitate the event, who will bring a sign-in sheet, who will arrive early to open and set up the room, who will bring refreshments, etc. Divide responsibility for these jobs among the members of the first meeting. This will make sure that no one person has too much on their plate, and it will expand the number of people who feel ownership over the public meeting and the new movement you are creating in your community.

You will also want to determine the date and location of a follow-up planning meeting before you hold the public event. A week or so after the public event is a good time for a follow-up meeting, while the information about the issue is still fresh in people's minds. Make small quarter-page flyers to give to all the attendees of the educational event about the follow-up meeting; let them know the time, location, and a contact number they can call for more information, and explain that this will be the first organizational meeting of a new group forming to resist genetic engineering. Remember that the educational meeting is just a first step in letting your community know about the hazards of genetic engineering. The follow-up planning meeting is when you will bring other community members into the movement and begin to determine the structure of the group.

Inform people of the public event at least two weeks in advance, through letters, postcards, email notices, newspaper and radio announcements, or flyers. Review the list you created at the first meeting of individuals and organizations that might support the new group and make sure they all receive a notice. Follow this up with phone calls to the groups or individuals you want to be sure come to the meeting, no more than a week before the meeting. This gives you an opportunity to explain the issues and take note of people's concerns. Childcare, as well as carpooling or providing transportation, will make it easier for some people to attend and will increase the chances of a good turnout.

### **At the Public Event**

Be sure to have a sign-in sheet on a clipboard, with pen attached that is passed around to all the attendees. You want to be sure to collect everyone's contact information (name, phone number, mailing address, email address, etc.). It will be important to keep track of the group who comes to the first educational event, as these people will likely be instrumental in helping establish and kick off the new organization. See the "Resources" chapter for a sample sign-in sheet. Also,



bring along educational materials that people can take home and share with their families and friends.

Announce the follow-up meeting at the start and the end of the public education event. Let attendees know that this will be their chance to help start a group to make change on this issue in your community.

Be sure to thank everyone for coming, and be sure to thank everyone from the initial meeting for his/her work in organizing the public event. Remember that there is no such thing as thanking volunteers too much for the work they do!

### **Plan the Follow-up Meeting**

Divide the list of people who came to the public meeting among your initial core group. A few days before the follow-up meeting, call everyone who came to the first public meeting and remind them about the time and meeting place. If there are groups or individuals you thought of at the initial meeting who didn't come to the public meeting, call them, too, and invite them to the follow-up meeting. If possible, call everyone who expressed interest in coming to the follow-up meeting again the day before the meeting.

The goal of the next few group meetings will be to establish the mission of the organization and the way the group wants to work together. The rest of this chapter of the toolkit is designed to help you through this process.

## Legal Structure Options

Eventually, your group will likely need to determine which legal structure you would like to adopt. If your group intends to raise money, it is particularly important to choose a legal structure that is best suited to your group.

### Why set up a legal organization for your GE-Free group?

- To get a tax ID number (to set up a bank account);
- To comply with federal and state tax laws;
- To be able to offer tax deductibility for large donors and foundations;
- If doing “lobbying” activity, to comply with federal and state political practices laws;
- To get an Employer Identification Number (to be able to pay employees and file taxes)

Setting up a legal structure can also help solidify the way your group makes decisions and communicates with one another, and can help the group seem more “established” in the eyes of the public, decision-makers, and donors.

There are a few key considerations to take into account when determining the most appropriate legal organization for your group:

- Will you be doing any, much, or mostly “direct” or “indirect” lobbying activity? (see attached memo on this)
  - If yes, you most likely cannot primarily be a 501c3 nonprofit, and must be a 501c4 or some form of Political Action Committee
  - If no, you could choose any structure that feels most appropriate for your group.

There are a few different legal structures you can establish:

1. *No legal structure:* You can still set up a bank account and receive donations. Most foundations do not give grants to groups that are not official IRS non-profit organizations and that do not have fiscal sponsors. You will not be able to offer tax deductibility to major donors. This restricts your ability to receive funds, but if funding needs are limited, many individuals are willing to give contributions to groups without 501(c)3 status.
2. *501(c)3 Public Benefit non-profit:* You can set up a bank account, receive donations, offer tax deductibility for major donors and foundations, and pay people. You also must have a governing board, do some legal filing (a lot of filing if you do any lobbying), and you cannot do any more than 5% of lobbying as defined by the IRS. It can be time-consuming and costly to set up a non-profit, but if you can find a local lawyer willing to donate time for filing, becoming a 501(c)3 could be a good option for better-established groups.
3. *Fiscal sponsorship:* Instead of becoming your own non-profit, another 501(c)3 may be willing to be your “fiscal sponsor.” This would allow you to accept tax-deductible donations from individuals and foundations. If your group becomes a fiscally-sponsored project of a non-profit organization, you can set up a bank account, receive tax-deductible donations, and pay people. Your fiscal sponsor’s board of directors would officially govern you, and there would be some legal filing to do, either by you or the sponsor depending on your agreement with them. Some fiscally-sponsored groups are allowed to do some lobbying, while others are not; it depends on the relationship with the sponsor.
4. *501(c)4 Public Benefit Non-Profit and Political Action Committees:* If your group is going to be primarily engaged in lobbying, as defined by the IRS, you would want to

become a 501(c)4. For most grassroots groups, this is not necessary, as only paid staff time is considered official “lobbying” by the IRS. But if you are a non-profit or if you have a fiscal sponsor, it is important to be familiar with lobbying restrictions, or you could jeopardize your 501(c)3 status.

Fiscal sponsorship is a good option for many grassroots groups that are not at a point of needing to have their own 501(c)3. To find a fiscal sponsor, you can ask other non-profits in your community who have a similar mission if they would be willing to take your group on as a project, or you could be umbrellaed by an organization whose mission is to be a fiscal sponsor for progressive groups. The Tides Foundation in the Bay Area and Third Sector New England in Boston are two examples of these. Most fiscal sponsors charge a certain percent of either money you spend or money you receive to perform the services they provide for your group. For grassroots groups, the average percentage paid to sponsors is 5-8%. To find out more about fiscal sponsorship, please visit the Foundation Center, [http://fdncenter.org/for\\_individuals/fiscal\\_sponsorship/0702.html](http://fdncenter.org/for_individuals/fiscal_sponsorship/0702.html), or contact GEAN at 563-432-6735 or [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org).

*Drawn from Californians for GE-Free Agriculture, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Resources for Organizing and Social Change*

## **Meeting Agendas and Facilitation**

People often say that they “don’t like to go to meetings.” This is oftentimes because they haven’t been to well-run meetings. A carefully prepared, well-facilitated meeting can be momentum-building and, believe it or not, fun! Making sure that your group meetings are running smoothly is an important component of keeping the group together and making sure that your campaign work is on track.

There are a lot of different ideas about how to run a good meeting, and many different ways to make decisions as a group.

### **Overview**

Some of the ingredients of good meetings are:

- Commonly understood goals;
- A clear process for reaching those goals;
- An awareness that people come with their personal preoccupations and feelings as well as in interest in the subject at hand; and
- A sense of involvement and empowerment (people feeling that the decisions are their decisions; that they are able to do what needs doing).

While there is no foolproof way to insure successful meetings, there are a number of guidelines that will go a long way toward helping groups to meet both joyfully and productively. Most people can learn how to facilitate a good meeting but it does take some time and attention. The more people within a group who are aware of good group process skills, the easier the task of the facilitator and the more satisfactory the meeting.

### **What is a facilitator?**

A facilitator is not quite the same as a leader or chairperson, but more like a clerk in a Quaker meeting. A facilitator accepts responsibility to help the group accomplish a common task: to move through the agenda in the time available and to make necessary decisions and plans for implementation.

A facilitator makes no decisions for the group, but suggests ways that will help the group to move forward. He or she works in such a way that the people present at the meeting are aware that they are in charge, that it is their business that is being conducted, and that each person has a role to play.

It is important to emphasize that the responsibility of the facilitator is to the group and its work rather than to the individuals within the group. Furthermore, a person with a high stake in the issues discussed will have a more difficult task functioning as a good facilitator.

### **Agenda Planning**

If at all possible, plan the agenda before the meeting. It is easier to modify it later than to start from scratch at the beginning of the meeting. If very few agenda items are known before the meeting starts, try to anticipate by thinking about the people who will be there and what kind of process will be helpful to them.

It is also helpful to have an agenda chart that can be posted on a wall or written on a blackboard for everyone to see. You can also make copies to give out to everyone at the meeting. A sample chart is included in this section of the Toolkit.

In the agenda include:

1. Something to gather people, to bring their thoughts to the present, to make them recognize each other's presence (singing, silence, brief mention of good things that have happened to people lately, etc.);
2. Agenda Review: It's a good idea to have the agenda written on large sheets of newsprint or on a blackboard so that everybody can see it. By reviewing the agenda, the facilitator can give the participants a chance to modify the proposed agenda and then to contract to carry it out.
3. Main Items: If more than one item needs to be dealt with, it is important to set priorities:
  - If at all possible, start with something that can be dealt with reasonably easily. This will give the group a sense of accomplishment and energy.
  - The more difficult or lengthier items, or those of most pressing importance, come next. If there are several, plan to have quick breaks between them to restore energy and attention (just a stretch in place, a rousing song, a quick game).
  - A big item may be broken into several issues and discussed one at a time to make it more manageable. Or it may be helpful to suggest a process of presenting the item with background information and clarification, breaking into small groups for idea sharing and making priorities, and then returning to the main group for discussion.
  - Finish with something short and easy to provide a sense of hope for next time.
4. Announcements.
5. Next steps/summary of decisions: Review who will do what by when; this will help people remember their commitments and will be sure these get into the minutes to help guide the next meeting's agenda.
6. Evaluation and closing: provide a quick opportunity for people to think through what happened and to express their feelings about the proceedings and thus to provide a sense of closure to the experience; and to learn to have better meetings in the future.

Estimate the time needed for each item and put it on the agenda chart. This will:

- Indicate to participants the relative weights of the items;
- Help participants tailor their participation to the time available; and
- Give a sense of the progress of the meeting.

### **Facilitating a Meeting**

The tone of the meeting is usually set in the beginning. It's important to start on a note of confidence and energy and with the recognition that those present are people, not just roles and functions. Sometimes a quick sharing of good things that have happened to individual people lately will do this. The time it takes is repaid by the contribution it makes to a relaxed and upbeat atmosphere where participants are encouraged to be real with each other.

*Agenda Review:*

1. Go through the whole agenda in headline form, giving a brief idea of what is to be covered and how.

2. Briefly explain the rationale behind the order of the proposed agenda.
3. Then, and not before, ask for questions, comments, and additions to the agenda.
4. Don't be defensive on the agenda you have proposed, but don't change everything at the suggestion of one person--check it out with the group first.
5. If major additions are proposed, make the group aware that adjustments must be made because of limited time available, like taking something out, postponing something until later, etc.
6. If an item that some people do not want to deal with is suggested for discussion, consider that there is no consensus and it cannot be included at that time.
7. Remember that your responsibility as facilitator is to the whole group and not to each individual.
8. When the agenda has been amended, ask the participants if they are willing to accept it, and insist on a response. They need to be aware of having made a contract with you about how to proceed. Besides, it is their meeting!

### *Agenda Items Proper:*

1. Arrange (before the meeting) to have somebody else present each item.
2. Encourage the expression of various viewpoints. The more important the decision, the more important it is to have all pertinent information (facts, feelings and opinions) on the table.
3. Expect differences of opinion; when handled well, they can contribute greatly to creative solutions.
4. Be suspicious of agreements reached too easily. Test to make sure that people really do agree on essential points.
5. Don't let discussion continue between two people, but ask for comments by others. After all, it is the group that needs to make the decisions and carry them out.
6. As much as possible, hold people to speaking for themselves only and to being specific when they refer to others. Not: "some people say . . .," "we all know . . .," "they would not listen . . . ." Even though this is scary in the beginning, it will foster building of trust in the long run.
7. Keep looking for minor points of agreement and state them. It helps morale.
8. Encourage people to think of fresh solutions as well as to look for possible compromises.
9. In tense situations or when solutions are hard to reach, remember humor, affirmation, quick games for energy, change of places, silence, etc.
10. When you test for consensus, state in question form everything that you feel participants agree on. Be specific: "Do we agree that we'll meet on Tuesday evenings for the next two months and that a facilitator will be found at each meeting to function for the next one?" Do NOT merely refer to a previous statement: "Do you all agree that we should do it the way it was just suggested?"
11. Insist on a response. Here again the participants need to be conscious of making a contract with each other.
12. If you find yourself drawn into the discussion in support of a particular position, it would be preferable to step aside as facilitator until the next agenda item. This can be arranged beforehand if you anticipate a conflict of interest.
13. Almost any meeting will benefit from quick breaks in the proceedings-- energy injections--provided by short games, songs, a common stretch, etc.

### **Evaluation**

In small meetings, it is often wise to evaluate how things went (the meeting process, that is, not the content). A simple format: on top of a large sheet of newsprint or a blackboard put a + on the

left side, a - in the middle, and a / on the right side. Under the + list positive comments, things that people felt good about. Under the - list the things that could have been done better, that did not come off so well. Under / list specific suggestions for how things could have been improved.

Don't get into arguments about whether something was in fact helpful or not; people have a right to their feelings. It is not necessary to work out consensus on what was good and what was not about the meeting. Meetings almost invariably get better after people get used to evaluating how they function together. A few minutes is usually all that is needed for evaluation; don't drag it out. Try to end with a positive comment.

### **Closing**

Try to end the meeting in the same way it started--with a sense of gathering.

*Drawn from: "Meeting Facilitation --The No-Magic Method" by Berit Lakey  
<http://www.reclaiming.org/resources/consensus/blakey.html> and the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center*

## Tips for Meeting Facilitators

**What is a Facilitator?** The facilitator is the person in charge of the meeting. They move the meeting along.

### The Facilitator is Responsible for:

- Getting agreement on agenda and processes before and during the meeting
- Conducting the meeting - makes sure the group keeps to ground rules, time limits, etc.
- Guiding discussion
- Staying neutral, asking questions and suggesting ways to approach parts of the agenda
- Making sure the group comes to decisions and work is divided among members
- Keeping the group on track when they head off onto tangents
- Watching the vibe of the meeting and helping to keep energy up
- Making sure everyone participates and no one dominates
- Creating a safe and positive environment (protects people from personal attack)
- Intervening if problems come up, dealing with concerns
- Creating a comfortable environment - using language that makes everyone comfortable

### Strategies for Good Facilitation (see below for specific things you can say during a meeting):

- Ask person who put specific item on agenda to give a brief introduction on important background information and what they want done;
- Give 5 minute warnings when moving on to another agenda item. Appoint a separate timekeeper if necessary.;
- Put off off-subject topics - Create a list (a “parking lot”) for items to be discussed at another time;
- Paraphrase (repeat back in your own words) to check for the sense of the discussion;
- Help people avoid repeating themselves by summarizing discussion and asking only for comments in areas that haven’t been mentioned;
- Make suggestions for how to move forward - after discussion has gone on for a while, try to summarize, look for agreement or sticking points, and come to decision;
- Ask questions;
- Be positive and encourage full participation - make sure everyone gets to speak, try to notice when someone is holding back;
- Focus on issues, not personalities;
- Ask someone else to facilitate if you want to actively participate in the discussion;
- Check briefly for agreement before moving on - make sure everyone understands decisions

### Techniques for making decisions in meetings:

- Brainstorming
- Prioritizing (ranking items)
- Pro’s and Con’s
- Straw voting (informal poll to see where people are)
- Going around to everyone to check for the sense of the group

### Suggested Wording for Facilitating a Meeting

1. Make sure each agenda item is introduced by the person responsible for it. This way everyone understands why the item is being discussed. The introduction should include: information that everyone needs to know, what needs to be decided, and possible pro’s and con’s.

“Jane, could you please give us a little background on this issue and tell us what action you are requesting?”



2. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

“I’ve noticed a few people have been saying a lot on this issue; before hearing any more from them, is there anyone who hasn’t spoken yet who has something to add?”

3. Encourage everyone to say what’s on their mind. Try to notice when people are holding back; that could make it hard for them to come to a decision later.

“I sense some hesitancy from folks to speak openly on this issue; it’s important we hear all points of view, so I encourage everyone to be honest about their feelings.”

4. Make sure people speak only on the matter at hand. If other issues come up, keep track of them on a "parallel agenda" and let people know that the group will return to this agenda before the end of the meeting.

“Joe, you’re raising some good points and I’ve noted them here; we’ll come back to them before the end of the meeting, but let’s focus more directly on the issue at hand.”

5. Encourage people to avoid repeating themselves and others by summarizing discussion periodically.

“So far, I’ve heard the following objections raised...The arguments in favor of the proposal seem to be...I’ve heard people propose the following possible solutions...”

6. Keep the meeting moving along. Remind people of time and appoint a timekeeper if necessary. If designated time runs out, ask the group to agree to spend more time on the issue, postpone it until later in the meeting, or put the discussion off until another meeting.

“We’re about to run out of the designated time on this issue. Is there agreement to spend another ten minutes to get a few more ideas on the table and make a decision now, or should we postpone a final decision until our next meeting?”

7. Encourage the group to take a break to restore energy or ease tension.

“I’m seeing a few people ‘resting their eyes.’ Would anybody object to a five minute break to get up and stretch and get some fresh air?”

8. After a topic has been discussed for a while, start trying to move the group toward agreement by summarizing discussion points, looking for common points of agreement, identifying sources of conflict, etc.

“I’m hearing most people agree with...but there seems to be a few points of view on...Perhaps we could focus on how to agree on these last few issues.”

9. Know when the group has reached a decision. Also know when a group cannot reach a decision; suggest postponing a decision when...

a) the group needs critical information

b) the group needs to hear from others

c) the group is not prepared

“I’d like to propose we postpone this discussion because...”

10. Make sure everyone understands the decision.

Could we briefly summarize the proposal that’s being decided right now?

11. If you want to participate actively in the discussion, ask someone else to take over facilitating the meeting. If you have a quick personal comment, signal to the group that this comment comes from you personally.

“I’m recognizing myself as speaker.” (Stand up or take some other physical action to distinguish you are not speaking as facilitator.)

*Drawn from: CompassPoint Non-Profit Services, the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, a project of The Tides Center. <http://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/facilitate.html> and from the North American Students of Cooperation Cooperative Education and Training Institute*

## Sample Agenda Chart for Meeting Facilitation

Feel free to borrow this format for writing up an agenda chart. It's a good idea to post the agenda where everyone can see it, on a piece of butcher paper or on a blackboard. You can also give copies of the agenda to each person at the meeting.

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Objective(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Roles:

1. Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Timekeeper: \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda	Purpose/Activity	Time	Responsibility	Notes
1. Introductions/ check-in	Tone-setting	5 min.	Facilitator	
2. Review meeting objective(s), agenda	Note meeting goal, ending time, special business, ask for new items, prioritize agenda to fit time frame	5 min.	Facilitator	
3. Confirm/assign meeting roles	Make sure above roles are assigned and clear	2 min.	Facilitator	
4. Work agenda items	Reports from committees and working groups, old and new business, special reports, etc.		Committee or working group spokespeople	
5. Plan next steps	Review decisions and commitments made, items for next meetings' agenda			
6. Evaluation	How do participants feel about the meeting? What went well? What could be improved?	5 min.	Facilitator	
7. Closing	End on a positive, momentum- building tone	5 min.		

*From Californians for GE-Free Agriculture*

## **Four Lessons on Volunteer Coordination**

Grassroots organizations are built on the work and dedication of volunteers. Most of the local genetic engineering action groups in this country are volunteer-driven. While biotech companies have incredible financial resources, our strength is in our numbers. Volunteer coordination is not only a key component of keeping a grassroots group going, it is also the cornerstone of making lasting change on this issue.

This section has four key lessons on volunteer coordination: working with volunteers, recruiting volunteers, supporting volunteers, and preventing volunteer burnout.

It's especially important for group volunteer coordinators to be familiar with resources like this one, but all the core members of grassroots groups should recognize ways to bring new volunteers into this movement and to keep them involved over time.

### Lesson 1: Working with Volunteers

#### ***1. Make sure you have a campaign plan***

Having a plan in place for your group's work is vital to successfully engaging volunteers. Staying focused on clear strategies and campaigns that are moving your group towards its long-term goals will enable you to generate the support you need and focus volunteer efforts. Without a campaign plan, volunteers' time and energy could be wasted, and their interest will wane without an end goal in sight; with a campaign plan, it will be clear what you need help with, and volunteers' jobs will be defined and productive.

It's best to have your campaign plans in place before you begin focusing on volunteer recruitment. Having your campaign plan in writing makes it easy to review the goals and objectives when meeting with new volunteers and ensures that you have the information you'll need to include in fundraising proposals and promotional information. *(For more on establishing campaign plans, please see "Develop a Campaign Plan" chapter of the toolkit.)*

#### ***2. Set up your system for working with volunteers***

Knowing what you currently have in place, or need to put in place to effectively manage volunteers, pays off. Consider the following when planning your system for working with volunteers.

##### **Who will be responsible for volunteer management?**

Often, when people are planning their project, they identify individuals responsible for the event coordination, fundraising, etc. But the core and essential task of coordinating and motivating these and other volunteers goes unrecognized and unfulfilled. Having at least one person focused on managing your group's volunteers is not a luxury but rather a necessity. The volunteer coordinator is one of the first positions that should be filled to help build momentum and ultimately sustain volunteer interest.

##### **Do you have a contact person?**

It's important to have at least one person whose name, phone number and/or email can be given out as a point person for developing your initial project team, recruiting volunteers, creating partnerships, fundraising, etc. This may be the person responsible for volunteer management or another committee or staff member supporting the project.

### **How will you keep track of volunteer information?**

Whether it's a paper trail, a series of Excel spreadsheets, or a data base, record keeping is critical to your success. Consider all of the information that is necessary for following up with individuals who show an interest in volunteering: name, address, phone number(s), areas of interest, skills to offer, hours of availability, emergency contacts, etc. Also, be sure to keep careful notes of who has volunteered and what projects they worked on, so you can remember what they are interested in and always thank them for the work they've done. The more organized and accessible your volunteer information is, the easier it is for the group to share the tasks involved in managing volunteers and delegate appropriate tasks.

Having ready-made forms for volunteers to fill out can be a helpful way of record keeping. Make use of event registration and regular sign-in forms, logs to track volunteer hours and volunteer information forms to collect information about volunteer interests and experience. You can also use petitions as a way to collect volunteer names; you can either let petition signers know that they will be called for volunteer opportunities, or include a check box on the petition for signers who would like to get more involved. You can find a sample petition like this in the "Resources" section.

### ***3. Determining and communicating needs***

Before you get going, consider your needs and expectations, what volunteers can expect if they get involved: Think about how you will communicate these and other aspects of the project.

#### **Be prepared to communicate...**

##### **The project**

Prepare a simple information package on your organization or campaign that provides background on the campaign and includes some information about the group that is leading it. You'll want to have this information on hand at tabling and media events. This information will also be useful when you are doing training sessions with new volunteers and fundraising for your project.

##### **How others can get involved**

Recruitment flyers, newsletters and notices to community members are helpful tools that communicate how people can join the project. Word of mouth is typically the most effective vehicle for encouraging people to get involved so don't be shy about spreading the word - it will spread. And the better organized you are for responding to volunteer inquiries, the more likely people will stick around.

##### **Your expectations**

What is expected of your volunteers? Think about the specific skills you're looking for, how much time is required and when. Knowing this will help you give your volunteers clear directions. Short job descriptions are very useful for communicating expectations for specific volunteer roles. The clearer you are, the more productive and committed your volunteers will be.

## **The benefits of participating**

Consider why volunteers would want to become involved. Simply put, what do they gain from their involvement? New skills, friendships, a stronger sense of community, a real contribution to the environment - these are some of the rewards of volunteering.

Be sure to emphasize the benefits of volunteering and of the project in your recruitment flyers, letters to members and supporters, through the media, etc. People are attracted to a positive message - appeal to this sense.

## **Your appreciation**

Communicating your appreciation through regular feedback, recognition and personal thanks is crucial. You can't thank volunteers too often. An open honest environment between organizers and volunteers is a must to ensure a rewarding experience for all. Consider organizing volunteer appreciation days once or twice a year—gather food donations from local restaurants, have a picnic in a beautiful spot, and review all the progress your group has made with the help of your volunteers.

## **Lesson 2: Recruiting Volunteers**

Engaging enough volunteers to share all the work that needs to be done is a common challenge and often the same few people are doing the bulk of the work.

Sometimes, even when there are people knocking on the door to participate, groups struggle with finding work to fit volunteer needs and interests. At the same time, they push on without the volunteer support they need in other project areas. Having a recruitment plan in place means not waiting for volunteers to walk in the door and offer to help, but rather going out and actively seeking volunteer help for areas of the project that require support.

Knowing how to reach and engage the right volunteers is important for establishing a consistent volunteer team and will help you meet the needs of your project during its various stages. Following the steps outlined in this chapter will help you recruit the right volunteers for your project.

### ***1. Before you begin to recruit***

#### **Know what you need your volunteers to do.**

Consider your organization and project carefully to determine what skills you require of your volunteers, and when. Your recruitment techniques will be very different if you are looking for a large group of people to come to a rally than if you need one person to help write funding applications. Think about the skills and roles your project requires rather than what volunteers can offer your project. While you'll need to be flexible to match skills and interests, try not to

tailor tasks to fit the specific skills of volunteers - in the long run, this could set you off strategy and consume valuable time.

Develop job descriptions for your volunteer positions. This will make it clear what you expect your volunteers to do, whether you are looking for special skills and experience, and how much time you require of your volunteers. Having job descriptions will also mean you'll be able to give volunteers work to do as soon as you've identified that there is a match between their skills and your project's needs.

If someone offers to volunteer for your organization or project, they most likely want to get involved in a project right away. The longer you take to get back to them, the more likely they are to lose interest and perhaps volunteer elsewhere. There are many volunteer management resources to help you develop volunteer job descriptions.

### **Design volunteer positions for varying levels of responsibility, commitment and experience.**

There are many different levels of involvement for people looking to volunteer with grassroots groups. Someone could come to a rally, they could help organize a press conference, or they could be the point person on fundraising or on a particular campaign.

Design a greater number of jobs requiring short, concentrated effort with a definite end point, a smaller number of positions with more involved, coordinating responsibilities and much fewer positions with ongoing but less time-consuming responsibilities. You will likely need to recruit differently for the various types of roles. The recruitment techniques discussed in this chapter, which are appropriate for recruiting coordinators and project volunteers, may not work for recruiting board or committee members.

If you have volunteer positions that require considerable commitment or seem too large or difficult, consider recruiting an entire group as a volunteer unit or several people to job share. For example, coordinating a fundraising plan is a long-term commitment, but organizing a house party or a raffle as part of that plan is less time-intensive. If recruiting for a big job is not turning up results, separate the work into smaller roles and recruit for those.

Be flexible with the positions that require greater responsibility and levels of expertise. Some volunteers will be reluctant to take on these roles so you may find that you need to recruit for these positions in stages. For instance, if your volunteers are interested in advertising and promotion but apprehensive to take the lead role, build their confidence by recruiting them to design flyers and write media releases. When they have mastered these tasks, mentor them in the more difficult task of coordinating media strategies and serving as media contacts.

## ***2. Identify your target groups***

Once you know the types of volunteer roles that need to be filled, you'll need to find the volunteers that have the necessary skills, experience and interest. It is helpful to identify groups of people that share a common characteristic, association or experience to target with your recruitment efforts. Identifying target groups for recruitment will help you tailor your efforts to the specific volunteer roles you're trying to fill. It's best not to rely heavily on only one target group when recruiting- branch out and try to involve volunteers from many different target groups.

### ***3. Target your recruitment by:***

#### **Activity**

When you need volunteers with special skills or experience, target your recruitment by the specific activity. Identify where you would typically find people with the skill sets you are looking for to accomplish that activity. Don't be afraid to invite people to participate even if you don't know them.

You can also tap into existing community volunteer resource bases, like a local volunteer center, schools and universities, social service agencies and other organizations that work on environmental issues, food issues, and agriculture to find people who may be interested in working with your group or on a particular campaign.

#### **Availability**

Many times there are no special skills required of your volunteers, just a willing attitude to help. Consider who would be available during the times you need help. Consider targeting seniors, retirees, stay at home parents and university students with flexible hours for volunteer needs during work hours.

#### **Association**

Your project and the participants are the best promotion and recruitment tools around. Ask current participants to attend a 'bring-a-friend' event and recruit from the new faces. Having a connection with the project is a great reason to get and stay involved.

More than 50% of people who volunteer do so because they are asked to by a friend, co-worker or acquaintance. McClintock. *Quick tips for Volunteer Management*

### **Volunteer-focused programming**

Groups that value and encourage their participants to volunteer as a way of earning badges or other accomplishments, can be a great target for volunteer recruitment. Many high school students are now required to complete a certain amount of community service in order to graduate. Local scouts, brownies and girl guide groups as well as non-profit youth-oriented groups can be of great help when many hands are needed. Many businesses support the volunteering efforts of their employees by allowing them time off or letting them modify their work schedule to make time to volunteer. Your local volunteer center is a good way to connect with businesses interested in supporting and promoting volunteerism among their employees.

### ***4. Communicating with your target***

#### **Develop a recruitment message**

Your recruitment message communicates what your group can offer potential volunteers while appealing to their motivation to get involved with your project. Communicate what the volunteer will do, the skills and attributes that are necessary for the position, and the time commitment



required. The recruitment message should also clearly describe how the work will benefit community members and other key stakeholders, as well as how the position will meet volunteer needs and interests.

## **Speak with potential volunteers face-to-face**

Nothing beats face-to-face contact when you're describing the value of the work being accomplished and inviting someone to participate. For instance, if someone signs up to volunteer at a tabling event and you have a good short conversation with them, give them a call and set up a time to talk with them about the issue and the group over coffee.

## **Network, network, network**

The members of your group already have connections to many people in your community. Friends and neighbors could help with projects, could donate time or money to your campaigns, and could have connections with elected officials who could influence the issue.

It is also important to think about ways to continually bring new people into the movement and into your group:

- Think about any contacts you may have and look at them as paths to reach a greater audience.
- Attend meetings where you can reach a variety of individuals with different interests. Always have information on hand so you are able to give people details they can walk away with and share with others.
- Participate in community events and bring a display along to fairs, trade shows and other events. Increasing the exposure of your organization and project will give you a greater audience from which to recruit.

### **Using motivation to design recruitment materials**

Appealing to the motivations of volunteers is a great way to get them involved. In order to meet volunteer needs, you first need to understand why people volunteer. Are they concerned about food safety? About the environment? About the well-being of local farmers? Once you have pinpointed the concerns of your members, you can design campaigns that best fit the interests of the group.

## **Make full use of advertising and publicity**

Develop brochures, flyers, and other materials to help recruit and retain volunteers:

- Your recruitment materials should be simple and succinctly address the what, where, why, who and how of the project. Offer added incentives such as the chance to receive training and learn new skills. Don't forget to include all relevant contact information.
- If possible, design a simple logo or add a design element to your existing logo that will identify your project. Participants appreciate being associated with something that is recognized by the community. The logo can be used for communication, advertising, volunteer awards or to display at a project event on a banner. Avoid issues of copyright violation by ensuring that you have permission to use any existing logos.

- Make full use of any free publicity, such as public service announcements, human-interest news articles and event listings.
- Contact traditional media outlets such as radio, television, newspapers and special interest publications.
- Sprinkle the billboards in your community liberally with posters, flyers and brochures. Think about where you can reach your target groups and consider restaurants, supermarket boards, libraries and local coffee shops that are heavily frequented.
- The Internet is an effective and inexpensive option for communicating and getting the word out about your project and volunteer opportunities. Find out if there are existing volunteer listserves in your community, or ask a group that works on similar issues to send out a call for volunteers to their lists.

## ***5. When volunteers step in the door***

### **Interview your candidates**

Besides getting to know a potential volunteer, the interview process is especially important if you are looking for special skills and experience. An interview can be as simple as a short chat to discuss your mutual expectations, to learn if they have the right skills and experience, and to discuss the time commitment and goals of the arrangement.

### **Provide an orientation session**

An orientation session is a great way of welcoming your volunteers, providing basic information and helping them understand how your project works. Most importantly, an orientation session demonstrates to your volunteers that you respect them and their contribution. Introduce new volunteers to other volunteers and staff. Spend time finding out what makes them concerned about genetic engineering, and tell them about the group's history and current projects. Talk together to figure out which projects or activities sound the most exciting to the volunteer, and make a follow-up plan.

### **Train your volunteers**

Training is one of the most valued forms of volunteer recognition. Training can also be promoted through your recruitment strategy as an added benefit of participation. Training is essential if you want your volunteers to have the information and know-how to successfully complete their tasks. Gather volunteers together, clarify technique, and provide instructions so that no one wastes their time. Training is an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other, learn new skills or brush up on skills that have been unused. You can do workshops on tabling, working with the media, meeting with elected officials, and organizing events (like fundraisers or rallies). If no one in your group has these skills, contact GEAN to find out if there are other activists in your area who could lead group trainings.

## **Lesson 3: Supporting your Volunteers**

Active and committed volunteers are the key to success in any community organizing project. Experienced volunteers are especially valuable because they already 'know the ropes'. They are familiar with the goals of your project, and can provide inspiration and leadership to new volunteers. With volunteers juggling their many priorities and demands on their time, it can be a challenge to keep a steady pool of individuals to help throughout the stages of your project.

So what can you do to keep your volunteers inspired and involved? Here are some ideas for retaining and supporting the heart of your project - your volunteers.

## ***1. Keep volunteers coming back***

Volunteers get involved for many different reasons and they have a variety of needs with respect to their volunteer experience. Your volunteers will have an enriching work experience and your project will be more successful if you meet the needs of your volunteers. In order to this, here are some insights:

### **The impact of their contributions**

Volunteers need to know that their contribution is making a difference, and every success along the way needs to be celebrated. Set clear short-, medium-, and long-term goals so that there are many opportunities for group members to feel the growing momentum of your local movement.

For example, set a target number of petition signatures to collect, and once that goal is met, have a party with all the volunteers who helped gather those names. Or set out to meet with a certain number of your city council members to educate them about this issue, and stay in touch with any volunteers who met with those elected officials as they agree to champion or supporter your bills and resolutions. You can also collect quotes from supportive elected officials and other influential community members who have been influenced by your volunteers about their support for the issue, and send those quotes out in volunteer listserves or newsletters to show the growing support for the movement.

Photos are also a powerful way to make sure volunteers feel recognized in their contribution to the group. Take pictures of volunteers tabling or collecting petition signatures at public events, or meeting with elected officials or giving presentations to students or other organizations. Make a collage in your meeting room or office, or post them on your website. This will help volunteers feel more a part of the group, and can attract new volunteers by showing how much fun you're having!

### **Community connection**

Foster opportunities for volunteers to meet one another and work collaboratively. Set up small groups to table or petition together. Bring together diverse community members to meet with elected officials. Form teams to organize events. Instead of asking volunteers to write letters to the editor on their own, set up pot-luck letter writing parties at someone's house. Creating new friendships and connections in our communities is an important piece of organizing, and a great joy of working with a community group.

### **Feeling valued and respected**

Providing a forum for volunteers' ideas to be heard communicates that their experience and knowledge is valued, keeps volunteers feeling connected and empowered and can contribute to achieving a more successful, realistic project. Where appropriate, ask a volunteer for their opinion and act on it. Check in with new volunteers after group meetings to see how they felt the meeting went and to find out if they have any questions. Oftentimes, experienced group members will use jargon or refer to group history or issues about genetic engineering that people

new to the movement won't understand. Answering new members' questions and helping them feel heard is an important component in volunteer retention.

## **Choosing their role**

Involving volunteers in deciding the role they will play empowers them to find a position that suits their interest, expectations and schedule. You may want to meet with your volunteers at the beginning of the project with a detailed list of all the tasks that need to be done. Everyone can then set priorities and decide which task they would like to do.

Make volunteer jobs interesting. Give volunteers a great place to work, new experiences and try to keep the atmosphere inviting and inspiring for all. Remember, the volunteer experience needs to be rewarding for them - and for your project or organization.

## **Be flexible with your expectations**

Being clear about your expectations right from the start is important, but expectations also need to be flexible. Recognize that a volunteer's needs and motivations change over time. Encourage volunteers to communicate with you about their volunteer experience and check-in often with your volunteers to discuss why they are volunteering and if they are happy with their work. If they are dissatisfied, do something about it!

If the work doesn't meet your expectations or those of your volunteer, work together to find an activity that will meet both your needs. You may want to evaluate progress together periodically to discuss and plan for the tasks that lie ahead.

## **Lesson 4: Preventing Volunteer Burnout**

It is normal to lose volunteers as they move to new places or on to new interests. However, if your project is losing key volunteers after they've contributed a great deal of time and effort or volunteers are moving through your project as if they were moving through a revolving door, you may be creating a 'burnout' situation. If you do find that your volunteers are experiencing burnout, you're not alone. Volunteer burnout is a significant issue that many grassroots groups face.

### **Recognizing Burnout**

Do your volunteers suffer from a persistent lack of energy and satisfaction? Are they short on enthusiasm and motivation? Is their interest flagging? Other symptoms of burnout include lack of concentration and humour, and decreased self-confidence. If you recognize these symptoms in yourself or in your volunteers, you could be suffering from burnout.

### ***1. Tips to Prevent Volunteer Burnout***

The following tips should help you ensure that your volunteers remain motivated and committed to your greening project.

### **Ensure that goals are realistic, relevant and achievable**

Be realistic when you set goals and objectives. There is no quicker way of burning out volunteers than making them reach for an impossible target. It is a good idea to gather input from volunteers, perhaps through a survey, to provide a forum for suggestions and concerns to be communicated and dealt with as early as possible.

Members of the group should periodically revisit the vision, mandate and campaign plans. Doing this regularly (i.e. when a new volunteer board member joins) will keep your eyes on your goals and ensure they are relevant to the interests and skills of participants.

### **Keep the workload manageable**

Typically, there is too much work to be done by too few people, and often a small group of volunteers work too many hours trying to get everything done.

- Revisit your project plan, expand timelines and re-evaluate the project size when necessary.
- Don't overwork volunteers! More hands make light work so recruit more volunteers to spread the work around if the workload is too great for your volunteer team
- Do not let one person take on too much. Teach volunteers in leadership roles how to delegate.
- Lead by example. Make sure that you aren't doing more than you're able, that you have realistic expectations of yourself and that you are getting joy from your involvement in the group.

### **Give volunteers the opportunity to say no and take breaks from the project**

It is much better to have a volunteer temporarily step away or take a lesser role than to lose them altogether. Invite a hard working volunteer to take a break to do something else or rest from their role with the project. They may appreciate the opportunity to have a change and return to the project more energized and inspired.

#### **Take Time Off**

Have the flexibility in your project plan to slow things down and put things on hold. Stagger 'big' project with smaller goals. If you are feeling exhausted, or if you recognize that one of your volunteers is, encourage them to take some time off or find other members of the group who can step in and fill your roles for a time.

#### **Do you know someone suffering from burnout?**

**First Aid for Burnout Victims** (Woloshuk and Eagan, *Beating Burnout*)

#### **Do Less**

- Work fewer hours
- Make a list of your priorities and do the most important first
- Say 'no' and don't feel guilty about it

#### **Delegate**

- Other people may not do it exactly like you, but trust them to do a good job

### **Exercise**

- Take a break, even if the day is busy

### **Get away from it all**

- A vacation or weekend retreat can be really refreshing

### **Spend more time with family and friends**

### **Take time for yourself**

### **Rest**

### **Have fun and laugh about it**

## **Promote a sense of accomplishment**

- Ask volunteers to participate in setting priorities so the most important tasks get accomplished first. This will help give volunteers a sense of accomplishment, even if only a small portion of the overall project is completed.
- Emphasize what has been accomplished over what still needs to be done.
- If a volunteer is best at doing public outreach and has been doing a lot of data entry lately, encourage them to focus on a project that gets them out in the community again. Perhaps the data work can be done at a later time, or another group member would be willing to do it.

## **Manage volunteer time efficiently**

Everyone has full, busy lives. Be sure you use your volunteers' time effectively:

- Be prepared so that you don't waste people's time. For example, if you have a team of people ready to table, make sure all the necessary hand-outs and sign-up sheets are copied, organized, and ready. Have pens and clipboards available, and make sure there are enough materials for everyone.
- Ensure that volunteers know exactly what is expected of them so they don't waste their time doing something that doesn't contribute to the end product.
- Tailor your volunteer jobs so that they can be readily started and accomplished in time allotments of one, two or three hours maximum. Most volunteers contribute less than five hours a week.
- Scheduling in advance allows volunteers to manage their time commitment.
- Build in extra time for training, questions and clean up at the end of events.

## **Make the volunteer work fun**

It's easy enough at times to feel overwhelmed with the challenges and workload associated with genetic engineering campaigns, but try not to let this stress affect the quality of the volunteer experience. Volunteers are more apt to keep coming back if they enjoy what they're doing and whom they're doing it with.

- Provide opportunities for volunteers to switch to different tasks that they find more enjoyable.
- Create a social network. Meet for coffee, potlucks and picnics. Celebrate volunteer birthdays. Build 'chat-time' into your volunteer activities and meetings.
- Think about starting a project scrapbook to record the history of your project, comments, photographs of volunteers and events for each year. This can become a cherished memento for the project or organization and a source of pride for volunteers.

*This is a slightly modified version of a guide, “Hands for Nature: A Volunteer Handbook,” that was put together by a Canadian group called Evergreen that does urban gardening projects. (www.evergreen.ca)*

## Communication Tools

There are many tools your group can use to enhance communications. This section will give guidance on using three tools: conference calls, listservs, and websites. These tools can be used for internal and external communications.

In many groups, communication can be referred to as “internal communication” or “external communication.” It’s helpful to understand these two categories, especially in the formation stages of a local group. Internal communication is shared with your core supporters to meet your groups’ needs such as sensitive strategy information, organizational structure development, and meeting minutes. Most internal communication should be internal because you don’t want your opposition to know these things, and other internal communication will just be plain boring or inappropriate for the general public to know. External communication is communicated in a way that the general public will understand it and also be persuaded by it. When external communication is effective, people eventually cross over to become the core supporters who could then also participate in internal communication.

*(See Chapter 3: Get Media Coverage, Section “Develop a Message”)*

### **How to set up free conference calls**

Sometimes you need to talk with a number of people at once, but a face-to-face meeting isn’t an option. Perhaps there are a number of groups in your state that want to work together on an rBGH-free dairies campaign, or want to collaborate on GM-free school meals campaigns. You can get everyone together on the phone by setting up a conference call, in which all the parties dial in to the same number and can speak together as a group on the phone.

The service [www.freeconference.com](http://www.freeconference.com) is a free, easy-to-use service that allows you to set up a conference call with as many people as you need. So long as participants don’t mind paying long distance fees, the calls are free; you are assigned a random number for everyone to dial into and then you create a code for callers to use. If you want to make your call toll-free, the organizer of the call has to pay a nominal fee for each minute of time used. There are also options to record your conference call for a small fee, which may help if you want to review the content of the call later. It only takes a minute to set up your free account, and only a minute more to set up a call.

### **How to set up a listserv**

Listsers are email mailing lists that make it easy to stay in touch with supporters and other members of your group. You can use listserv to send out regular newsletters to your friends and supporters, to connect working groups with one another (if you have a sub-section of your group that is working on a particular campaign, for instance), and for a host of other needs.

A few companies provide free listserv services. Riseup, a company that focuses on supporting progressive organizing efforts, allows you to set up listservs, [www.riseup.net](http://www.riseup.net), as does Yahoogroups, [www.yahogroups.com](http://www.yahogroups.com). It isn’t hard to establish a listserv, and you can determine if the list is open (anyone can join) or moderated (so only certain people have access to the list), and many other particulars.

### **How to set up a website**

More and more people in this country and abroad turn to the internet for their information. In general, a website is used for external communication. A website is a powerful way to spread the



word about your group and about the issue of genetic engineering to your community and abroad.

It can feel intimidating to set up a webpage if you've never done it before, but there are a number of ways to go about this that are accessible and not too time consuming.

One way is to find a web designer in your community who is willing to put in some time to set up your page. Ask other progressive groups in your community with web pages who designed their page. Oftentimes, you can find people who will donate their time for your group, or who will give you a reduced rate on their usual fees. Just ask! You would then need to have a sense of how you want your page to look and what information you want to have available, and then can sit down with your designer and put the page together.

Other components needed to set up a page include paying a company to provide web hosting for your site (reserving space on the web for your page) and buying your URL, the address that people type into their web browser to get to your page. These do not need to be too expensive or too much of a drain on your resources. Please contact GEAN for further advice about how to set up a web page, [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org).

If you want to make it possible for people to donate from your webpage, check out [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com). PayPal has a program that can allow supporters to do one-click donations through your webpage.

If you don't have the people or resources to update your page often, but want to have action alerts and breaking news on your page, you can link to other groups that update their pages regularly. Two good ones for national news stories and action alerts are the Organic Consumers Association, [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org), and the Center for Food Safety, [www.centerforfoodsafety.org](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org). Say No to GMOs! has a great page with lots of information articles, action alerts, and news stories cataloged for the past few years, [www.saynotogmos.org](http://www.saynotogmos.org).

Examples of grassroots and regional genetic engineering action group web pages that you can look to for advice or inspiration include:

GE-Free Maine: [www.gefreemaine.org](http://www.gefreemaine.org)

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture: [www.calgefrees.org](http://www.calgefrees.org)

GMO-Free Hawaii: [www.gmofreehawaii.org](http://www.gmofreehawaii.org)

Rural Vermont: [www.ruralvermont.org](http://www.ruralvermont.org)

Most GEAN affiliates have web pages, and any one of them may give you some useful ideas; check out the links to the pages from <http://www.geaction.org/network.html>

# **Consensus Decision Making Process**

## **Used by the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center~~1999**

The OAEC staff collective will in all cases, unless specifically stated otherwise by consensus agreement, make decisions based on “consensus” as defined in this document.

### **I. Defining Consensus Process:**

By “consensus,” we mean that agreements on minor and major issues are reached through a process of gathering information and viewpoints, having discussions, and synthesizing proposals and/or developing new ones. The goal of consensus process is to reach decisions which everyone can agree on, or at least agree to live with. Ideally, consensus synthesizes the ideas of every member of the group into one decision.

Consensus does not necessarily mean total agreement. Rather, it means that a proposal has gone through a process in which everyone has had a chance to express feelings and concerns and in which no decision is finalized until everyone in the group feels comfortable with the decision and is able to implement it without resentment.

### **II. We have agreed to adhere to a consensus model of decision making for these reasons:**

- Consensus creates and strengthens a spirit of trust, cooperation, and respect among the group’s members.
- By incorporating the clearest thinking of all of the group’s members, consensus increases the likelihood of new, better and more creative decisions.
- Because all have participated in its formation, everyone has a stake in implementing decisions.
- Consensus significantly lessens the possibility that a minority will feel that an unacceptable decision has been imposed on them.
- Consensus safeguards against ego/adversary attitudes, uninformed decision making, “rubber-stamping” of decisions, coercion, self interested positions, mistrust, and half-hearted agreements.

### **III. Consensus process requires from individual group members and the whole group:**

- Mutual respect.
- Time, patience, and commitment to reaching mutually agreeable outcomes.
- The assumption that each person has ideas to offer and that the sum of the parts are greater than the whole.
- That ideas and solutions be listened to with respect, trust and without coercion.
- That there be sensitivity and openness to new and different ideas.
- That there be an honest effort on the part of all members to accommodate the feelings and ideas of others with one’s own.
- A dedication to pursue a mutually agreeable outcome.
- A willingness to “step aside” in decisions with which one may not totally agree, but with which one can live.

- That each person will exercise his/her power to “block” responsibly, i.e. only in cases of profound disagreement with the rest of the group. If one does feel that strongly, it is vital for the good of the individual and the group as a whole to block consensus without feeling guilty, and for the group to respond to this without resentment or anger.
- An understanding that not everyone will have an “equal voice” under consensus. Individuals who have greater involvement in the matter under discussion will have more developed viewpoints and will usually have stronger concerns. At the same time, there must be a strong commitment to avoid patterns of domination and passivity.

#### IV. Guidelines for consensus process:

1. **An issue is raised:** This may be in the form of a concrete proposal, or as a general discussion. In the latter case, a go-around or brainstorm can be used for everyone to express their point of view, and these ideas can then be synthesized into a proposal. The working proposal should be clearly stated in simple, non-biased language by the facilitator.
2. **Clarifying questions and amendments:** The facilitator asks for clarifying questions, modifications and friendly amendments. These must be acceptable to the originator of the proposal to be considered as such, or they may be offered as a counter proposal. The proposal(s) are restated and clarifying questions are asked.
3. **Further facilitated discussion and debate:** At any point in this discussion, process suggestions may be offered on how to proceed. Such process suggestions take precedence over other speakers on the list. Dividing the proposal into several parts for discussion, breaking into smaller groups to allow for further discussion, forming a committee to rework a particularly difficult proposal outside of the meeting, or pointing out a mistake in procedure are all examples of process suggestions that can be helpful in overcoming difficulties. If discussion on an issue has gone on for a long time and seems to be getting nowhere, call for a break.
4. **Testing for consensus:** As general agreement emerges, the facilitator restates the original or evolved/amended proposal and tests for consensus. This is done first by asking for reservations and concerns to approving the proposal as stated. Even though a proposal may be acceptable to someone not in total agreement with it, it is important nonetheless for these reservations and concerns to be voiced. If the reservations or concerns rise to the level of objections (meaning that a person can’t tolerate proposal as is), the proposal clearly needs more facilitated discussion and debate (#3).
5. **Resolving reservations and concerns—amendments:** If reservations or concerns are expressed, (ie: a person is concerned about proposal, thinks it may not be the best choice, wants small changes), the facilitator asks for amendments (small changes or rewording to meet reservations).
6. **Testing again for consensus:** Facilitator calls again for consensus (asks for objections or concerns to new, evolved proposal). If all agree, consensus is achieved. If all are in agreement except one or two people, there are three options:
  - a. **Individual(s) can “stand aside”:** If no successful accommodation is made to a person’s objections after a reasonable group effort, it is in the individual’s obligation to examine whether s/he feels strongly enough to maintain the objection. If not, s/he consents to “stand aside.” If the individual(s) is/are willing to stand aside, it means they do not agree with the decision but do not feel strongly enough to “block.” They are willing to have the decision go forward.
  - b. **The group can set the proposal aside:** If more than two or three people start to stand aside, then the facilitator should question whether the best decision has been

reached yet. Perhaps the proposed decision should be set aside for another time or considered in a different light.

- c. **Individual(s) can “block” the decision:** The majority should consider whether they truly understand the reasons and feelings of those dissenting and have exhausted all reasonable compromise. Individuals who are holding the group from making a decision should also examine themselves closely to assure that they are not withholding consensus out of self-interest, bias, stubbornness, vengeance, etc. That said, a person does have the option of “blocking” the decision. A block should be used cautiously and in a principled way, reflecting deeply felt convictions about the issue in question. A block is not just a “no” vote, or an expression of disfavor. A block says, “I believe what the group wants to do is wrong. I cannot allow the group to do it and I am willing to impose this view on other group members because I feel it so deeply.”
7. **No decision is a decision:** If someone blocks a decision, the group has to start again. To not be able to make a decision *is a decision*. At this point, it is almost always best to table the item in question and to return to it another day, after those involved can reflect, and possibly talk about it outside the meeting.
8. **Consensus achieved:** If no one blocks a proposal, and it has been fully discussed, the group can consense to the proposal. When consensus is reached, decide how decision will be implemented.

## **VI. Roles and responsibilities at consensus based meetings:**

**Facilitator:** helps move the meeting along. Takes suggestions for the agenda and arranges them in order of priority. Makes sure all other meeting roles are filled. Calls on people to speak in turn—keeps a written list if many are in line to speak. Helps insure that everyone has a chance to speak, and that no one dominates the discussion. Helps group resolve conflict and make decisions by summarizing, repeating, or re-phrasing proposals as necessary. Should remain neutral on topics being discussed; when an issue arises about which the facilitator feels strongly, and s/he wants to actively participate, someone else should take over the facilitation on that item.

**Timekeeper:** warns the group near the end of the time period allotted for an agenda item. May be filled by the facilitator.

**Notetaker:** records minutes, especially all proposals, amendments and decisions the group makes. Decisions and who is to implement them should be noted as precisely as possible.

**Process-watcher:** pays attention to group process, especially unexpressed feelings and tensions; reminds the group to relax and take breaks as needed. Optional/as needed.

(See [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org) to download a pdf attachment to Chapter 1, Strategy Development Charts))

## Chapter 2: Develop a Campaign Plan

### Introduction

There are lots of ways to get involved in resisting genetic engineering, many ways to educate your community about the issue, and any number of activities that a new group can plunge into when they decide to start taking action.

However, rather than pouring group energy into short-term projects with no long-term goal in mind, it is important to think about what your group wants to accomplish in the long term and develop campaign plans according to that vision. This will help you select campaigns that are strategic and that will have lasting impact. It will also save the valuable time of your supporters and volunteers and make sure your group has a good chance of securing solid campaign victories. These wins will help progress our movement to move American agriculture away from genetic engineering, and it will empower the people in your community to experience the joy of creating positive change in the place they live.

Thinking about how to plan out a campaign can be an overwhelming prospect. Thankfully, we don't have to re-invent the wheel; citizens have been running campaigns and planning social movements for a long time, and there are some long-standing methods we can draw from when creating campaign plans.

Campaign planning is a powerful process. Remember that there are already a few campaigns included in this toolkit that you can draw from and adapt to your local community. These have already been thought out by other community groups, and it can be a good start for a new group or a good boost for existing groups to take on tried and true strategic, winnable grassroots campaigns.

When discussing campaign development, there are a few terms we will use, and the differences between them are important in planning out your strategies:

- *Goal*: Point toward which to navigate; the longer-term result desired
- *Objective*: Achievable in the near term; helps move us toward our goal
- *Strategy*: A plan and/or method employing tactics to accomplish a goal or objective
- *Tactic*: A small-scale action serving a larger strategy; a specific action carried out with an immediate end in view.

Depending on the campaign you choose, there may already be resource people that can help you with the planning process. Additionally, the local level campaign models provided in the second half of this toolkit already provide some essential components of a campaign plan. This chapter of the toolkit focuses on ways to develop a solid campaign plan for your group to work on

# Community Mapping

## What is Community Mapping?

Mapping is the process of linking information to place. Community mapping does this in order to support social and economic change on a community level. The central value of a map is that it tells a story about what is happening in our communities. This understanding supports decision-making and consensus-building and translates into improved program design, policy development, organizing, and advocacy. It is a tool that is used by many non-profits and grassroots groups to help them determine which campaigns would be most effective in the circumstances in which they are working.

## Why map our community?

Mapping is a great way to collaborate with your group in thinking about the needs and challenges being faced in your community and who is a part of your community. It can be a fun process that helps those doing the mapping to get to know each other. Mapping also helps to identify problems in the context of the actual community we will work within, and it leads the group into the next stage of thinking, “choosing an issue.”

## How do we do it?

You can do mapping in a large group or with a few members of your core group who are interested in the process. There are a few steps to doing mapping:

1. Start by drawing a rough map of the geographical/jurisdictional arena you are imagining organizing within (e.g. town, city, county, state)
2. Draw in the following components of that community:
  - a. *Who lives in the community?* Where do they live? What are the demographics of that community (e.g. politically “red” or “blue”, race, age, class, etc.)? Is it an “activist” community? Where are the environmentalists? Where are the farmers?
  - b. *What is special about the community?* Nature, history, tourism, industry, etc. What do you like about your community?
  - c. *Where are the problems facing the community?* Toxics, housing, loss of farmland, poverty, lack of open space, etc. Who/what is affected by those problems?
  - d. *Where do people gather?* How do people find out what’s going on (e.g. media, events, clubs, hang-outs, etc.)?
  - e. *What else do you need to map?* What more is needed in order to have the data to be able to choose your campaign goal, target, and strategy?

You can make your map as detailed or as simple as you like; the main goal is to start thinking about the context in which you will be doing your organizing.

*Drawn from Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, [www.oeec.org](http://www.oeec.org) and Californians for GE-Free Agriculture, [www.calgefrees.org](http://www.calgefrees.org)*

## Campaign Goals and Objectives

Once you have considered the elements of your community that will affect your work in the mapping exercise, you can start thinking about which campaign goals and objectives are the best fit for your group.

### Choosing campaign goals

Begin this process by doing a brainstorm -- what are some goals your group may want to go for? Remember our definition of a goal: the point toward which to navigate; the longer-term result for which you are striving.

The brainstorm can be three-part:

1. *What are some possible long-term goals?* These are the big things you hope to achieve over time, your vision of how your work will impact your community over the long term. Ex: "Transform Sonoma County's culture and economy to be a beacon of ecological agriculture and sustainable food systems."
2. *What are some possible mid-term goals?* These are big steps you can take to help achieve your long-term goals. Ex: "Build new alliances so that the majority of the people and businesses in Sonoma County ally themselves with our long-term goal."
3. *What are some possible short-term goals?* These are the things that we often think of when we think about goals: passing legislation, stopping the release of a particular crop, creating GMO-free zones, etc. Ex: "Create, run, and win the 'GE-Free Sonoma County' ballot initiative."

One way to organize the brainstorm is to give each group member a few strips of paper to write their ideas down on for each of the long-, mid-, and short-term goals. Give everyone a big marker to write with. Then ask group members to start taping their ideas up on a wall. Ask them to try and group similar goals together; feel free to let members keep moving goals around on the wall for a while until they fall into a few main groupings. You can even do this part of the exercise without talking. This can be a fun way to start sorting and prioritizing the goals of the group.

Once everyone's ideas have been posted on the wall, there are a few criteria you can consider to help narrow down the goal options. Will your campaign goal:

- Result in a real improvement in people's lives?
- Give people a sense of their own power?
- Alter the relations of power?
- Be worthwhile?
- Be winnable?
- Be widely felt?
- Be deeply felt?
- Be easy to understand?
- Have a clear target?
- Have a clear timeframe that works for you?
- Be non-divisive?
- Build new alliances?
- Build leadership?
- Set your organization up for the next campaign?

- Raise money?
- Be consistent with your values and mission?

Spend as much time as you need talking about your goals, sorting them through, and coming to a group agreement about which goals feel the most appropriate for your community, and which short- and mid-term goals will truly help you reach your long-term goals.

### **Choosing campaign objectives**

Once you have decided which goals your group wants to go for, begin to think about the objectives (the steps that are “achievable in the near term”) that would be best to take on to move you toward your short-term goal. Remember that because you have already done good strategic thinking about which shorter-term goals can lead you towards your mid- and long-term goals, reaching these short-term goals will bring you towards what you’re ultimately trying to achieve.

Objectives are the basis for making demands of a decision-maker. They should be specific, achievable, and measurable:

**S**pecific: everyone in your group knows and agrees on the goal or objective;

**A**chievable: it's realistic, or at least it's conceivable that you can win;

**M**easurable: you can tell whether you've won or lost when the campaign is over.

### ***Don't choose “public education” as a campaign objective***

Because genetic engineering is an issue that few Americans still understand, many grassroots genetic engineering groups set “public education” as a campaign objective. However, if your objective is to educate the public, you set your campaign up to fail. This doesn't mean public education isn't important; almost any campaign needs a good public education effort. But it's not a good objective for a community organization:

- *It's not a basis for a demand.* Public education is one of the means to the end, but it's not the end in itself.
- *It's not specific.* It can mean lots of different things to different people, in your group and in your community. What will you educate people about? Who is the "public" you will educate?
- *It's not achievable.* You can't gather the resources to educate everyone your issue.
- *It's not measurable.* A year from now, you won't be able to tell whether you have won or lost. How would you measure whether you have educated the public?

Your objective should be **achievable**, even if that means it isn't everything you want. If you set your sights too high and never win anything, people will drop out of your campaign and your group. On the other hand, if you pick part of what you want as a campaign objective and win it, you've will have momentum to launch a new campaign to get the rest.

Good objectives must be **measurable** if you're going to be able to tell your own members, decision-makers, potential allies, and press what you want. If you want to stop new field trials of genetically engineered crops in your local environment, you can demand that the state government agency that issues permits for release does not grant a permit for that crop. If you simply tell the government you want to stop genetic engineering, what are you specifically asking them to do?



Brainstorming possible objectives to get you towards your goal can be another good group-building process. Allow group members to throw out their ideas. Then begin to sort them through, discuss the options, and narrow down the objectives to the ones that fit as many of the above criteria as possible and that feel the most exciting to your group members.

**Example of objectives from Sonoma County, CA campaign:**

1. Consult with farmers, scientists, government officials, and allies to write a ballot initiative that we can win and that furthers our mid- and long-term goals (by June 1, 2004);
2. Build a signature gathering campaign and collect 40,000 signatures, secure a place on a 2005 ballot, and build the organizational base to run the ballot campaign (from July 1- Dec 31, 2004);
3. Run a successful election campaign, resulting in a ballot victory in November 2005;
4. Run all stages of our campaign with a clear eye on building an organizational base for the next campaigns that we will run to move us closer to our mid- and long-term goals.

*Drawn from the Western Organization of Resource Councils, <http://worc.org/development/howto.html>, the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org), and Midwest Academy, [www.midwestacademy.com](http://www.midwestacademy.com)*

## The Best Political Arena to Work in

Now that your group has determined your goals and objectives, it is time to develop a campaign strategy to achieve your goals. The first step in campaign strategy development is to determine which political arena you want to work in to achieve your campaign objectives. Review the objectives your group has chosen. Which arena(s) could you choose to carry out the components of your campaign? A few examples include:

- State and federal courts
- State regulatory agencies
- The state legislature
- County councils or boards of supervisors
- City or town councils
- Farmer groups
- “The market” (grocery stores, restaurants, etc)
- Universities

Then you can map out which arena is the best fit for your campaign objectives. Make a chart with “arenas” on one axis and “objectives” on the other. Then fill in the chart with how strong of a chance you have to meet your objectives in that arena. For example:

<b>Potential political arena to carry out campaign objectives</b>	<b>Preventing further commercial GE plantings in our state</b>	<b>Preventing any further GE research trials in our state</b>	<b>Establishing an enforceable “right to know” which GE crops are planted in the state and where</b>
<b>Ballot initiative</b>	Little chance	Little chance	Little chance
<b>State and federal courts</b>	Medium chance	Medium chance	Medium chance
<b>State regulatory agencies</b>	Medium chance	Medium chance	Little chance
<b>State legislation</b>	Medium to good chance	Little chance	Medium chance
<b>Local government</b>	Good chance	Medium to good chance	Medium chance
<b>“The Market”</b>	Good chance	Little chance	Little chance
<b>Farmer rejection (ie, farmer and producer associations)</b>	Good chance	Medium to good chance	Little chance
<b>Universities</b>	n/a	Little chance	n/a

Now you can begin to hone in on those arenas where you have the best chance of success. Talk with your group about which of these seem the most effective and exciting to focus on. If you have more than one campaign objective, you can choose more than one arena to work in. The next step is determining who in the political arenas you have selected is able to give you what you’re looking for in your campaign.

*Drawn from Californians for GE-Free Agriculture, [www.calgefree.org](http://www.calgefree.org), and Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org)*

## Choose and Influence a Decision-Maker

Once you have selected the political arena you'd like to work in, the next step in developing your campaign strategy is to decide whom you will focus on as your "target decision-maker." This will be a person or a group of people who are empowered to make the changes you're seeking. Ask yourselves: *"Who can make the decision that gives us what we want?"*

The goal here is to be as specific as possible and to narrow your focus to individual people you can name who have the power to make your objectives reality. For example, if you want to stop a particular GMO crop from being released in your state and the arena you have chosen to work in is the state legislature, rather than choosing "the senate" as your target, think of a powerful committee chair or particularly influential senators who could garner the support you need to meet your objectives.

Choosing your decision-maker could require some research. Be sure you have the facts you need about how decisions are made in your community and in your chosen political arena to select an appropriate campaign target.

### Power Mapping your Decision-Maker

In all of our communities, there are webs of relationships that connect people to one another. All of the people we seek to influence in our campaigns, including our campaign target, are a part of this web. Relationships and connections in our communities are critical resources in our work; the more connected we are to the networks in our communities, the more effective our work will be on this issue and in community organizing work in the future.

Power mapping is a tool that can help you think about these connections and networks and how they play into your campaign. This exercise can help your group determine which relationships and networks you have and need to achieve your goals. It will help you figure out who can influence your target decision-maker and whom *you* can actually influence to start the dominoes in motion to reach that decision-maker.

Start by writing your primary target's name in the center of a piece of paper, and draw a circle around it (if you are doing this exercise with your group, put this up on a piece of butcher paper that everyone can see). Then draw lines radiating out of the circle that connect your target to the names of those who you know have an immediate impact on the target. This could be their friends or family members, close colleagues or co-workers, influential constituents or constituent groups, company shareholders, etc.

Once you have thought of everyone you can who has a direct impact on your target, repeat the process with those people; draw lines from each of them to the people you can think of who influence them. Soon you will have something that looks very much like a spider's web, showing the connections that lead to your primary target.

Now you can look over this web and find places where you have influence and power. One of your group members may be friends with someone who influences your target directly; you may see channels or networks you are already a part of that you can use to move your target decision-maker to act. Or you will see individuals, groups, or networks that you should think of ways to influence in order to have an impact on your target. This will help you start planning out concrete steps to take to influence that target person and make your objectives reality. Keep

referring to your power map as you refine the details of your campaign plans. Remember whom you are trying to influence, and keep an eye on the prize!

## **Secondary Decision-makers: Allies and Opponents**

Your target decision-maker is not the only one who will influence your campaign; there are probably powerful individuals or groups in the community you should consider who will influence your target, and who will either be supportive of your campaign or will work to oppose you. It is important to take stock of who these people are and make plans to build your power by bringing them into the movement or working to influence them.

*Allies* are people who might share your goals or objectives or support your efforts to build a coalition. They are individuals or groups who would add to your power to achieve your objectives.

*Opponents* are those who stand to lose or will feel threatened by achievement of your goals or objectives. They will actively oppose you.

Make a list of potential allies and potential opponents. Be as specific as possible (again, this might require some research). Rather than write down "environmentalists" as potential allies, list actual people (i.e. "Jane Smith, President of local Sierra Club chapter"); instead of listing "biotech industry" as an opponent, say "Dan Jones, local PR representative for Monsanto."

Many individuals and groups will not yet have a position on this issue or may have conflicting interests and loyalties, and they could end up in either camp. You want to identify potential allies who could help you the most. You want to convert or neutralize as many potential opponents as possible and prepare for those you cannot influence. Be careful when considering your opposition: do not waste your group's precious energy trying to convince opponents who will never agree with or support your position.

This is another opportunity for brainstorming. Here is a list of questions you can use to help identify "secondary targets":

- Who benefits from the problem you seek to address?
- Who suffers from the problem?
- Who are our allies? Who are the allies of our allies?
- Who might be "obstacles" or opponents? Who are the allies of our potential opponents?
- What are the positions of other major sectors of the community that you want to consider (for example, workers, land owners, neighbors, community groups, etc)?

Start thinking about how you will do outreach to these groups and individuals. You may want to bring a presentation to a local parents' group or to a Rotary Club meeting. You may want to set up lunch dates with particularly influential allies or potential opponents. Building these connections will strengthen both your campaign and your community.

*Drawn from the Western Organization of Resource Councils, [www.worc.org](http://www.worc.org), Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org), and Californians for GE-Free Agriculture, [www.calgeefree.org](http://www.calgeefree.org).*

## **Tactics, Tasks, and Timelines**

Tactics are all the things you will do in the campaign: the individual steps along the road. Now that you have your goals, objectives, and targets in mind, it is time to get down to brass tacks and plan your tactics. The most important--and fun--steps to plan are actions: the things you will do to put pressure on the decision-maker to meet your demands. You could write letters, make phone calls, march on City Hall, demonstrate in front of someone's house, hold a press conference, circulate a petition, or hold an accountability session with the decision-maker.

Community organizations plan actions that are non-violent, but the only other limits to the kinds of actions you take are your imagination and what your members decide is appropriate and effective. Try thinking like the decision-maker or like your opponents. What actions would make it harder for the decision-maker to ignore your demands? What can you do that would confuse your opponents, and attract new supporters? Do another brainstorm with your group and throw out a lot of ideas.

### **Prioritize your tactics**

Once you have a list of possible actions and activities, put priorities to the list. Which ideas can you really pull off? Which do you have to do to win? How can you design a campaign that builds your power and the pressure on the decision-maker with each step?

It is usually more effective to start with low-pressure actions like letter writing, and build up to accountability sessions and other high-pressure, high-stakes tactics. You wouldn't normally begin a campaign by chaining yourself to a tree in a decision-maker's front yard. Most people are not comfortable with such strong actions until their more polite approaches have been rejected. A strong tactic is more effective when the decision-maker has learned about your group and your demand under more conventional circumstances.

### **Divvy up tasks and put into a timeline**

You have made a list of tactics, and you have set priorities. Who will do the research, produce materials and obtain resources, and plan the actions?

Make a list of each individual task, and decide with your group, given the roles that you have established, who will do each and by when. You can put this information into a table (see template in this section) for each campaign objective you are working on.

Then, put these tasks on a master calendar. Add in the dates of public meetings, hearings, meetings of your group and of allies and opponents, and important local events (county fairs, elections, etc). If you are working on more than one campaign objective at once, make sure to put all your campaign events and deadlines up on the calendar so you can be sure you are not loading too many activities in any one period of time. Help protect the energy of your group and your volunteers by being realistic about timelines and duties for each of your members.

*Drawn from the Western Organization of Resource Councils, [www.worc.org](http://www.worc.org)*

## Chapter 3: Get Media Coverage

### Introduction

Media work is a critical component of any progressive grassroots campaign. The media--be it TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, or other publications--is where most people get their information about issues of the day. Genetic engineering is an issue that still is not being seized by many media outlets, and it is, therefore, an issue that few people in this country know much about.

We, as organizers, have the ability to change that, to bring this issue to our community and to the people of this country, and to show them the hazards of GMO's and what we can do to resist them while promoting local, sustainable agriculture. Developing a plan to tell your campaign story to the media is a key piece in making your work effective and in building towards long-term change on the genetic engineering issue.

GEAN is available to help you get your message out to the general public through the media. Local organizers in the GE-free movement can shape public opinion through well-planned media work. Because sending press releases to so many reporters may be beyond the capacity of many grassroots groups, GEAN offers a media service (through our membership with Green Media Toolshed) that allows us to send your press releases to key reporters in your area and, if appropriate, throughout the country. The service is free to our affiliates; just call us at 563-432-6735 or email [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org) to talk about the options. GEAN is also available to help edit letters to the editor, press releases, and to connect you with media strategy advisors who can help you develop your media work.

Although it can be challenging to get progressive messages covered by the mainstream media, some careful planning can produce amazing results. A well-planned media effort can do an incredible amount to further your campaign and change consciousness about this issue. Poorly-planned media work, on the other hand, can zap the energy of your members and end up conveying the wrong message about the issue. Take the time to build media work into your campaign plans, to really think about what messages you want to convey, who you want to convey them to, and the most effective avenues you can use to get your message across.

This chapter has some of GEAN's favorite resources on doing media work, but there are many, many other guides out there, many theories on how to develop media plans, organize press events, conduct effective interviews, etc. Additional resources can be found at [www.greenmediatoolshed.org](http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org).

## **Develop a Message**

A campaign communication strategy is all about building a machine that is intended to shoot messages to the right audiences, at the right time, and in the right way. To borrow a violent metaphor: if the communications strategy is the gun, the message is the bullet. In other words, it's all about message!

Message is the core ideas of a campaign expressed in a way that reaches people. Message articulates the change(s) you want in the world and how people can get involved to make them happen. The message encapsulates the campaign story. An effective format for doing this is Problem + Solution + Action. Message comes from organization and motivates organization among your target audiences to affect the campaign target.

A winning message takes into account what will work with the audience to build support. The message is not restating the campaign goals and it is never in the imperative. Effective messages make the case in a way that is compelling to the target audience. Ideally, different messages should be tested with the audience to see which one works best. There should be one and only one campaign message and it needs to be repeated innumerable times (in innumerable ways), but tailored for the different audiences.

### **Messaging to Motivate**

Messages are intended to mobilize people. To do so, messaging must start with where your target audience is and move them from there. What do we actually want our target audience to do? Change the way they vote, consume, argue, or make decisions? While our campaign message should stay the same for all of our target audiences, we will usually expect different actions and reactions from them. For instance, we may want our message to move a politician to change policy, a company to stop the release of a particular GMO, a journalist to communicate our message, and the person on the street to stop buying genetically engineered foods.

Campaigning is not education. Campaigning is a motivational exercise. It narrows the focus of attention in order to get people to take action. In this respect, campaign messaging has much more in common with advertising than it does with a college lecture. Campaigning lowers the barriers against action and increases the incentives to take action until the rabbit pops down the hole, the dog jumps through the hoop, the President signs the decree, the company moves out of your state, etc.

Education, in contrast, is a broadening exercise. It uses examples to reveal layers of complexity, leading to lower certainty but higher understanding. Campaigning maximizes the motivation of the audience, not their knowledge. Try using education to campaign, and you will end up circling and exploring your issue but not changing it. Of course, all campaigns have some educational effect, but it is education in order to organize, not vice versa. Campaigns educate by doing, through experience, not through passively providing information. Information is not power until it leads to mobilization.

### **Message Discipline**

A campaign should be very disciplined about how many core messages it has. One is ideal, three is manageable, and five is the absolute limit. The process of creating your message should lead to the best articulations of the issue. Therefore, you should use that message and that message only. This is message discipline. Key messages are repeated over and over and over again. They may be tailored slightly different for different audiences (particularly the action

component) but ultimately the repetition builds upon itself until your message is so saturated that it has become conventional wisdom.

### **The Golden Rule of Messaging = KISS**

Keep It Simple, (Stupid). Simplicity should not be seen as a vice or a cop-out in messaging. Simple means boiling down complex issues into their true essence without distortion. Messages are not policy statements or scientific discourse. Rather they are focused ideas that can move and replicate in idea space.

### **Developing Your Message: Rules of Thumb**

*Rule 1:* Have one main message with up to three underlying themes to support it.

*Rule 2:* All messages should support the organization's main goals.

*Rule 3:* Messages are not necessarily sound bites; they are the ideas you are trying to communicate to the public. (Messages are reinforced by sound bites, phrases, statistics, and anecdotes.)

*Rule 4:* Messages don't change frequently. For messages to have impact, they have to be repeated over and over again.

*Rule 5:* Messages can be tailored for specific audiences, while still remaining constant.

*Rule 6:* Consistent messages should permeate all of your communications efforts, not just contact with the media.

*Rule 7:* Messages must be simple. They are ideas that can be explained in a sentence or two - if it requires a paragraph or two, keep working.

*Rule 8:* Remember: messages take time to create. Don't rush the process.

### **Exercise: Develop Campaign Messages with the Message Box**

Use the Message Box to design and structure a message into core and supporting messages. The exercise utilizes four different functions or types of messages: Threshold Messages, Action Messages, Solution Messages, and Reinforcement Messages. Ultimately your campaign message must be able to address all these areas, but depending on your target audience, one of these four may be the lead, and others may be supporting messages.

For example, if your audience generally already agrees that coal is a problem for health, then you could fill in the threshold message, the solution message, and the action

message. People know that coal is a problem so you have them there. Your threshold message could then assume that coal is bad and say that Bush is helping coal companies when clean energy could provide all of the energy that we need. You can help stop this by voting this November for Initiative A. These are the three messages and you could have sub-points under each (Bush supporting coal companies, clean energy works, how you can make a difference).



## Draw a message box



Put your group's name or the campaign's name in the middle box. Now you have four spaces to write your key messages. You may choose to use only three of the spaces.

The message box is designed this way because messages don't need to be delivered in a vertical order. In other words, if you wrote messages in the following way:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

...your spokespeople may think they always have to start with message number one. This is not true. For some audiences, you may find that message number one is the place to start; for others, message three is best. To complete a message box, use the long lines to write in the main points. Don't worry about exact wording at this point. Make bullet points next to the messages and fill in anecdotes, statistics, phrases, and sound bites that reinforce this message.

### *Questions that may help you develop your message box*

*Space #1*, top of the box: What do people need to know, believe and care about to become engaged with your organization or your issue?

*Space #2*, moving clockwise: What obstacles or misconceptions do you need to overcome to get people engaged?

*Space #3*, What needs to happen or what do people need to do to meet your organization's goals or have impact on your issue?

*Space #4*, If people did this, how would things be different?

To help lead your group through message development, copy the Message Development Box handouts that follow to distribute while working together on message development.

*From Green Media Toolshed,*

<http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org/training/TargetAudienceandMessageI.adp>

*Strategizing A Media Campaign: Crafting an Effective Message Developed by the SmartMeme Media Training Project [www.smartmeme.com](http://www.smartmeme.com)*

## **Deliver your Message**

### **Tell your Story**

The best way to communicate effectively with the public on environmental issues is to develop a simple and compelling story that is repeated over and over again in the media. To be compelling, a story must have certain core elements: a problem or threat, a victim, a bad guy who is responsible and should be held accountable, a good guy and a successful, or potentially successful, solution (you have pointed to the problem, now what is your recommended solution?).

The following paragraphs use a real-life example from the environmental movement. Here, a coalition of groups was able to take a very complex issue - international trade - to the people of the United States. Using a current event - an issue involving endangered sea turtles - that was much easier for the average US citizen to identify with, a successful effort was launched not only to help these endangered creatures, but to help push for reform of the international trade system.

### **Start with the facts**

#### ***Do not assume that everyone understands***

Most Americans are not comfortable with basic science or are unfamiliar with technical issues. When describing the 1998 international trade dispute over something called "Turtle Excluder Device" use, the following was used to explain this somewhat confusing issue: The US law in question requires that all shrimp sold in the United States be caught in nets with a Turtle Excluder Device, an "escape hatch" which lets shrimp pass into the net while guiding turtles out.

#### ***Keep it simple and specific***

"The final ruling is widely expected to uphold the earlier WTO ruling, which called the US turtle protection law an unfair restraint of trade. Environmental groups strongly protested the ruling, asserting that it had no legal, scientific, or economic justification."

#### ***Build on what Americans know and believe***

Americans recognize the importance of protecting endangered species: "Sea turtles are the real losers in this ruling," said Tim Eichenberg of the Center for Marine Conservation. "Hundreds of thousands may unnecessarily die in shrimp nets due to the politics of a trade dispute that ignored the very real danger of their extinction and dismissed an effective, inexpensive solution." You can also link your issue to a similar issue that has caused a great political and grassroots 'stir': "Given that the President lost a major battle on trade when 'fast track' authority was not reauthorized by Congress, the implications of eroding American support for trade for future free trade agreements - like the renegotiation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that will begin soon are important."

#### ***Be accurate and cite sources***

Use credible third-part verifiers (doctors, scientists, etc.) to document your points. Cite scientific studies. Revealing that we have coalitions and alliances with other kinds of groups - in the case of international trade, with labor or human rights organizations, for example - can expand believability and audience.

#### ***Avoid jargon, technical mumbo-jumbo and lots of numbers***

Make the facts accessible by putting them on a human scale. Don't lead with: "Properly installed TED's exclude about 97 percent of the sea turtles from shrimp trawl nets while losing

only about 1-3 percent of the shrimp. The use of TED's is recognized by countless scientists and the National Academy of Sciences as the single most important action necessary for sea turtle recovery." A fact such as: "It is estimated that 155,000 sea turtles drown in shrimp nets every year," creates more sympathy with the media and average Americans.

### ***Be consistent and repetitive***

Decide on the set and wording of facts that make your best case and then make it a mantra that's included in all of your public written and verbal communications: "There is no legal, scientific or economic justification for this ruling." (Over and over)

## **Make a Personal Connection**

### ***Define what is at stake***

Lay out the consequences. People are more likely to care and act if they already have an emotional and vested stake in the issue, such as their concern for an endangered species, food safety, or their rights to choose. "Environmental leaders see the latest shrimp-turtle trade ruling as the latest in a string of arbitrary and environmentally destructive WTO decisions that threaten both environment and public support for international free trade."

### ***Make it local***

Reference local places, people, history, and hopes for the future. The closer we bring it geographically, the more likely we are to get a response. Stories on the local news are much more likely to be seen and remembered by your neighbors than anything on the national news. In the shrimp-turtle case, a series of references to how US shrimpers have been using TED's for years, prompted several local stories. For example, check out this excerpt from the New Orleans Times-Picayune: "In an unusual alliance, both environmentalists and shrimpers want the federal government to appeal the panel's decision. Both groups said they will lobby Congress and the Clinton administration. 'I don't want this body telling us which (laws) they like and which ones they don't,' said Tim Eichenberg, an attorney for the Washington-based Center for Marine Conservation. Eichenberg said the WTO ruling could undermine domestic environmental laws because Congress will be under pressure from American shrimpers who think foreign competitors have an unfair advantage. The unfair advantage, the American shrimpers say, is that their foreign counterparts no longer have to abide by the US rules, while they do. 'The shrimp (industry) is getting battered real bad,' said Jeffery Scott, owner of a Dulac (Louisiana) processing plant."

### ***Define the enemy***

Characterize it as a fight between good guys and bad guys. Tell them who is wearing the black hat, who is dumping what in the local river or in the air. It helps to fight a known foe: "This World Trade Organization decision exposes the failure of current international trade rules to adequately balance trade and environmental priorities. The WTO ignored its own charter with twisted legal reasoning that would never stand up in US court of law. The WTO is broken and needs to be fixed."

### ***Show and tell***

Use visuals to help tell the story. This makes for better TV. In the fight to protect endangered sea turtles, the environmental groups used B-roll and large pictures for television news.

## **Provide solutions and specific actions to take**

### ***Couple problems with solutions***

Advocacy efforts work best when problems and solutions are linked together, when we explain the problem and tell the audience how they can help solve it. Be specific about the actions people can take.

### ***Provide an action "menu"***

People believe they can help in a variety of ways- as consumers, as community members, and as voters. An action menu that lists actions individuals can take increases the likelihood they will act on behalf of the environment. Keep in mind the distinction between public education activities and lobbying when developing your action menu. Asking people to be informed shoppers, such as buying unbleached paper products or dolphin-safe tuna, is a public education, charitable purpose activity. Asking people to contact members of Congress or the state legislature is lobbying. This is an important distinction to make because of potential legal restrictions that may apply to your organization.

## **Manage your message**

Once you have carefully developed your message, 'message development' helps ensure that everything your organization and its staff does or says reflects that message. This can be something as essential as the fact that an organization that promotes 'livable spaces' (alternative transportation and less urban sprawl) offers incentives to its staff to take public transportation, walk to work, or other activities. However, it also means that events, interviews, written materials, etc. should all somehow convey and reinforce the group's message.

Proper message management means that you will never be led 'off message' - when you do or say something that does not support the themes that your message set up. This often happens in the media when an issue that is similar to yours is more popular. To the extent that this gets you in the door with the media, it can be useful, but be careful not to be led completely off-topic.

For example, an organization that works on the issue of curbing urban sprawl would like to keep transportation tax money from being used to fix existing roads, yet the interviewer wants to talk about how potholes cause damage to cars and the rising costs of repairs due to...Well, you get the idea. It may be best to simply say, "I can't speak about how to fix cars, but I do know our study shows fixing the potholes instead of building new roads can save drivers a lot of money in car repairs." Don't let anyone lead you away from your message.

*From Green Media Toolshed,*

*<http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org/training/TargetAudienceMessage/DevelopYourMessage.adp>*

## **Plan a Press Event**

This section provides a primer for planning a smooth press event. There will always be last-minute problems with set-up or speakers, but proper planning can really help avoid headaches.

### **Set your expectations**

The first thing you should do when thinking of organizing a press event is to set and manage expectations. What is your measure of a successful event? The number of reporters? Number of stories? Story content? Policy changes? You need to determine if an event with a few key reporters could do the job just as well as a larger event.

It is also important to remember that few events draw a large number of reporters, and even fewer stories will be written. Reporters receive an endless stream of event invitations, and even when they are interested enough in your issue to make it a priority, their editors may not share those priorities.

### **Notify the Media**

Every press event must provide written notification to reporters in the form of a press advisory. These advisories should be followed up with phone calls and additional background information when requested. Advisories should be sent five to seven days before the planned briefing, conference, or other event. Follow-up calls should begin three to four days before the event, and continue until the day of the event.

It is also critical to make sure that every event you plan is included in the 'daybooks.' These private or public relations news wires are an additional source for getting the word to the media about your news conference. Most large cities have an Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) daybook, which is run by editors in each market. Check out AP Online.

Most markets have a daily and a weekly version of the daybooks. Deadlines for daybooks are usually 3 p.m. on the day before your event for daily calendars. Call and get the deadlines for weekly daybooks. Mail, phone, or fax the information at least 48 hours before your event to your local daybook. Be sure to call and double-check that the editors included your entry - this is not a favor, it is a calendar of events for the media to attend/respond to.

Most editors simply take the opening sentence of your advisory along with the contact name and phone number for your entry in the daybook, so make sure that the most important and compelling information is at the top.

### **Reporter RSVP List**

Keep track of who will be attending your event. Maintain an RSVP list for the event, listing the reporter's name, attendance status, their outlet, and the date.

### **Tracking Press Calls**

Tracking progress on press calls can be as simple as the following:

### **Calls for (Event name and date)**

Name, Washington Times, (phone)

4/8 faxed info

4/13 has info, will call if he needs anything

Name, Reuters Atlanta, (phone)

4/7 left voice mail

4/8 faxed info, out of town on assignment, back in office 4/10

4/13 interested in interviewing speaker, can call back if no word by 4/20

Name, Gazette (IA), (phone)

4/9 took name, number, will get back to me, might assign

4/14 faxed material

Or, you can use this sample form for calls:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outlet: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Notes:

Notes:

Follow-Up?

### **Keeping Track**

It is important to keep track of who has spoken to whom, what was said, and which reporters have expressed interest. It may be very helpful to keep a computer document that indicates which reporters plan to attend an event. If it is on the computer, then it can be updated by anyone who makes press calls, without overlap.

### **How They Run**

#### **Format**

It is important to stage the press conference in a convenient location or at a site that relates to the press conference itself. For example, a press conference about problems with the state government's actions on wildlife protection may be best suited for the steps of the state capitol. If possible, going to an interesting site - such as a wildlife area to announce a lawsuit to protect the land - may be very helpful for television or radio reporters. On the other hand, if an indoor, or more central location is needed, the state courthouse is a great place to announce a lawsuit as well. Finally, several large cities have press clubs where a large number of reporters are centralized. This is great in places such as Washington, DC where it is in your best interest to make it as easy as possible for reporters to attend.

#### **Set-up (indoor)**

A podium (and table, if needed) should be placed in front of a solid color, preferably blue

curtains. Make sure there are NO distracting paintings, murals, or mirrors. Make arrangements for a press registration table that has a sign-in sheet and where reporters can pick up press kits, or other information. The press registration table should be set up 30-40 minutes prior to the press event, and should ALWAYS be attended by a representative from your organization.

### **Visuals**

Try to have visuals available during the press event. A blow-up of your logo as a visual for the podium is always a good idea. Make sure you place it directly under the microphone, not below the logo of the hotel or place of the event. If you have charts or other visuals in a report, a blow-up can be made at a local photo or copy shop for less than \$25. If you have a video clip or an issue ad campaign, make copies to distribute to the broadcast media. Remember, an assignment editor is more likely to make the decision to cover your event if there is a visual story to tell. Do not be afraid to use gimmicks and props. Television stations love them. Remember, "talking heads" make boring television footage.

### **Timing**

Generally, since press events are focused on breaking news, they should begin either at 9 am or 10 am. If you schedule an event earlier than 9 am or later than 11 am, you risk losing several outlets due to deadlines, conflicting news stories, or simply because reporters do not like to attend early morning events. (They tend to work late). Try to limit the speakers to a total of 20 minutes (maximum), allowing reporters enough time to ask questions about what interests them most. Once the event runs over an hour or so, reporters will start to leave in large numbers, but expect them to leave at any time during the event.

### **Speakers**

Limit the number of speakers to a maximum of four to allow for follow-up questions from the press. Attempt to designate no more than three main spokespeople to take follow-up questions. If you have a large coalition, invite representatives to bring written statements (for the table or press kits) and help respond to questions, but not to serve as presenters. Likewise, you can invite policy experts to answer specific questions during the reporters' question-and-answer period.

The opening statements should be crisp and not time consuming - about three minutes each. The combined opening remarks and statements should only take 10-15 minutes. A moderator should introduce the speakers and be prepared to coordinate the question period. This person could also be delivering an opening statement. Make sure your press kit includes a list of the names and titles of your speakers so that photographers can take a copy and correctly identify each person.

Think carefully about the order in which your press conference speakers will appear. Have a complete text of their statements, but ask them to summarize the most important points and try not to read each word. Reporters not attending the news conference will need copies to use to write a story if they are unable to personally cover your media event. Also, preparation and circulation of the text at the news conference eliminates errors copying down remarks or misquotes. You might want to make an audio copy of the event and pass the tape along to reporters who plan to file a story and need more details. But don't send them a tape unless they ask for it. Few of them have time to listen.

### **Press Kits**

Be sure to prepare a press kit with essential materials for distribution to reporters covering the press conference and for use by those who cannot attend. Be sure to include copies of any report or study being released, prepared statements, speaker biographies, background information, contact information, and other relevant information.

## **Follow-up**

Develop a sign-in sheet for reporters who attend your press conference. Check the list immediately and identify key reporters and media outlets that did not attend. If possible, courier or hand deliver the press kit to key outlets not attending the press conference (unless they have already told you they are not interested) and follow up an hour or so later with a call to key reporters or editors. Often, this type of follow-up can increase coverage of news events or stimulate additional stories.

After your event is over, have someone ready to send out copies of your media release that summarizes the most compelling aspects of the event. Have the fax numbers/emails of all the reporters on your list ready in advance, so the person lined up to send out the release is ready to go as soon as the event is done.

## **Evaluation**

It is important to review what worked at each press event and what did not. Schedule an evaluation with key staff or volunteers as soon as possible to review the organization of the event, the way in which press conference participants reacted to press questions, and the coverage or lack of it. The evaluation session should also look at ways in which press contacts can be made more effectively for the next news event.

## **Event Planning Checklists and Forms**

The following checklists and forms should be used for each of your press events. Adapt these for your particular situation and special needs.

### **Logistics**

EVENT:

DATE:

STAFFER IN CHARGE/ POINT PERSON:

<u>TO DO</u>	<u>BY WHOM</u>	<u>BY WHAT DATE</u>
Media advisory		
Speakers		
Speaker Preparation		
Materials		
Event room		
Event special needs		
Press list		
Media calls		
Sign in sheet		
Staffing of Event		
Taping of event done by		
Typed sign in sheet		
Copies of Tape		
Sending out media release		
Follow-up calls to reporters		
Tracking of Media Clips		

*From Green Media Toolshed, [www.greenmediatoolshed.org](http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org)*



## **Choose and Prepare Spokespeople**

Choosing and preparing the best spokespeople for media work is as critical as proper message development. Environmental organizations typically want to pick one official spokesperson for all issues - usually the executive director or president. However, it may be more beneficial to identify and prepare an array of spokespeople on a variety of subjects that your organization cares about. Below are some suggestions for choosing and preparing spokespeople.

### **Go Beyond the Usual Suspects**

Consider looking outside the "usual suspects." Consider research scientists, legal experts, economists, academics, consumer advocates (for magazines or television particularly), doctors, elected officials, and agency representatives who can lend your organization outsider credibility. Working with great representatives from other types of advocate organizations, such as the PTA or religious organizations, also helps you present a compelling, well-rounded story to the media.

If your organization or your speakers are considered to be "extremists," then you may want to consider reaching out to representatives or groups who are seen to occupy a more "middle" ground. For example, an environmental group with a very strong stance on endocrine disruptors may want to consider including a representative from a government agency, consumer's group, or other organizations that the press and public consider more moderate.

### **Speaker Control**

When recruiting potential speakers outside of your organization, you must be sure their message serves your purpose. It can be catastrophic for your organization if, in the middle of a press briefing, your speakers are not properly articulating your message or worse, espousing the opposite point of view. Be sure to properly prepare and "vett" speakers before an event or interview. Check their credentials with other experts in the environmental, scientific or legal communities.

To vett a speaker - or check their credibility - call them to discuss the topic in which you are interested. Tell them your organization is considering a press event (or other work) on the subject. Explain that you are looking for as much information as possible and want to speak with a variety of experts. Have they published anything themselves on the issue? What are their viewpoints? Have they ever dealt with the press? Don't promise anything until you have checked them out thoroughly.

Finally, make sure that speakers are well versed in what has previously been said to reporters on the issue at hand. Outline the points that need to be made, establish who will touch on which key points, and discuss the time allotted to each.

### **Consider a Debate**

If you feel that it will lend credibility to your story and you have extremely strong speakers, organize a debate or at least offer the "other side" the opportunity to speak at your briefing or interview. You may also need to make this call if reporters indicate that getting both sides of the story is critical to making the news; at least in this situation, you can offer three speakers from your side and offer one slot to the other side. This can lend a great deal of credibility to your event in the eyes of the media.

When deciding to invite the competition, be sure that your messages and speakers are unbeatable and that it will make a significant difference in the amount and quality of press coverage.

For example, the highly charged controversy over energy policies following the Kyoto Climate talks presented the environmental community with a wonderful opportunity to host a debate. A formal press conference-style debate featuring two excellent speakers from the environmental community and two less impressive representatives from industry resulted in a rousing "win" for the environmental community and some great press coverage.

## **10 Tips for Spokespeople**

Whether you have one spokesperson or several, it is important for your spokespersons to be in-tune with your message and well versed on contact with the media. If at times you use an outside spokesperson, you should select someone who is able to connect to your target audience and influence people that feed information to your target audience.

### **1. Know Your Message**

You must know what your message is and be sure to get it across. A reporter or interviewer may not ask you a question that directly addresses your issue. If you know your message, you should be able to take any question and answer it in a way that stresses the main points you would like to get across.

### **2. Use the ABC's to Stay on Message**

Remember that interviews with reporters are not regular conversations; they are an opportunity to get your message across to the public. No matter what the reporter asks, reply with one of your core messages. Try the ABC's of talking with a reporter: Acknowledge the reporter's question, Bridge to your message, and deliver your Core message. "That's a very interesting question, however what we must remember is..." Even when it feels awkward, keep bridging back to your message; chances are if you say it enough, that is what the reporter will print.

### **3. Make it Interesting**

You should know supporting facts, anecdotal stories, counter-arguments, and critical details. You should be able to carry a conversation on your issue that is worthwhile to your audience and interviewer.

### **4. Keep Yourself Together**

Do not drown your message in arguments and shouting. Stay on message, attack your opposition as needed but always remain calm, rely on facts and stories to make your points, and focus on results of moving your message to your target audience.

### **5. Punt, Don't Bluff**

Don't know an answer? Promise to get back with the specifics. Do not give false information.

### **6. The Facts**

Work with the facts. You do not have to respond to hypothetical information or questions and uncertain facts that lack sources or documentation.

### **7. Clear and Concise**

When you answer questions or discuss issues, use terms that are easily understood by your audience.

### **8. Stay On Track**

If your message becomes sidetracked, bring the discussion back to the point. Maintain composure and pause to recollect your thoughts to be sure you make your point.

### **9 & 10. Give Thanks and be Grateful!**

Thank the audience, thank the reporter, and thank the interviewer. Show gratitude for the time you were afforded to discuss your issue.

## Press Releases & Media Advisories

A **media advisory** is a one-page sheet that alerts reporters to an upcoming news event. It is sent out several days before the event and is followed up with a phone call. A **press release** announces breaking news and is written like a news story. (Sample advisories and releases follow in this section.)

### Media Advisory Quick Tips

- **Keep it short.** List the event and its participants, the date, and location. Be sure to include the name and phone number of a contact person for the press. Briefly spell out the purpose of the event. Are you releasing new research findings? Protesting government actions? Let broadcasters know if you will have video or a live feed.
- **Offer a compelling preview.** Write a strong headline and lead sentence that peak reporters' interest. Do not reveal the news you will be releasing, but do provide a tantalizing glimpse that gives them reason to attend.
- **Send it to journalists.** Fax or e-mail your advisory to reporters who cover your issue, to editors, news directors, bureau chiefs, and TV/radio producers. Also, send it to the daily calendars (daybooks) of wire services.
- **Follow up with a phone call.** Give the essential details of your event—make sure your pitch is tight and persuasive. Leave a message if the journalist is not there.

### Press Release Quick Tips

- **Put the most important information first.** Your headline should grab reporters' attention, and your lead sentence should summarize what is most newsworthy. Next come supporting facts and quotes from spokespeople or experts to illustrate and liven your data. At the end of the release, include a one-paragraph mission statement from the sponsoring organization. Be sure to put the name and phone number of a contact person at the top of the release.
- **Include all the facts necessary for reporters to file a story.** Write in a fluent, newsy style that conveys authority and fully covers the issue so that reporters will rely on your release as they write their stories.
- **Send it to journalists who got the media advisory.** In addition, put together a press kit to hand out at the event. The press kit should contain the press release, along with other relevant materials, such as fact sheets, news clips, statements from supporting groups—whatever helps the press understand your issue and write their story.
- **If reporters need substantial time to prepare a story, send an embargoed release ahead of the release date.** Make it clear that the story **cannot** be published before the date specified on the release. But also be aware of the risk. A reporter might break the embargo and publish the news ahead of schedule, ruining your press conference, and media strategy.

- **A few technical tips.** Send out the press release on letterhead stationery of the sponsoring group. Keep it to one page or, at the most, two pages. State *-more-* at the bottom of each page, except for the last page where you put a ### sign.

*(Sample news advisory)*

**News Advisory**  
September 3, 2004

**Contact:** Melanie Bondera, Hawaii GEAN  
(808)640-1643  
Noli Hoye, GMO-Free Kauai  
(808)651-9603

**New Research Reveals Widespread GMO Contamination and Threats to Local Agriculture from the University of Hawaii's GMO Papaya**

*Farmers, Health Professionals, Scientists, and Concerned Citizens Return Contaminated Papayas and Demand University Take Responsibility for Clean Up*

**WHEN:** Thursday September 9, 2004; 11am

**WHERE:** Plaza, University of Hawaii, Hilo

**WHAT:** News conference and direct action

**WHO:** Farmers, health experts, University of Hawaii scientists, concerned students, and citizens

A coalition of farmers, health experts, scientists and concerned citizens will release the results of pilot testing for GMO contamination from the genetically engineered papaya. The coalition's research, which has been gathered over the past year and a half, has now been verified by independent laboratory tests. In addition to releasing their research, farmers and backyard growers will return their genetically contaminated papayas to the creator of the GMO papaya: the University of Hawaii. This action will be the launch of a grassroots campaign calling on UH to help protect local agriculture by taking responsibility for cleaning up GMO papaya contamination.

*\*\*Great visuals and non-violent direct action! \*\**

###

From *GMO-Free Hawaii*, [www.gmofreehawaii.org](http://www.gmofreehawaii.org)

*(Sample press release)*

**News Release**  
September 9, 2004

**Contact:** Melanie Bondera, Hawaii GEAN  
(808)640-1643  
Noli Hoye, GMO-Free Kauai  
(808)651-9603

**New Research Reveals Widespread GMO Contamination and Threats to Local Agriculture from the University of Hawaii's GMO Papaya**

*Outraged Farmers, Consumers and Backyard Papaya Growers Return Contaminated Papayas to the University of Hawaii in Crop Dump*

**Hilo, Hawaii** -- Independent laboratory testing results released today reveal widespread contamination from the world's first commercially planted genetically engineered tree, the papaya, on Oahu, the Big Island, and Kauai. Contamination was also found in the stock of non-genetically engineered seeds being sold commercially by the University of Hawaii.

Farmers, health professionals, concerned citizens, and University of Hawaii scientists joined GMO-Free Hawaii in announcing the shocking results of their research at the University of Hawaii, which created and released the GMO papaya. Dozens of outraged farmers, consumers and backyard growers brought their contaminated papayas back to the university to underscore their demand that UH provide a plan for cleaning up papaya contamination. The coalition also called for liability protection for local growers and the prevention of GMO contamination of other Hawaiian commodity crops.

All samples were tested by Genetic ID, one of the world's leading scientific laboratories for genetic testing. Composite samples from the Big Island and Oahu both revealed GMO contamination. Nearly 20,000 papaya seeds from across the Big Island, 80% of which came from organic farms and the rest from backyard gardens or wild trees, showed a contamination level of 50%. Oahu's composite of papayas, primarily from organic farms, showed contamination of over 5%, and trace levels of contamination were found on an organic farm on Kauai. One package of seed of the Solo Waimanalo papaya, a non-genetically engineered variety purchased directly from the University of Hawaii, also tested positive for GMO contamination.

"It is an outrage that UH is selling contaminated papaya seeds to our local farmers and growers," said Toi Lahti, an organic farmer and papaya grower from the Big Island. "Not only could organic farmers lose their certification by growing genetically engineered papayas, GMO papaya seeds are also patented by Monsanto among others. This opens farmers to oppressive lawsuits based on claims of patent infringement, where corporations such as Monsanto have not hesitated to sue even those who unknowingly planted such seeds."

"These tests indicate that UH's non-GMO seed stock is contaminated, and so there can be no doubt that the University must take immediate action to protect farmers, consumers and the environment," said Mark Query of GMO-Free Hawaii. "Papaya contamination is a case study in the threat that GMO contamination presents to local agriculture. It is now clear that coexistence of traditional and GMO crops is impossible."

Farmers raised concerns about the impact the contamination crisis could have on export markets, particularly to countries like Japan that have stringent regulations about importing genetically engineered crops. "The Big Island is home to most of the commercial GMO papaya fields in the state," said Melanie Bondera, a farmer from Kona and member of the Hawaii Genetic Engineering Action Network. "The continued planting of GMO crops risk giving Hawaiian agriculture an undeservedly bad reputation in major export markets around the world."

Dr. Lorrin Pang, MD, MPH, a public health specialist, discussed potential human health threats posed by the GMO papaya and other GMO foods, including increased antibiotic resistance and unexpected allergenic reactions. “All of these concerns are troubling in themselves, but they would be less worrisome if the GMO mutations did not spread beyond our intentions. Today's report shows that they do,” Dr. Pang said. “If a health problem arises that is attributable to GMO foods, it will be impossible to recall such a live, dangerous mutation once it has been released into the environment.”

Dr. Hector Valenzuela, a scientist specializing in tropical crops from UH Manoa’s Department of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences, asserted that the University’s focus on promoting genetic engineering is steering Hawaiian agriculture in the wrong direction. “Instead of supporting untested technologies like genetic engineering, the University of Hawaii should redirect their resources to focus on researching and promoting workable, non-GMO solutions to local agricultural problems. Hawaii farmers need agricultural advances that can protect their farms and our state’s agricultural economy over the long run.”

Bondera outlined the campaign being launched by GMO-Free Hawaii based on these contamination results. “The University and the biotechnology industry have touted the GMO papaya as an unmitigated success for local papaya growers; the true story of Hawaiian farmers’ experience with the GMO papaya, however, is a far bleaker story. Despite the problems local growers have had with the GMO papaya, the University is now genetically engineering taro, pineapple, banana, sugarcane, and other commodity crops,” said Bondera. “The problems with GMO papaya contamination show us that there are too many unanswered questions about agricultural biotech to be releasing new experimental genetically engineered organisms into our environment. We do not support the further release of other genetically engineered commodity crops, and call for a commitment from the University to fund research into local, sustainable agriculture.”

*Photos available.*

####

*From GMO-Free Hawaii, [www.gmofreehawaii.org](http://www.gmofreehawaii.org)*



## **Background Materials for Reporters**

The main goal of a media campaign is to facilitate accurate and balanced reporting of the news you are trying to release, whether it is the results of a scientific study or your organization's legislative agenda. Your job in this campaign is to make the media's job as easy and as interesting as possible. One way to do this is to provide reporters with a sufficient amount of background material.

The problem with most press packets is that they concentrate on providing information rather than conveying messages. All of your documentation (statistics, quotes, and so forth) should be arranged in a clear, concise way that supports the key themes you want to highlight. Information must be credible, concise, and well-documented. Remember, your several-page packet will likely be boiled down to several paragraphs in a story, so help a reporter write the story by focusing on the key elements.

If you give reporters too much information, you give them a choice of what to cover and risk overwhelming them to the point where they will not read any of it. You should make the choice - then sell that choice by supporting it with focused, well-written materials.

Outlined below are several types of background materials that can be included in a press kit to help reporters find the most interesting and important information the resources they need. The faster reporters can find the information they need, the better your chance at successful media placement. If your information is accurate and easy to use, then reporters are more likely to write stories that accurately depict your position/issue/report.

### **Layout**

You want to make sure that the most important or compelling piece of information (the release, for example) is in the spot where the reporter will look first upon opening the packet: the right-hand side. Supporting articles should always be placed toward the back of the packet, behind other background materials. Make sure that contact or biographical information is near the front. Also, make sure that your card is included in the packet. If you mail or courier the packet, include a note reminding the reporter of the request for information and offering to help set up interviews, etc.

### **Press Kit Materials may include:**

#### *Media Advisory*

If you do not plan to write the Press Release after the event, you may want to include the advisory in your press kit. This serves as a reminder to the reporter who may hold on to the kit for future use.

#### *Press Release*

You may choose to write a press release before the event takes place. This should be written as something that an objective reporter could use in its entirety as a news story. Few will, of course, but looking through that lens helps you pare the story down to its essentials. You are responsible for anything you say in the release. Some outlets will use the release verbatim so confirm all facts, figures, quotes, and spellings. Small, weekly papers are most likely to run a release verbatim.

### *Supporting or Background Materials*

Complex issues often require more substantiation than can be included in a press release. It is often useful to provide the media with additional briefing materials, fact sheets, statistics, or report summaries. Use headlines that reflect your main themes and organize all data under those heads. Charts and graphs are often useful ways to summarize information; state key findings in declarative, bold-faced sentences.

Avoid overload. Focus on being concise and credible. Always indicate the source. You will increase your chances of coverage if you highlight local or state information or the impact of national data on a specific community, state, or region. When sending to more than one state, you may want to tailor individual press kits to those areas.

### *Press Statement*

A statement from the press conference speakers or from noted individuals if the event is less structured - a noted scientist, or economist, for example. These should be very brief and focused on the key messages. Speakers may deliver expanded remarks at the actual event, but do not force the reporter to sift through the introductions, warm-up, etc. to find the salient quote.

### *Speaker Biographies*

You should include a paragraph-long bio for each speaker, including their name, affiliation, and all contact information. This will help reporters when citing quotes, or setting up interviews. Do not force reporters to call you in order to contact the source unless your experts require prepping or want to screen each interviewer.

### *Background Statement*

A background statement on your organization or coalition should be no more than one page long and include:

- Name of organization
- Contact info for organization and speakers
- Main purpose of organization
- Recent work that your group has accomplished: a list of issues, for example.

### *Visuals*

If you have digital photos that you would like to make available to reporters, please send them to GEAN and we can set up a special on-line folder for your event that reporters can access for copies of the photos. Let reporters know that you have photos available, and provide them with detailed information on how to access the photos.

## Pitching to Reporters

If you want reporters to come cover press events, or if you want them to cover breaking news, or if you want to begin developing a relationship with a reporter, you are going to need to get them on the phone and “pitch” your story to them. It can be intimidating to think about calling a reporter. However, there are lots of ways to prepare and be sure that your pitches go as smoothly as possible.

One good thing to practice is getting mentally prepared to make these calls; remember that these reporters’ jobs are to find good stories to cover. By creating a strong press event or releasing an important new piece of information and letting them know about it, you are making their job a little easier.

Although the following tips are geared towards soliciting immediate coverage, much of this advice applies to building on-going relations with reporters over the phone. Whether you are calling for an event or calling to follow up on materials you sent to a reporter, you will want to consider the following:

- **To the point:** If you do not know the reporter, you will have less than 30 seconds to get his/her attention. Get to the point quickly. Answer the question: "Why should this reporter be interested?" and tailor your pitch accordingly. For example, look into regional, the public health, or the science angles of a story, as opposed to a straight "environmental" pitch.
- **Practice:** Before calling the media, write out and practice your pitch on someone who is not a member of your organization to see if they understand what you are saying and if they think it is interesting.
- **Respect deadlines:** Media calls are best made in the morning or early afternoon when most reporters are not on deadline. Always ask if the reporter is on deadline before you begin. If they are, ask when a better time would be to call. Exceptions to the rule are radio and TV talk shows. Call when the show is not on the air.
- **Be direct:** Tell the reporter why you are calling - "I saw your story on... and I thought you might be interested in something my organization is doing about this problem," or "I'm calling to let you know about a new report on XXX."
- **Be ready:** Have your talking points and the appropriate information in front of you, including statistics and spokesperson information so you do not sound disorganized. Be specific. Do not say, "We are doing interesting things." Instead say, "We have a new report that found higher levels of air pollution in the Cleveland metro area in 1999, than in the previous decade."
- **Relate:** Tie the story to something timely or newsworthy - "As you know, the U.S. Congress is considering cutting back on clean air regulations. If this happens, it will mean XX for (the media outlet's geographic area)..."
- **Be honest:** If you don't know the answer to a question the reporter raises, tell them that you do not know but that you will try and find out for them and call back. Do not make up answers or speak off the cuff. Anything you say is on the record so choose your words carefully. Say something like, "I'm not sure about that. Is it alright if I find out and call you back?"
- **Be flexible:** If a reporter is on deadline and is brusque, do not let it shake you. It is essential in this situation that you respond courteously to their situation by offering to call back, ask when would be the best time to call back, find out if you can fax the

information, etc. Others may be brusque even when not on deadline. Do not take it personally.

- **Your info:** Offer to provide additional information and background materials. These should expand the portrait of your organization and its activities, as well as the positive role played by the entire sector.
- **Their info:** If the reporter asks you to fax something, confirm their fax number. Many organizations change their fax numbers frequently. Follow up with a fax immediately.
- **Follow up:** When not working on a same-day press briefing, make a commitment for the next step: set up an interview, send/fax follow-up materials, call the reporter back with more information after a certain time period, etc.
- **Try and re-try:** Share what is working about your media "pitch" - and what is not working - with your colleagues. It may take a couple of calls to get your pitch down, and when you find what works, share it.
- **Know your stuff:** Be prepared to have conversations with reporters who know a lot about the issue. If you finish your 30-second pitch and cannot answer reporters' inquiries, you will not be able to sell your story. Reporters want to be sure you know what you are talking about. Remember that your pitch should be simple, interesting, short and clear. But, your knowledge should go to a deeper level.
- **Track it:** Keep a log with good notes about your press outreach. Record reporters' interests, key questions; note what the next steps are. Does the reporter want more information? Do you need to make a follow-up call in a few days? Record any follow-up activities on the log.
- **Abort? Retry? Fail?** If a reporter says no, respect it. Do not keep harping or bothering him/her about the same story or angle. No does not mean "don't ever call me again." It just means do not call again with the same pitch/story. Do not be afraid to call another time with a new story, a very interesting new angle, breaking news, etc.

### **Fielding Incoming Calls**

When receiving press calls, make sure anyone who may answer the phone is prepared to take careful messages. Get the name, number, and organization calling, as well as their deadline. If you do not have the information right in front of you, do not hesitate to ask the reporter if you can call right back with some answers, someone to talk to, etc. Always remember: an imminent deadline should receive an immediate call back from the appropriate spokesperson.

Have only trained people answer press inquiries. Do not let an untrained person field press questions. Have them take a very specific message, and have the right person call back.

Also, when receiving calls, you may have the opportunity to try a new angle, or tell the longer story to further interest a reporter, or to get them to cover your side of the story more in-depth. Other reporters may call you looking for information to write a story when they are unable to attend.

### **Leaving Messages**

Reporters are hardly ever at their desks - although your chances are best in the morning. Do not hesitate to leave brief messages for reporters outlining your pitch. You can do this more than once, but try not to leave more than two messages. Try to keep your pitch very short, ask them to call, offer to fax info, and say that you will call back. If you wait until you get every single reporter on the phone before giving your pitch, you may face an empty press event.

## **Sample Pitches** *Courtesy of Fenton Communications*

Your job is to take the most interesting and timely aspects of the story and condense them into 30 seconds or less, including a brief introduction of yourself. Check out these sample pitches:

### ***Report release with regional angles***

"A report coming out next Tuesday names cities with the most pot-holed and deteriorated expressways. This is the first report to outline how much money poorly maintained roads are costing drivers. It turns out that drivers spend four times more repairing the damage to their cars caused by crumbling urban expressways than state highway departments spend each year to fix them. But, states continue to divert maintenance funds to build new highways, rather than fixing the ones that are in bad shape."

Details of the press conference . . .

### ***Background briefing for features that also has several hard news hooks.***

Two reporters from a Fox TV station in Tampa will talk about pressure from Monsanto. They did an investigative piece on Bovine Growth Hormone in Florida that revealed some of the Health Canada science. Monsanto found out about their story and pressured the Fox network in New York. The reporters were asked to change their story in ways they thought were "false, inaccurate." After more than 70 rewrites, they were fired. They are now suing the TV station and filing a complaint with the FCC.

Talking about human health concerns: Monsanto's own studies have linked BGH to cysts in rats, illness in cows

Talking about FDA approval: Officially approved in 1993. These old Monsanto studies documenting health risks are now coming public because of the Health Canada review.

On Tuesday the (organization) will demand that the (decision-maker) take (GE product) off the market or face a lawsuit.

Details of who/where/when.....

## Writing Effective Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are an easy way to voice your opinion to policy makers and to educate people in your community about the issues your organization addresses. You can use letters to correct or interpret facts in response to an inaccurate or biased article recently published in a newspaper or magazine; to explain the connection between a news item and your organization's issues; or to praise or criticize a recent article or editorial. Whatever your purpose, your letter will reach many people in your community - without exception, the letters section is one of the most highly read segments of newspapers (and magazines).

Letter writing can also be an empowering activity for volunteers. Seeing their name published in the paper can give your volunteers a real feeling of ownership over their involvement in this issue, and can be a small victory that can build confidence and commitment for the volunteer. Consider holding monthly letter writing parties for volunteers, where people can come together, write letters to the editor (or to elected officials or other targets, as needed in your campaigns), and get to know each other.

*The majority of this information can be found at the 20/20 Vision web site.*

### Steps to Success

#### Step 1: Know Your Paper's Policy

Find out the newspaper's (or magazine's) policy for printing letters. Some have requirements for length of letters, some want letters to be typewritten, and almost all require that you include your name, address, and phone number. (Of course your address and phone number would never be printed. Most publications will want to call you before they print your letter to confirm that you really did write the letter and that you want to have it published.)

If the paper does not publish its letters requirements next to the letters it prints, do not be afraid to call. Ask to whom you should address your letter, if they have any length restrictions and in what format they would like the letter.

#### Step 2: Be Timely

Responding to a recent article, editorial, or op-ed is one of the best ways to increase your chances of getting published. (Be sure to mention the name of the article and the date it was written in the beginning of your letter.) You can also capitalize on recent news, events, or anniversaries.

#### Step 3: Keep it Simple

You already know how to write letters to policy makers that are concise, informative, and personal. The same should be true with letters to the editor. Make your first sentence short, compelling, and catchy. Do not be afraid to be direct, engaging, and even controversial. Keep your points short and clear, stick to one subject, and, as a general rule, try to limit your letters to under three or four paragraphs in length. Most publications ask that letters be kept to 250 words or less. The shorter the letter, the better its chances of being printed.

#### Step 4: Get Personal

Newspapers, at their core, are community entities. Editors will be much more likely to publish a letter, and the letter will have much more impact, if it demonstrates local relevance.

- Use local statistics. For example, a letter focusing on a vote on the Clean Water Act should point out how many rivers and lakes are unsafe for swimming in your community or state.
- Use personal stories. For example, if you or someone in your family has become ill because of contaminated drinking water, you should talk about your experience in a letter to the editor addressing the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Use names. As congressional aides have repeatedly told us, if a letter to the editor mentions a Representative or Senator's name, they will see it. They care about how they are being perceived in the district, and they will pay attention to a letter that asks them to co-sponsor legislation, or to take a specific action in Congress. You should also urge your readers to support your position and to let their elected officials know their views.
- Use your credentials. If you have expertise in the area you are writing about, say it!

### **Step 5: Increase Name Recognition**

Letters to the editor are an excellent opportunity to let more people know about your issue. As a general rule, you should sign your letter to the editor with your affiliation. On the other hand, if you and many other representatives from your organization are writing letters to the editor as part of a targeted campaign, you may not want to include your affiliation. Publications will not print letters they think are part of a manufactured campaign.

If you are the only one writing to the editor, you may also want to work your organization's name into the text of your letter. For example, in a letter about food safety standards you could say that, "The (your organization) recommended guidelines for improving food safety standards to protect our children just last year."

### **Step 6: Don't Forget the Follow-up**

Do not be discouraged if your letter is not printed. Keep trying. You can even submit a revised letter with a different angle on the issue at a later date. And if your letter is published, be sure to send the clipped version to your member of Congress as well! While your representative or senator will probably have clipped your letter, it carries more weight if it comes from you with a personal note attached.

### **Steps 7: Think Strategically**

You should think about letters to the editor as a regular strategic campaign tool to increase the effectiveness of your organization's actions. Try to target several different papers in your area at the same time and encourage people to explore different angles on the same issue. However, do not send the exact same letter to more than one newspaper in the same market. If you want to be published in more than one paper in the same market, rewrite the letter slightly or choose a different angle to approach the subject at each publication. Newspapers do not like to print "form" letters.

Then, consider sending copies of your letters to the individuals or groups you are trying to influence; for instance, send a copy to your target legislator, to the superintendent of schools, or to the manager of the farmer's market you are trying to move to be GMO-free. Use your letters to bring you closer to your campaign goals.

*"It is especially good if the letters are geographically spread and the issue is repeated in a few areas. It creates a ripple effect. It shows that the issue has reached far into the congressional district which, in turn, gets noticed by the policy maker." - Congressional Aide*

## Sample letter to the editor

*Disclose location of genetically engineered crops*

September 14, 2003  
The Editor  
Honolulu Advertiser

Thank you for your recent article (“EPA Fines Pioneer for Genetic Contamination,” September 12, 2002) about the safety hazards posed by genetically engineered crops here in Hawai’i.

Hawai’i has more permitted field trials of experimental genetically engineered crops than any other place on earth. Given the number of permits our state Department of Agriculture has granted to biotechnology companies to grow these experimental crops in the islands, I was particularly concerned to learn that Pioneer Hi-Bred and Dow Agrosiences were fined by the EPA for violating safe planting restrictions on Kauai and Molokai.

These mistakes make it clear that it is necessary for the public to have a right to know where genetically engineered crops are being grown in our islands, and exactly what genetic experiments are being done here.

All farmers, gardeners and growers should know if there are fields of genetically altered crops nearby that could contaminate the food they grow. Here in the islands, biotech companies are doing experiments in which human genes and animal genes are inserted into crops. Isure don't want these things in my garden.

Now that we know mistakes have been made in how experimental genetically engineered crops are being grown in Hawai’i, it is imperative that our local and state politicians move these companies to publicly disclose where they are growing GMOs in the islands, and what genetic experiments they are doing here. We just deserve to know.

Noli Hoyer

GMO-Free Kauai  
Hanalei, Kaua’i

*Drawn from the Green Media Toolshed Media Training Program, [www.greenmediatoolshed.org](http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org)*



## Opinion Editorials

If you have tried and failed to get your paper's editorial board to take up your cause on the editorial page, or if they have decided to write an editorial condemning your cause, it may be time to write your own piece. The "op-ed" (opinion editorial) page is the place to try to publish your commentary.

Guest commentaries are articles that appear opposite the editorial page of local, state and national newspapers. Many op-eds are written by syndicated columnists or the paper's own columnists; however, they are also written by local citizens, experts, leaders of organizations - people like you. They are an extremely powerful and cost-effective way for your organization to educate a large number of people about your issues and to influence policymakers.

### Who reads opinion pieces?

National opinion articles are usually read by policymakers, academics, and important decision-makers. If your goal is to reach the general public, an op-ed in a national paper such as the New York Times is not the best approach. To reach the public in a specific region, submit your piece to the local/regional paper. Finally, there are national chains, such as Knight-Ridder, that will run an op-ed. A piece like this may appear in local and regional papers all over the country.

### Do Your Homework

Although most newspapers consider it a priority to maintain open access to their opinion pages, not all papers are receptive to publishing guest pieces from anyone, especially special interest groups. If you want to write on behalf of your organization, it is important to know the paper's policy. It is important to read the paper you wish to approach, find out whether or not it publishes guest columns, how frequently it does so and whether it prefers to publish columns by policymakers, "celebrity" journalists, academics, or other types of authors.

You should also read the paper regularly to understand the editorial direction of the paper. Papers may see no need for a guest column unless it is filling some void. They will not print a guest column that is merely echoing what another columnist has already written or what has already been articulated by the paper in an editorial. In fact, your best bet may be to write a column that takes direct exception to an editorial.

### Contacting the Paper

When approaching a small newspaper, you may be dealing with the editorial page editor or the chief editor. At a larger paper, however, you may be referred to the op-ed page editor. Once you know what you want to write, you should try discussing it with the person in charge of op-eds or commentaries. Explain what you want to write in response to something that has been printed in the paper, or that you want to express your views on an ongoing subject. Ask them their opinion, take any guidance they are willing to offer, but remember that they may be strapped for time like any other reporter. Many large newspapers also have recorded messages outlining their guidelines for submitting op-eds. Do not be surprised if you are transferred to this line.

Before writing a piece, make sure you get all the information you need from the newspaper:

1. Word length
2. How to submit
3. Whom to submit to

4. How long submissions are held on to/considered and how to find out whether it has been accepted for publication
5. Details on how to withdraw submissions

### **Timing is Everything**

Timing is the most important factor in submitting an op-ed. Is Congress or the state legislature about to cast a controversial vote? Is there an appropriate holiday or anniversary? Can you tie the op-ed to the release of a new report, a recent article, a popular movie, or event in your community? In many cases, it is best to submit your op-ed well in advance of a timely event, such as a news anniversary or important vote because editors plan their opinion pages a week or more in advance. When reacting to a news event, submit your piece as quickly as possible afterwards - no more than a week after it has been covered by the newspaper, preferably within two or three days.

### **Writing an Op-Ed**

Start by outlining what you want to write - not only the issue but the point of view you want to take. Consider what the paper has already printed on the subject and decide how you could best contribute to the debate. Again, unless you want to write for the New York Times, or another major national outlet, the local angle is your best bet. Even international issues such as climate change have local impact.

#### *Tips:*

- Keep your text to between 500 and 800 words (about 3 pages double-spaced) in general, but call the outlet you plan to submit it to for their guidelines.
- Stay focused on one issue, and boil your argument down to three or, at the most, four major points.
- Think creatively and try to be original. (Tip: read op-eds before starting so you see how they are styled.)
- Highlight the issue's relevance. How/why has it been in the news? What's so controversial?
- Write in short paragraphs; three sentences each.
- Use simple, short sentences. Avoid fancy words, jargon, or acronyms.
- Eliminate the passive voice. Example: "This legislation was defeated almost entirely by the governor." Changed to: "The governor single-handedly defeated the bill."
- Begin with a short vignette illustrating how the issue affects an individual or group of people to drive home why the newspaper's readers "need to know."
- For regional placement, use local or regional statistics. For example, in an op-ed focusing on the Clean Water Act, you should mention the number of lakes, rivers or streams in your state that are unsafe for swimming.
- Include at least one memorable phrase that can be used as a "pull" quote. It must be short.
- Op-eds should provoke discussion, controversy and response.
- Op-eds should be informative and provide practical solutions for the problem you have presented.
- Close on a strong note. Use a short, powerful last paragraph that drives the point home and sums things up.
- Don't forget to thank the editor, or whomever you are dealing with at the paper, for publishing your op-ed piece. A good relationship with the editorial staff could become one of your most valuable resources. (But don't include your note of thanks in the op-ed itself).

- Include a cover letter when submitting an op-ed that summarizes why it is timely and of interest to readers of this particular publication. Thank the editors for considering your piece. Keep the letter short - less than one page.

### **The Right Author**

You do not necessarily have to sign or write an op-ed by yourself. Sometimes it is best to ask a government official or expert to collaborate on an opinion piece. Finding the best author to collaborate with can be critical in getting your article published and maximizing its impact. Choose from scientific or other experts from your organization or others, ask a local doctor, business executive, or elected official - anyone who may be perceived as having an interesting perspective on the issues or the appropriate credentials for weighing in on a topic. For example, a retired Energy Department official would carry more clout discussing the potential impacts of energy sector deregulation than a known renewable energy or environmental activist. The best person (or persons) to collaborate with on an op-ed are not always experts on writing for the media. However, when revising the text, be sure that everyone who collaborates on and signs an opinion piece has the opportunity for revision and fact-checking.

### **Formatting an Op-Ed**

- Double space your text.
- Provide a suggested title, the author's name, and identification - although it will most likely be re-named.
- You may want to include a short biographical paragraph about the author at the end, including residence and experience relevant to the topic.
- Consider illustrating your piece with a photograph, map, or other visual aid. It is a good idea to maintain a good file of black-and-white shots.

*Adapted from Green Media Toosheld's piece, drawn from "Op-Eds: A Cost-Effective Strategy for Advocacy," by Denice Zeck and Edmund Rennolds. This guide is part of the series, "Strategic Communication for Nonprofits" published by the Benton Foundation and the Center for Strategic Communications.*

### **Sample Op-Ed #1**

#### **Turning Point for California's Farm Industry Industry aims to strip local control of food supply**

Britt Bailey, Becky Tarbotton

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

Environmental and healthy-farming advocates are learning what tobacco-free campaigners learned in the 1990s: When local governments step up to protect their community's citizens, industry responds by taking away the authority of local governments.

In spring 2004, three California counties and two cities passed ordinances that restricted growing genetically modified organisms. In response, state Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter (Kern County), earlier this month gutted and then amended Senate Bill 1056 with some of the broadest and most

sweeping pre-emptive language ever written in the Legislature. Its purpose? To override existing local restrictions, prohibit any future initiatives that might restrict genetically engineered crops and eliminate local control of seeds and plants. Essentially, to hijack control of our food supply.

Just as the tobacco industry acted to restrict local tobacco controls in 20 states, agribusiness corporations and their affiliated associations are behind the moves to thwart local efforts to restrict the growing of genetically modified foods. In the 2005 session, 16 state legislatures, including California, introduced bills prohibiting local control of seeds and plants. The nearly identical language used in each of the bills illustrates a systematic and ordered approach to stifling community decision-making. Agribusiness councils, whose leadership includes members such as bioengineering firms Monsanto and Syngenta, are promoting the legislation while the bills' initial language has been developed by the American Legislative Exchange Council, a conservative public-policy organization.

What will such pre-emptive laws do to local control? According to Tom Campbell, director of the California Department of Finance, "state pre-emption laws can do two things. They can overturn the will of the people in the event an initiative has passed, and they can prevent the introduction of laws on the same subject from being introduced in the future." Pre-empting local authority stifles citizen participation in the democratic process and should give pause for any legislator or citizen. What are voters in Mendocino and Marin counties to think when their votes to restrict genetically modified crops and protect local food and farming are worthy of so little respect?

There is no denying that agricultural biotechnology is a complex and controversial issue. You would think this would be all the more reason public debate and discussion should be encouraged, not silenced. Yet if legislators such as Florez have their way, citizens will lose an opportunity to be part of the discussion to resolve one of the most challenging issues of our time. Local initiatives and citizen actions restricting genetically modified crops are a signal to the Legislature that Californians are concerned about this new technology and, in the absence of government leadership, are taking matters into their own hands to protect their environment, economy and health.

Proponents of SB1056 assert that California needs uniformity and homogeneity with regard to seed laws and that the state could not possibly handle a patchwork of laws passed by local government. Yet, if local authority over seeds is taken away by the state, then so is every farmer's choice not to use genetically engineered seeds and plants. Once genetically engineered plants are released into the environment, historically preserved and heirloom seed strains are forever affected, according to a 2004 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists. Diverse agricultural economies may suffer from losses due to this contamination. For example, if organic crops become contaminated with genetically engineered pollen, those farmers may lose their organic certification.

In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to James Madison in which he stated, "I know of no safe repository of the ultimate power of society but the people, and if we think them not enlightened enough, the remedy is not to take the power from them." That critical power is now being challenged, as state Sen. Wes Chesbro, D-Arcata (Humboldt County), noted: "Regardless of how you feel about the (genetically modified organism) issue, taking away local voters' rights is a serious threat to democracy."

Please voice your opposition to SB1056, which impedes our ability as community members to protect and create a sustainable food supply. Contact your legislator (to find out who that is, go

to [leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html](http://leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html)), Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata ([senator.perata@sen.ca.gov](mailto:senator.perata@sen.ca.gov)) and Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez ([assemblymember.nunez@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.nunez@assembly.ca.gov)). This legislation does not represent the freedoms our country was founded upon.

Britt Bailey is director of Environmental Commons in Gualala (Mendocino County) and environmental policy instructor at the College of Marin in Kentfield. For updated information on the seed and plant pre-emption bills, visit [www.environmentalcommons.org/gmo-tracker.html](http://www.environmentalcommons.org/gmo-tracker.html). Becky Tarbotton is campaign coordinator for Californians for GE-Free Agriculture ([www.calfree.org](http://www.calfree.org)), a statewide coalition promoting ecologically and economically viable agriculture.

Sample Op-Ed #2

## **Falsities, half-truths and smears marred essay on Tillamook milk**

Thursday, March 31, 2005

**IN MY OPINION Rick North**

**Dr. Martin Donohoe**

A recent op-ed piece by Alex Avery and Terry Witt ("Contriving a controversy concerning Tillamook's milk," March 25) questioned the legitimacy of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility's campaign to discontinue recombinant bovine growth hormone -- rBGH or rBST -- in dairy products.

Our organization, which prides itself on sound science, has intensively researched the scientific data and historical/political information on rBGH.

We discovered a deeply disturbing web of undue corporate influence in the Food and Drug Administration, where several of the agency's own scientists questioned the validity of the data and safety of rBGH. We learned why rBGH has been banned in most industrialized nations of the world and we saw how Monsanto, rBGH's sole manufacturer, intimidated many who opposed it.

Last week's op-ed was more than an attempt to silence the continuing controversy about the safety of this drug. It was an assault on citizen participation in democracy, on activism itself.

Our dictionary defines an activist as someone who takes "positive, direct action to achieve an end." In the past few years, the meaning of this word has been turned on its head to imply a negative, self-serving person. The prevailing definition disparages citizens who question corporate power or official government policy. It's illuminating to track those people criticizing activism and recognize their tactics.

One such tactic is the half-truth. Their op-ed gave the impression that our campaign had targeted Tillamook County Creamery with thousands of complaints and was wholly responsible for its decision. Actually, Tillamook had received comments about rBGH and had begun discussions about banning it before our campaign had even started. In the past year, we have asked consumers to urge Tillamook and other dairies to stop using the hormone. However, the thousands of comments we helped generate in the 10 days leading up to the membership vote were thanking Tillamook for its previous rBGH-free decision.

The op-ed also contained numerous totally false statements. One example: rBGH doesn't harm cows? Monsanto's own package insert lists more than a dozen harmful medical conditions that rBGH increases, including painful mastitis, foot disorders and reduced pregnancy rates. It's no wonder both the Humane Society of the United States and the Humane Farming Association have condemned rBGH.

Monsanto has funded, directly or indirectly, both Avery's Hudson Institute and Witt's Oregonians for Food and Shelter. In fact, Monsanto has a representative sitting on the board of Witt's group.

Activists are more than just watchdogs. They have produced some of this nation's greatest accomplishments. Without them, 10-year-old children would still be working 12 hours a day in coal mines and sweatshops. Blacks would still be barred from schools, hotels and swimming pools. Women would still be denied the right to vote. In Oregon, activist William Steel spearheaded a 17-year struggle that led to the creation in 1902 of Crater Lake National Park. Activist Richard Chambers led the three-year battle for the 1971 Bottle Bill that became a nationwide model.

It is the right and responsibility of citizens to question government policy and challenge abuses of corporate power. When activism is attacked or neglected, democracy itself is in peril.

Avery and Witt got one thing right -- we are activists. And we're proud of it.

Rick North of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility is project director for its Campaign for Safe Food. Dr. Martin Donohoe, a physician, is the campaign's chief science adviser.

## Chapter 4: Local Fundraising and Special Events

### Introduction

From printing costs for flyers and fact sheets to rental fees for meeting venues, most campaign work will require some degree of financial support.

Some grassroots organizers feel like fundraising work is not a part of their “real” program work, and don’t look forward to doing it. However, doing fundraising for your group will not only make it easier for you to meet the needs of your campaigns, it is also a way for people in your community to literally become more invested in your work. Some people are not able to give time to the work of your group, but they may have money they can contribute. As you work to maximize the number of people in your community who are involved in and feel like a part of this movement, doing local fundraising is a good way to widen the net and bring in new community members.

Money can also bring an infusion of energy to your campaigns. It is empowering to feel supported by your community in the work you are doing; having a chunk of money in the bank is one way for group members to be able to quantify the support you are receiving for your work. Also, if you are able to pay some of your group members for the time they devote to this cause, you can free them up from other work obligations and bring more concentrated energy to the movement.

There are many ways to raise money for genetic engineering work. One common yet sometimes exhausting way of raising money is from foundations. Grant writing can be a time-consuming process, but it may be right for your group to begin looking for support from foundations. Quite possibly, there may be foundations that exist to support efforts in your specific community or state. One place to research foundations is at your local library, which will likely carry *The Foundation Directory* in their reference section. Although grant writing is not covered in this chapter of the toolkit, there are numerous resources on grant writing available. A couple of links to start researching on the web are:

<http://www.seanet.com/~sylvie/grants.htm>

<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html>

While groups often think first about writing grants for fundraising, getting financial support from local people can be even more effective. In fact, most non-profits receive 80% or more of their contributions from individuals, not foundations.

Seeking out local donors is effective for a number of reasons:

- The work you are doing to protect your community from genetic engineering will be particularly compelling to the people who live in your area, as they may feel most directly impacted by your efforts. They have a direct stake in the place you are working to preserve.
- Your group already has connections to people in your community who have resources to give. Fundraising is largely about relationships, and local fundraising can build on the networks your members and supporters are already a part of to secure support.
- Seeking individual financial support can be less time-consuming and has a higher rate of return than grant writing.

- If you develop a careful plan for developing local donors and nurturing them over time, you will lay the foundation for funding that can be sustained over time and security for your group's projects as a result.

There are a lot of ways to engage in local fundraising efforts. Individual meetings with donors can be particularly effective in raising larger amounts of money. House parties cannot only help you secure funding, but will also help you identify new volunteers for your campaign work. Public fundraising events are fun ways to both raise money and raise awareness of the issue in the community. T-shirt, book, movie, and bumpersticker sales can also raise modest amounts of money while helping advertise your efforts and educate your community. All of these local fundraising efforts will help bring more local people into this movement and will bring your work the financial support it needs to carry out its campaigns.

Remember that asking community members for money is not a burden to them; you are providing people with another way to support this movement and to resist genetic engineering. And your group and group members deserve to be financially supported. Recognize your worth by feeling empowered to ask for the funds you need. You may be surprised by how many people are thankful to be given the opportunity to contribute.

This chapter of the toolkit provides tools and lessons on fundraising from individual donor supporters and special events.



# The Ten Most Important Things You Can Know About Fundraising

## 1. IF YOU WANT MONEY, YOU HAVE TO ASK FOR IT

While there are some people (may their kind increase) who will simply send an organization money or offer money without being asked, there are not enough of them to build a donor base around. Most people will not think to give you money unless you make your needs known.

This is not because they are cheap or self-centered; it is because most people have no idea how much it costs to run a non-profit, or how non-profits get money. If you don't ask them, they will simply assume you are getting the money somewhere. They have no reason to think your group needs money unless you tell them, the same way they have no reason to know if you are hungry, or unhappy, or needing advice.

Millard Fuller, who founded Habitat for Humanity, says, "I have tried raising money by asking for it, and by not asking for it. I always got more by asking for it."

## 2. THANK BEFORE YOU BANK

Once you receive money, you must thank the person who gave it to you. I have found that disciplining myself not to deposit checks until I have written the thank you notes has forced me to make thank you notes a priority. I am not rigid about this rule because if I get behind in my thank-you notes and then don't deposit the checks for a while, the donors may wonder whether we really needed the money.

Thank you notes do not need to be fancy and should not be long. If at all possible, they should include a personal note, even if it is from someone who doesn't know the donor. You can add something as simple as, "Hope to meet you sometime," or "Check out our website," or "Happy holidays," or even, "Thanks again — your gift really helps."

Many organizations have created note cards for staff and volunteers to use when writing thank you's. The front of the card has the logo of the group, on the top half of the inside is a relevant meaningful quote from a famous person, and the bottom half of the inside is used for the message. It is a small space, so you really can't say much. Many databases will print out a thank you note after you enter the information about the donor — saving valuable time. These are best if accompanied by a personal note at the bottom. Late thank you's are better than no thank you at all, but photocopied form thank you's are almost the same as no thank you.

The long and the short of thank you's is: if you don't have time to thank donors, you don't have time to have donors.

## 3. DONORS ARE NOT ATMS

A survey of donors who gave away more than \$5,000 a year asked, "What is your relationship with your favorite group?" Several gave similar answers, even though they did not know each other and did not give to the same group. All the answers were on this theme: "I would love to be considered a friend, but I am more of an ATM. They come to me when they need money, they tell me how much, I give it to them, and the next time I hear from them is when they need more."

This is a terrible indictment of much of what passes as fundraising. When I have described this common situation in trainings, people have often asked, "How can we make sure our donors don't feel this way?" The answer is very simple, "Make sure you don't feel that way about your donors." All groups have a few "high maintenance" donors, and may be forgiven for wishing them to go on a long trip to a place without phones or e-mail. But the majority of donors require practically no attention. They have the resilience of cacti — the slightest care makes them bloom.

Thank you notes, easy-to-understand newsletters, and occasional respectful requests for extra gifts will keep people giving year in and year out. Think of your donors as ambassadors for your group. Design your materials so that donors will be proud to give your newsletter to a friend or recommend your group when their service club or professional association is looking for an interesting speaker, or forward your e-mails to several of their colleagues.

By treating your donors as whole people who have a number of gifts to offer your group, including their financial support, you will have more financial support from existing donors, more fun fundraising, more donors, and the peace of mind of knowing that you are not treating anyone as an object.

#### **4. MOST MONEY COMES FROM PEOPLE, AND MOST OF THOSE PEOPLE ARE NOT RICH**

There are three sources of funding for all the nonprofits in the United States: earned income (such as products and fees for service), government (public sector), and the private sector, which includes foundations, corporations, and individuals. For the nearly 60 years that records about who gives money away have been kept, at least 80% of this money has been shown to be given by individuals.

In 2002, total giving by the private sector was almost \$241 billion, and 84.2 percent of that (\$202 billion) was given away by individuals! These people are *all* people — there is no significant difference in giving patterns by age, race, or gender. Income is not nearly the variable that one would think: middle-class, working-class, and poor people are generous givers and account for a high percentage of the money given away. In fact, a study by Arthur Blocks of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University showed that 19% of families living on welfare give away an average of \$72 a year!

Too often, people think they can't raise money because they don't know any wealthy philanthropists. It is a great comfort to find that the people we know, whoever they are, are adequate to the task. Seven out of ten adults give away money. Focus your work on these givers, and help teach young people to become givers.

#### **5. PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO**

One of the biggest mistakes I made early on as a fundraising trainer was not balancing my emphasis on the need to ask for money with the reality that people are going to say no. No one is obligated to support your group — no matter what you have done for them, no matter how wealthy they are, no matter how much they give to other groups, how close a friend they are of the director, or any other circumstance that makes it seem they would be a likely giver.

While it is possible to guilt-trip, trick, or manipulate someone into giving once, that will not work as a repeat strategy. People avoid people who make them feel bad, and they are attracted to people who make them feel good. When you can make someone feel all right about saying no, you keep the door open to a future yes or to that person referring someone else to your group.

People say no for all kinds of reasons: they don't have extra money right now; they just gave to another group; they don't give at the door, over the phone, by mail; a serious crisis in their family is consuming all their emotional energy; they are in a bad mood. Rarely does their refusal have anything to do with you or your group. Sometimes people say no because they have other priorities, or they don't understand what your group does. Sometimes we hear no when the person is just saying, "I need more time to decide," or "I need more information," or "I have misunderstood something you said."

So, first be clear that the person is saying no, and not something else like, "Not now," or "I don't like special events." Once you are certain that the person has said no, accept it. Go on to your next prospect. If appropriate, write the person a letter and thank them for the attention they gave to your request. Then let it go. If you don't hear no several times a week, you are not asking enough people.

#### **6. TO BE GOOD AT FUNDRAISING, CULTIVATE THREE TRAITS**

A good fundraiser requires three character traits as much as any set of skills. These traits are first, a belief in the cause for which you are raising money and the ability to maintain that belief during defeats, tedious tasks, and financial insecurity; second, the ability to have high hopes and low expectations, allowing you to be often pleased but rarely disappointed; and third, faith in the basic goodness of people.

While fundraising is certainly a profession, people who will raise money for any kind of group are rarely effective. Fundraising is a means to an end, a way to promote a cause, a very necessary skill in achieving goals and fulfilling missions.

## **7. FUNDRAISING SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH FUND CHASING, FUND SQUEEZING, OR FUND HOARDING**

Too often, organizations get confused about what fundraising is and is not.

If you hear that a foundation is now funding XYZ idea, and your organization has never done work in that area nor have you ever wished to do work in that area, the fact that you are well qualified to do such work is immaterial. To apply for a grant just because the money is available and not because the work will promote your mission is called fund chasing. Many groups chase money all over and, in doing so, move very far away from their mission.

Similarly, if your organization seems to be running into a deficit situation, cutting items out of the budget may be necessary but should not be confused with fundraising. When deficits loom, the fund squeezing question is, “How can we cut back on spending?”; the fundraising question is “Where can we get even more money?”

Finally, putting money aside for a rainy day, or taking money people have given you for annual operating and program work and being able to put some of it into a savings account is a good idea. Where savings becomes hoarding, however, is when no occasion seems important enough to warrant using the savings. I know a number of groups that have cut whole staff positions and program areas rather than let money sitting in their savings be used to keep them going until more money could be raised. I know groups that overstate what they pay people, what price they pay for equipment, what they spend on rent, all to get bigger grants from foundations or larger gifts from individuals, and then put that extra into savings — savings that they have no plan for.

A group that saves money needs to have a rationale: Why are you saving this money? Under what circumstances would you spend it? Without some plan in mind, the group simply hoards money. Fund chasing, fund squeezing, and fund hoarding need to be replaced with an ethic that directs the group to seek the money it needs, spend it wisely, and set some aside for cash-flow emergencies or future work.

## **8. FUNDRAISING IS AN EXCHANGE — PEOPLE PAY YOU TO DO WORK THEY CANNOT DO ALONE**

Hank Rosso, founder of the Fund Raising School and my mentor for many years, spoke often about the need to eliminate the idea that fundraising was like begging. Begging is when you ask for something you do not deserve. If you are doing good work, then you deserve to raise the money to do it. What you must do is figure out how to articulate what you are doing so that the person hearing it, if they share your values, will want to exchange their money for your work. They will pay you to do work they cannot do alone.

## **9. PEOPLE’S ANXIETIES ABOUT FUNDRAISING STEM FROM THEIR ANXIETIES ABOUT MONEY**

Anxiety about money is learned, and it can be unlearned. If you are ever around children, you know that they have no trouble asking for anything, especially money. In fact, if you say no to a child’s request for money, they will simply ask again, or rephrase their request (“I’ll only spend it on books”), or offer an alternative (“How about if I do the dishes, then will you give me the money?”).

Everything we think and feel about money we have been taught. None of it is natural; none of it is genetic. In fact, in many countries around the world, people talk easily about money. They discuss what they earn, how much they paid for things, and it is not considered rude to ask others about salaries and costs.

We have been taught not to talk about money or to ask for it, except under very limited circumstances. Many of us are taught that money is a private affair. Having too little or too much can be a source of shame and embarrassment, yet money is also a source of status and power. Most people would like to have more money, yet most will also admit that money doesn't buy happiness. As adults, we have the right — in fact, the obligation — to examine the ideas we were taught as children to ensure that they are accurate and that they promote values we want to live by as adults. Most of us have changed our thinking about sex and sexuality, about race, about age, illness and disability, about religion, about marriage, about how children should be raised, what foods are healthy, and much more. We have done this as we have learned more, as we have experienced more, or, as we have thought about what we value and what we do not. We need to take the time to do the same work with our attitudes toward money. We can choose attitudes that make sense and that promote our health and well-being. Our attitudes toward fundraising are a subset of our larger attitudes toward money. The most important change we can make in our attitudes toward fundraising is to remember that success in fundraising is defined by how many people you ask rather than how much money you raise. This is because some people are going to say no, which has got to be all right with you. The more people you ask, the more yes answers you will eventually get.

Finally, if you are anxious about asking for money or would rather not ask, this is normal. But ask yourself if what you believe in is bigger than what you are anxious about. Keep focused on your commitment to the cause and that will propel you past your doubts, fears, and anxieties.

## **10. THERE ARE FOUR STEPS TO FUNDRAISING—PLAN, PLAN, PLAN, AND WORK YOUR PLAN**

Though humorous, this formula that I learned from a community organizer underscores the fact that fundraising is three parts planning for one part doing. I learned this later in my career, after having gone off half-cocked into many fundraising campaigns and programs. I meant to plan, I planned to make a plan, I just never got around to planning. I have learned (usually the hard way) that an hour of planning can save five hours of work, leaving much more time both to plan and to work. Planning also avoids that awful feeling of “How can I ever get everything done,” and that sense of impending doom. It moves us out of crisis mentality and means that we are going to be a lot easier for our co-workers to get along with.

There are a lot of articles and books on planning —I recommend reading some of them. However, the easiest way I have found to plan something is to start by defining the end result you want and when you want it to happen, then work backwards from that point to the present. For example, if you want your organization to have 100 new members by the end of next year and you are going to use house parties as your primary acquisition strategy, you will need to schedule five to seven house parties that will recruit 10 to 15 members per party. To set up one house party will require asking three people to host it (only one will accept), which will require identifying 15 or 20 possible hosts to carry out the number of house parties you want to have. The hosts will want to see materials and know what help they will have from you. The materials will have to be ready before the first phone call is made to the first potential host, and the first phone call needs to occur at least two months before the first party. So, the materials need to be produced in the next two weeks, hosts identified in a similar timeframe, calls made over a period of two or three months, and so on.

When you are tempted to skip planning, or to postpone planning until you “have some time,” or to fly by the seat of your pants, just remember the Buddhist saying, “We have so little time, we must proceed very slowly.”

By Kim Klein, Grassroots Fundraising Journal  
[www.grassrootsfundraising.org](http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org)

# Develop a Fundraising Plan

## Five Steps to Develop a Grassroots Fundraising Plan:

- 1) Develop a budget.
- 2) Determine the total amount of money to be raised from individual donors.
- 3) Set income goals for different groups of individual givers.
- 4) Decide how many donors you need to meet your goals, and select the best strategies.
- 5) Put the plan onto a timeline and fill out the tasks.

Veteran fundraiser and organizer Gary Delgado says that there are four steps to successful fundraising: plan, plan, plan and work.

Because there is so much truth to this advice, it may surprise readers that this “how to” is relatively short. That’s because planning for fundraising is not difficult to explain, nor is it difficult to do. Not only is planning fully three-fourths of what makes for successful fundraising, it is also true that one hour of planning can save three hours of work. But the final and most important truth is that planning does not take the place of doing.

Given that an organization is going to have to work its plan in order to raise money, how can a workable plan be created? There are five steps:

### 1. Create a budget.

The first step in developing a fundraising plan is to develop a working budget. A budget is simply a list of items on which you will spend money (expenses) and a list of sources from which you will receive money (income). A budget balances when the projected expenses and income are equal.

There is a simple process for budget preparation that most small nonprofit organizations can use effectively. The process takes into account the largest number of variables without doing extensive research or developing elaborate spread-sheets. In some organizations a single staff member prepares the entire budget and presents it for board approval, but this is a large burden for one person. Therefore, the method presented here assumes that a small committee will undertake the budget-setting program.

### Task One:

#### Expenses Versus Income

The budget committee should first divide into two subgroups: one to estimate expenses and the other to project income. When these tasks are completed, the subgroups will reconvene to mesh their work.

#### Estimating Expenses

The group working on the expense side of the budget prepares three columns of numbers representing “bare bones,” “reasonable,” and “ideal” expense figures. The “bare bones” column spells out the amount of money the organization needs to survive. Items here generally include office space, minimum staff requirements, postage, printing and telephone. This column does not include the cost of new work, salary increases, additional staff, new equipment or other improvements.

Next, the group prepares the “ideal” column: how much money the group would need to operate at maximum effectiveness. This is not a dream budget, but a true estimate of the amount of funding required for optimum functioning.

Finally, the committee prepares the “reasonable” column: how much money the group needs to do more than simply survive but still not meet all its goals. These figures should not be conceived of as an average of the other two columns. For example, an organization may feel that in order to accomplish any good work, the office needs to be larger, or in order to maintain staff morale, the organization must raise salaries. Because higher rent and increased salaries aren’t necessary to a group’s survival, they will not be included in the group’s “bare bones” budget; however, they are important enough to the organization’s work to be included in the “reasonable” budget.

The “bare bones,” “reasonable” and “ideal” columns, then, give the range of finances required to run the organization at various levels of functioning. The process of figuring expenses and income must be done with great attention to thoroughness and detail. When you don’t know how much something costs, do not guess. Take the time while creating the budget to find out.

### **Projecting Income**

At the same time that the expense side of the budget is being prepared, the other half of the committee is preparing the income side. Crucial to this process is a knowledge of what fundraising strategies the organization can carry out and how much money these can be expected to generate. The income side is also estimated in three columns, representing “worst,” “likely,” and “best.”

To calculate the income projection labeled “worst,” take last year’s income sources and assume that with the same amount of effort the group will at least be able to raise this amount again. In the case of foundation, corporation or government grants it may be wise to write “zero” as the worst projection. The “best” income projections are drawn up next. These figures reflect what would happen if all the organization’s fundraising work was successful and every grant proposal submitted was funded. Again, this is not a dream budget. It does not assume events that will probably not occur, such as someone giving your group a gift of a million dollars. The ideal budget must be one that would be met if everything went absolutely right.

The “likely” column is a compromise. It estimates the income the organization can expect to generate with reasonable hard work, expanding old fundraising strategies and having success with some new strategies, yet with some things going wrong.

All income categories are figured on the basis of their gross: that is, the amounts you expect to earn from each strategy before expenses are subtracted. The expenses must be included in the expense side of the budget. Be sure that the committee developing the expense side of the budget includes expenses involved in carrying out fundraising strategies in the total expenses of the organization.

### **Task Two:**

#### **Meet, Compare, Negotiate**

Once income and expense projections have been completed, the two parts of the committee can share their results. When the income and expense sides of the budget have been figured separately in this way, there is less chance of giving in to the temptation to manipulate the figures to make them balance.

When the entire committee reconvenes, you hope to find that the “reasonable” expense column and the “likely” income column are close to the same. In that happy circumstance those figures can be adopted as the budget with no more fuss. Occasionally groups are pleasantly surprised to

discover that their "likely" income projections came close to their "ideal" budget. However, compromises usually need to be made. In these cases the expenses need to be adjusted to meet realistic income potential, not the other way around.

When no two sets of numbers are anywhere near alike, the committee will have to find solutions. There is no right or wrong way to negotiate at this point. If each committee has really done its job properly, there will be no need to review each item to see if it is accurate. However, with more research, committees may discover other ways to delete expenses or add income.

## **2. Determine the amount to be raised from individual donors.**

From the amount of money you determine you must raise, subtract any amounts that will be raised from strategies not involving individual donors, such as income from foundation, corporate or government grants, product sales, fees for service, interest income, etc. The amount that remains is the amount that will form the basis of your fundraising plan for individual donors. The other methods of income generation will be added to your plan during the last step.

## **3. Set income goals.**

Now divide the amount of money that must be raised from individuals into the proportions you can expect from different groups of givers.

- 60% of your money should come from 10% of your donors – major donors.
- 20% of your money should come from 20% of your donors – habitual donors giving through your retention strategies.
- The remaining 20% of your money should come from 70% of your donors – first time donors giving through acquisition strategies.

Next, analyze your current donor list to answer the following four questions:

- *How many donors do you have now in each of these three categories?*
- *What is your renewal rate? (It should be around 66%.)*
- *What is the organization's strength in working with donors?*
- *Has the number of donors to your organization grown, decreased or stayed the same in the last three years? If it has decreased, you are definitely not doing enough acquisition and you may also have a problem with retention of donors. If the number of donors has stayed the same, you are either doing a good job with retention or acquisition, but not both, because otherwise you would see an increase.*

This analysis will give you a clearer sense of the strategies you need to employ to meet your financial goals.

## **How to Develop a Fundraising Plan**

### **4. Decide how many donors you need.**

Match the number of donors you need to make your goals in each category with strategies that work best for reaching those donors.

### **5. Put it on a timeline.**

Put the entire plan, including all methods of income generation, onto a time line and fill out the tasks. Voila! A fundraising plan is born. (This is not to underplay the amount of time it will take you to do these five steps – a planning committee of the board will need to meet two or three times to get a plan of this specificity accomplished.) By using these steps, the planning process can be both simple and accurate.

*Drawn from Western Organization of Resource Councils, [www.worc.org](http://www.worc.org)*

## **Support from Individuals**

Individuals should provide the core support for practically any kind of nonprofit endeavor. Such support is important for a number of reasons. Individuals are, beyond a doubt, the most reliable, consistent source of income for nonprofit organizations throughout the world. Their investment in your work will rarely waiver as long as you fulfill your mission adequately and acknowledge the individual supporters for their aid. Individuals form very personal relationships with the charitable organizations they support. As long as you encourage, recognize, and nurture that relationship, you can count on retaining most of your individual donors year in and out. They serve as your life insurance policy for the future, for they will be around even if institutional supporters withdraw their support.

Nevertheless, some organizations scoff at the idea of reaching out to individuals for support, believing that the public is apathetic to their issues or that their immediate constituency is too poor or hard-pressed to provide any significant help. Other groups simply don't know how to petition the public effectively for financial support and find themselves bewildered by the variety of techniques available for securing contributions from individuals.

But the nonprofits that overcome these obstacles will be rewarded in the long run with a growing base of individual supporters who outlast practically every other form of support and who may be even more responsive than institutional sources to pleas for certain types of programs that otherwise would languish. The most modest start at soliciting gifts from individuals may soon prove worthwhile and, ultimately, create a substantial level of support.

### **Encourage Donors To Become Members**

Membership is the most common method that groups use to encourage individual support. Membership sometimes carries certain rights within an organization, such as voting for officers and board members, but in most cases membership simply gives a donor a sense of belonging to an organization.

People who make donations without becoming members do not seem to feel that their gifts establish a mutually understood commitment, nor do they have any real incentive to repeat their gifts in the future — unless they are solicited again. However, people who join an organization tend to recognize that they have made a commitment.

Organizations that encourage individuals to become members benefit in other ways. A membership is generally perceived by both donor and institution as something to be renewed. This allows donors to project their annual membership as a regular part of their yearly budget while allowing the institution to project a specific amount of income from membership support (taking into account some attrition, of course).

Donors can be encouraged to become members at a level commensurate with their interest and means. A pattern of graduated perquisites ("perks") can give donors an incentive to increase their giving, and so be upgraded from one category of membership to another.

Some groups strive to make their membership invitations more attractive by offering concrete benefits to individuals who join. Even small groups can offer such perks as T-shirts, buttons, discounted admissions to special events and educational programs, and invitations to members'



parties. Actually, your imagination and knowledge of your own constituency can help you design a membership package of benefits to suit almost any organization.

Don't lose sight of the fact, however, that while tangible membership benefits serve as an incentive to give, and to give more, they rarely provide the primary stimulus. Individuals become members and make contributions for a variety of other, usually intangible, reasons. You can best decide if you need to sweeten your membership program with distinct benefits, for you know your constituents best.

If they feel a strong sense of kinship with your organization, your constituents will inevitably respond well to requests for funds, whether received through the mail or at their doorstep. When your donors are already quite loyal, you may not need to sweeten your membership offer to elicit the desired response. You can, however, still consider motivating your supporters to increase their level of support by offering specific benefits tied to different giving levels. For example, you can offer a silkscreen poster signed by the artist to all contributors who give, say, \$250 or more. If your organization's claim on the conscience and wallets of your public is less strong, then benefits can serve as a greater incentive to prompt individuals to respond to your requests.

If you're considering offering tangible benefits, be sure to stay within the guidelines given by the Federal Accounting Standards Board (FASB). If your perquisite has market value — that is, it could be sold outside your organization — then you must deduct the market value of the product from the donation, and only the remaining portion may be claimed as a deduction by the member. T-shirts, mugs, and tote bags bearing your organization's logo are not items that generally could be sold in a regular store, but art could be. These regulations are not entirely cut-and-dried; but they must be kept in mind.

### **Identify Likely Supporters**

The first step in tapping individuals for membership is to identify the particular constituencies most likely to be committed to your work — your board, volunteers, and even your staff members. This may seem offensive to some of these individuals, who already give generously of their time and feel that this sufficiently demonstrates their commitment. And in part, that's true. Still, there is nothing like a commitment of money to signal to others the importance donors ascribe to their organization. Since many of your board members, staff, and volunteers will, at some point, ask others to give to your organization, they will be able to say to a prospective member, "I joined because I felt that what we are doing is critically important. Won't you join, too?"

Now that you are ready to go beyond your own organization for support, your task becomes one of identifying and targeting which individuals are most likely to develop an interest in, and extend support to, your work. Undoubtedly, you will be able to develop some sense of how to identify these individuals and to decide what constituencies they might belong to. Brainstorm with other members of your organizing committee, board of directors, or fundraising committee.

If your organization already receives support from individuals through a variety of ways, start out by analyzing those supporters. List them by their common denominators, such as occupation: Are they teachers, social workers, lawyers, parents, activists, doctors, or computer programmers? Demographics: What is their age? Gender? Political affiliation? What distinguishes them? You are not trying to stereotype your supporters, only to differentiate them so that you know how you can reach them most effectively.

If you decided to undertake a direct mail campaign, you'll need to select lists of names to mail to. The more you know about your current members, the more readily you will be able to identify other kindred souls. For example, which magazines do most of your members subscribe to, and which newspapers do they read? This information will help you target your public relations efforts.

You may be surprised at who is giving you money and who is not. On the one hand, you may realize that a certain segment of the population you had thought would contribute has provided only minimal support; you should reach out to them. The opposite may also be true. For example, a shelter for battered women used to routinely delete men's names from direct mail lists they used until they examined their donor base and learned that 20 percent of their supporters were men. And the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City was very surprised to discover how many of their individual donors were lesbians.

### **Determine Ways To Approach Individuals for Support**

The sharper your sense of your current and prospective donors, the easier it will be to select the most productive way of approaching them — which brings us to the second step: brainstorming a variety of ways to ask individuals for support.

Let's take a hypothetical example to illustrate how an organization can identify its key individual supporters. Members of the core group of Art in Schools (AIS) asked themselves the following question: Which individuals are the most likely supporters of our work to help ensure that music, drama, and fine arts programs are included in schools' curricula?

As a result of their brainstorming, AIS found that they had many constituencies, owing to the community's deep concern about the quality of education. These included:

1. Core group members, especially artists. (including their families and friends)
2. Other politically aware or socially concerned artists
3. Socially concerned members of the arts-oriented public in their community
4. Art, music, and drama teachers
5. Parents, particularly those parents who had themselves enjoyed art as part of their education
6. Liberal arts professors, particularly those who teach undergraduates, who were dismayed at the lack of cultural awareness of many of the incoming freshmen
7. Teachers union members and officials
8. Members of dinner theaters, art clubs, book groups, and the like

Clearly, AIS has many potential constituencies to turn to for support. Let's list the possible ways each of these groups of prospective supporters can give support, or how to best ask them for support on a regular basis:

### **Constituencies**

All constituents can be asked to:

- Make personal contributions
- Become members through the annual fund
- Purchase raffle tickets, buttons, bumper stickers, etc.

1. Core group members
  - Attend and sell tickets to fundraising events
  - Identify and approach local business, government, federation, association, religious, and labor contacts to explore fundraising possibilities
  - Ask friends and other artists to donate works of art (or other related or appropriate items) for an annual auction
  - Arrange for exhibitions of student artwork
2. Other politically aware or socially concerned artists
  - Donate works of art for sale or auction
  - Design special art postcards as a source of earned income
  - Attend and sell tickets to fundraising events
  - Solicit their dealers and galleries
  - Make personal contributions, and become AIS members through annual fund
3. Socially concerned members of the arts-oriented public
  - Buy tickets to special events and purchase postcards
  - Host exhibitions of donated art in their homes to sell to other friends
4. Arts, music, and drama teachers
  - Organize house parties
  - Provide names of parents who might be concerned
  - Provide access to other teachers not in the arts who might give money
  - Attend events
  - Help promote the political message of AIS to students, school administrators, and other teachers
5. Parents
  - Provide access to PTA meetings and mailing lists
  - Post notices in newsletters
  - Host houseparties
  - Attend events
6. Liberal arts professors
  - Write articles for journals
  - Provide interviews to the media
  - Provide names of professors and alumni who might be sympathetic
7. Teachers members union and officials
  - Provide mailing lists for a direct mail solicitation
8. Members of dinner theaters, arts clubs, book groups, etc.
  - Provide names for direct mail appeals
  - Announce events at their performances

As this hypothetical case illustrates, there are many ways individuals can support a particular nonprofit undertaking. This group, just like your own, can expand its list by sharing it with others. In many cases, you will observe that the strongest members of your group will be people who cross several lines. For example, university professors who were also members of amateur theater groups, who had children in the public school system, and who were active in the PTA or their own union, are most likely to become committed AIS members and donors.

Furthermore, anyone who was identified as someone who could come to an event could also be approached by mail or phone. People who would donate art can be approached to donate cash, and people who buy art at auctions should be asked to become members of the group. If you do a thorough job in analyzing your constituency, you will soon be overwhelmed by possibilities and realize that you can raise funds successfully as long as you plan your work and work your plan.

## **Choose Your Approaches**

The third step is to choose from your lists those approaches or methods your core group wants to pursue. Ask your planning committee, which is responsible for your fundraising efforts, to suggest which approaches you should use — perhaps three or so to start with. Let's put this task before our hypothetical organization.

The core group of Art in Schools decided to focus on a campaign to sell specially designed art postcards to the memberships of other sympathetic organizations through direct mail; asking famous socially concerned artists known to them to donate works of art for an annual auction; and conducting a phonathon to ask teachers and professors to join. Note that these approaches include a mix of face-to-face solicitation, direct mail, special events, telephone solicitation, and earned income.

AIS chose this particular mix of approaches to individuals for several reasons. As artists, they realized that they had access to something of value to others — their work and the works of other artists. They also knew that their targeted constituencies were regularly solicited by other more established organizations. As a result, they decided to raise money by selling art postcards in lieu of simple solicitation for support. They were also capitalizing on the knowledge and skills of their core group. Some of their members had personal relationships with famous artists, and one member had experience in designing and marketing postcards for sale.

After discussing their plans with more resource people outside their immediate circles, including the local art auction house and several gallery owners, they were able to make reasonable estimates of projected income from these activities. They decided to drop the tour of artists' studios, for others did not find the concept very appealing. They discovered that their friends were not members of any existing human rights organizations, so they decided to institute a membership program. Since their friends included both struggling and successful artists, they developed a two-tiered membership program to enable both groups to give according to their means.

## **Estimate Your Proceeds**

The final step before the actual fundraising gets under way is to make some conservative estimates on how much each of the chosen efforts can net in a year. Art in Schools came up with the following summary:

AIS decided to list all the artists who joined as members and patrons, or who contributed their own work, in a full-page ad in the local arts newspaper each year to thank them publicly for their support.

## **Acknowledge Your Supporters**

Finally, you want to make sure that you recognize your supporters both privately and publicly for their contributions. Private acknowledgment should always begin with a personalized thank-you note. Further private recognition can take the form of mailing newsletters, "insiders' memos," annual reports, and other publications to donors to keep them posted about the work that they have made possible. Let them know regularly that your flourishing, ongoing work would be impossible without their help.

Public acknowledgment can be as simple as listing your new members (if they aren't too numerous) in a newsletter on an ongoing basis. If you offer different categories of membership, you can list supporters by the categories they have chosen. You've seen these lists of benefactors in the playbills of nonprofit theater groups and on the walls of buildings of nonprofit facilities. Just as a university recognizes major donors by naming buildings or other facilities after them, smaller nonprofits can express their appreciation to supporters through some form of public listing.

In choosing your approaches to individuals, remember to look for ways in which to ask them for money regularly and to provide them with opportunities for personal involvement in your work.

Since membership contributions do not preclude people from making additional gifts to an organization, you can solicit support from members more than once a year. If you can make a good case for needing financial help, you should certainly not hesitate to make an appeal to your membership. There is no magic rule about how many times a year you can ask the same people to give, but most groups find that they net a decent return without alienating donors when they ask three to four times a year. Some groups are able to ask up to twelve times, but most find that they lose money if they ask more than twelve times or less than three. Your membership may forget about you if you solicit less than three times a year.

The bottom line is, you can mail out as many appeals as will net consistent positive responses and cover more than their printing and mailing costs. Again, use your own judgment: How many solicitations would you be willing to receive? If each appeal had merit on its own, you would probably feel differently than if each appeal sounded exactly like the one preceding it. Beware of crying wolf more than once! You can go to your membership once for funds to meet a crisis or emergency, but success the second time around is unlikely.

## Meetings with Donors

Face-to-face meetings are a very effective way to get larger donations from funders, and to continue building relationships with people who are able to give your group financial support over time. If one or two members of your core group are able to have a well-planned meeting with a prospective donor in person, you have a good chance of not only receiving funding from them, but will also develop a new or deeper connection between a member of your community and your movement. Research shows that 50% of the people who are asked for money in a face-to-face meeting will give, the highest success rate of any of the major grassroots fundraising methods.

### Research possible donors

The first step in reaching out to potential major donors is research and planning. Sit down with your group and think about people you know who support your work and who may be willing to give a larger contribution. Brainstorm a list of names. Then work through that list and figure out who is most appropriate to do outreach to that person, and the best method of approach (letter, phone call, personal visit, etc).

If you have done fundraising events or received donations in the past, look over your list of donors. Have any of them given multiple times? Which of these givers do you think are invested enough in the movement to give a more substantial gift? Remember that those who are willing to give larger donations are not necessarily the most wealthy people in your community; they are people who believe strongly, or could believe strongly, in the work you're doing.

Once you've narrowed down your list of prospective major donors, do some research about those you will approach. Where do they work? Are they involved in other community groups? What connects them to your movement? Location, particular interests, close friends who are involved in the issue?

Depending on your relationship with the funder, it may be a good first step to write them a letter or make a phone call introducing yourself and the group, and asking for the opportunity to meet in person. Let them know that the purpose of the meeting is to talk with them about the work you're doing and to ask for their financial support; it's important to be up front about this so they know what to expect.

### Prepare your talking points

There are a number of things you can do to prepare for the meeting itself. It's a good idea to write down an agenda and the main points you'd like to make during the meeting. Include a specific amount of money you are going to ask for.

One suggested format for a donor meeting goes like this:

- Introduce yourself (or yourselves if there are two of you)
- Engage the donor in the conversation right away: ask them a little bit about themselves, what concerns them about this issue, their involvement in the community, etc.
- Present information about your group, your campaign, and your financial needs; be careful not to go on too long here. Shoot for presenting this information in 5-10 minutes.

- Ask for a specific contribution, and then *stop talking*. This can be the hardest part. “The best way you can support this movement is giving \$3,000 to underwriting the cost of our farmer outreach program.” And then close your mouth. There can be a strong temptation to keep going on and on after you’ve put the figure out there, but it’s best to just stop, let the donor think about it, and hear what they have to say.

You will also want to consider which written materials you’d like to bring along: a brochure about your group, a fact sheet about the issue, an information sheet about your current campaign, clippings of letters to the editor or other articles written about your group and your work in the local paper, etc.

### **Practice, practice, practice**

Once you’ve figured out what you want to say, spend plenty of time practicing. This is very important; getting comfortable with the words you will say to funders will help you go into these meetings with confidence.

Ask another group member to do a role-play with you; have them play the part of the donor, and you play yourself. Run through the whole meeting, from walking into the room to the “ask”. The most important piece to practice is your presentation of your work, your needs, and your ask. Then, when the role-play is over, have a conversation with the person who played the donor. Talk about how it felt for you to present your “ask,” find out what felt persuasive or ineffective to your partner, and try it again. Ideally, trade roles, so you play the donor and your partner plays the member of your group. This will help you see how it feels to be in the donor’s shoes.

### **Mentally prepare**

And finally, before a personal meeting with a donor, mentally prepare yourself to make your presentation. Remember that asking this person to contribute to your campaign is not about you. You are not there representing yourself. You are there representing this movement and this issue. Take your ego completely out of the equation. Tap into why you are passionate about this cause, and hold that in your heart when you go into the meeting. The more you are connected to why this issue is important to you, the more that will come across to the funder. The more confident you are in asking for funds, the more likely they will be to give. The less you feel like you’re being a burden on this person, and the more you feel like you’re giving them an opportunity to participate in something that is important and that can make positive change in your community, the more fun and successful this meeting will be.

### **During the meeting**

Now that you’ve practiced what you want to say, compiled good written materials to share, and mentally prepared, you’ve set yourself up for a successful meeting.

A few tips for during the meeting:

- Be on time. This will show your respect for the person you’re meeting with and a level of professionalism.
- Try and let the funder do the majority of the talking. While it can be tempting to talk a lot about your group, the issue, and your work, make sure that you give the donor plenty of opportunities to ask questions and talk about their concerns about genetic engineering.

- Don't expect the donor to cut you a check right then and there. They may need some time to think about what they're willing to give. Know that this is okay, and be sure to make it clear to them how they can give later (give them materials with your group address printed on it and point that out to them, or your website address if you have ways to donate on-line).
- Provide them with other opportunities to contribute. If they give or not, let them know how they can be more involved in the movement: up-coming meetings or events, action steps they can take, ask if they want to be added to your listserv or action alert list, etc. Remember that donors are not just there to provide you with money; they are an active part of this movement.

### **Follow-up**

To develop donors who are willing to give to your group over time, you must treat them respectfully. A general rule of thumb is that all donors should be thanked at least 7 times. Thank them when they offer to meet with you, when you arrive at the meeting, and before you leave. Right after the meeting, even if the person you met with did not choose to contribute, sit down and write a thank-you note to them for their time and put it in the mail. You can't be too grateful to people for their gifts to your campaign.

Stay in touch with your donors over time. Send them notes or emails when big things happen in your campaign; send them your newsletters; help them know that the victories you secure are their victories, too. If you only approach donors when you're asking for money, you are likely to lose their support. If you include them in your campaign outreach, you are more likely to continue receiving their financial support, and you will have gained another supportive community member who feels like a part of this movement.



## Fundraising Letters and Phone Calls

One good way to introduce your group and your campaign to potential donors is to write a letter and to follow your letter up with a phone call. You can send fundraising letters to friends, family members, individuals you've identified as potential funders, or local businesses. You can write letters either requesting financial contributions or "in-kind" donations, like food from your local co-op for a public education event, or printing from a local copy shop.

Spend time with your group thinking about different individuals and businesses you can reach out to for funding and in-kind support. Decide who in the group is best to do outreach to those people or companies, and the best way to approach them. Personal meetings, phone calls, or letters are some of the options to consider.

If letter-writing is the best method of approach, be sure to start the letter off in a way that makes it clear that this is an appeal for support. If you are asking for money, state a specific dollar amount early in the letter. If you are asking for in-kind support, be clear about exactly what you're seeking. Make your letters no more than 2 pages long; include information about genetic engineering, what your group is doing to address these hazards, and why their support is important.

Most letters will not be enough to secure funding. To vastly improve your chances of receiving donations, follow up your letter with a phone call a week or so after the recipient has received the letter. The phone call will help be sure they received the letter, give you a chance to answer any questions, and find out if they are interested in giving. It can be helpful to write out what you want to say when you make your follow-up calls, either in bullet form or in script form. Attached is a sample "phone rap" for following up the Cal GE-Free fundraising request letter to natural food stores.

As with all fundraising efforts, always follow up your outreach with a thank-you. If a person or business donates, write send them a thank-you note right away. Ask if they'd like to be included in your listserv or mailing list. Keep them posted with campaign victories. Make sure to include them in your movement in as many ways you can.

## Special Events

Special events are often support-boosters as much as fund-raisers. They are a lot of work, and often result in relatively little money, but they're a lot of fun, and they can raise community awareness about genetic engineering while bringing more people into the movement.

Fundraising events can be major productions (auctions, benefit concerts, etc) or they can be smaller affairs (like house parties). A few ideas of some fundraising events your group can do:

- **Organize a house party:**
  - Invite a group of friends, colleagues, or neighbors to your home to educate them about the issue and ask them to donate to your group
  - This is a great way to find new volunteers, expand your base of support, and raise money
- **Ask group members, friends, and supporters to host house parties:**
  - This is a good way to help supporters and group members feel more invested in the group and in your fundraising efforts
  - Work with hosts to brainstorm guests to invite (co-workers, colleagues in community groups, fellow parents, neighbors, etc)
  - Provide sample invitation, group materials for them to have on hand, and sample thank-you cards to send to guests after the event
  - Remind them when inviting guests to let invitees know this is a fundraising event
  - If appropriate, offer to have someone in the group to come and give a talk to guests, moderate questions and answers, and explain about the group and your campaigns
- **Organize a benefit dinner**
  - Ask local farmers to donate GMO-free ingredients to a benefit dinner
  - Ask local chefs to prepare special dishes with these local ingredients
  - Advertise the event as an opportunity for community members to support local, GMO-free agriculture
- **Organize a benefit concert**
  - Ask a local band or musician to donate their time
  - Sometimes local concert venues will also be willing to sponsor a concert as a benefit for your group, sharing the proceeds made at the door with your organization
- **Organize a benefit auction**
  - Ask local businesses to donate items to an auction
  - Invite community members to attend
  - Have music playing, refreshments on hand
  - Find a local person to be an auctioneer and sell 10 or fewer bigger-ticket items; if you have other items to auction off, sell them in silent-auction style

Because house parties can be particularly effective and not too much work to pull together, we've included further information on organizing them in this section. If you choose to do a bigger fundraising event, like an auction or a concert, check in with other non-profits and community groups in your area who have done similar events. Find out what venues they used, how they advertised, where they sold tickets, and any other advice they have to share.

No matter what activity you do, remember to thank everyone who donates to your campaign, and keep track of your funders. Develop a good system for recording who has given to your group,

how much they gave, and where they donated (at a public education event, a fundraising event, on your website, etc). This will help you stay in touch with donors, determine who you will approach for bigger contributions, and get a sense of which modes of fundraising are working best for your group.

## Organize a House Party

House parties are a great local fundraising tool. By bringing people in the community together in small, social gatherings to learn about genetic engineering and how they can get involved, you will help build new relationships in the community, raise awareness about this issue and visibility for your group, and find solid sources of local financial support for your work.

Money is only one asset the guests will bring with them. They also carry their own ideas and skills, have contacts with other groups of people at home and at work that could support the campaign, and carry new energy that you can bring to your group. Remember that having the house party and sharing information about genetic engineering is a successful event in and of itself, regardless of the amount of money raised. The money raised can only make the event MORE successful.

Thank you to the Organic Consumers Association and Californians for GE-Free Agriculture for developing many of these materials about hosting house parties.

### House Party Tips

#### *Invitations*

Generally, only one out of four people who are invited to your house party will attend. The response rate is even lower (one of 10) if you use email only. The most effective way to get good attendance is to mail out invitations, and follow up a week later with a personal phone call.

Five to seven days before the party, make a second reminder call. It will greatly increase the attendance at your party.

- Be sure your invitations include the date, time, & address of the party. Include good directions to your house (a map is very useful).
- Include your phone number and email.
- Ask your guests to RSVP so you have an idea of how many people are coming.
- Be direct in mentioning that the house party is both for educational purposes and for fundraising this in your invitation so that people know they will be asked to contribute to your group/campaign.

#### *Preparations*

- Consider asking a few friends or other group members to help you plan. You can even list them as a “host committee” on the invitation to attract more people who will recognize the names.
- Send invitations in advance & ask for an RSVP.

#### *Set a fundraising goal*

- Set a goal for how much money you would like to raise at the event (\$100, \$200, \$500, etc.), and don't be afraid to ask for it!

#### *Being Creative*

- Consider making your house party an organic or GE-Free dinner or brunch; it can be an organic wine-tasting, organic chocolate-tasting, tea party, etc.
- The event can be in your home, or at a church or other community setting.

### *Cutting Costs*

- Get organic food, drinks, etc. donated. You'd be surprised how many companies (restaurants, coops, natural food stores, etc) are willing to help.
- Have a 100% organic or GE-Free potluck with guests bringing the food.

### **Sample Planning Timeline for a House Party/Fundraiser**

To help you ensure a successful event, we've provided a sample timetable for a small to medium-sized house party/fundraiser. Keep in mind that depending on when your event takes place, its size and its type, your timetable will be different.

#### *What you need:*

- Name tags and markers
- A clipboard or two and pens for guests to sign in
- Group/campaign materials and genetic engineering fact sheets
- Items to sell: books, movies, group t-shirts, bumperstickers, etc.
- If showing a movie, a copy of the film and the equipment for screening (TV/VCR/DVD player)

#### *When you decide you want to host an event:*

- Determine the where, when, who, why and what of the event.
- Decide what format you want your party to take: do you want to do a presentation about the issue and your campaigns, show a film, or invite a guest speaker?
- Write out an action plan and a to-do list.
- Create invitation list.
- Arrange for a friend to help or develop a committee.

#### *Two weeks before:*

- Mail invitations with directions and a request for RSVP.
- Reserve any necessary equipment.
- If showing a film, secure a copy of the DVD/VHS.
- Prepare your own presentation or remarks.

#### *One to two weeks before:*

- Plan the meal or refreshments.
- Purchase or secure donations for beverages and supplies.
- Call invitees you haven't heard back from yet and encourage them to come.

#### *One to five days before:*

- Call all invitees who said they wanted to come and remind them about the event and be sure they have directions.
- Obtain rented or borrowed equipment.
- Prepare make-ahead food.
- Set up the beverage area.
- Practice your statements/presentation

#### *Day of event: The Party!*

- Welcome guests, allow guests to mingle for 15-30 minutes.
- Welcome and Introductions (10-20 minutes).
- Begin the presentation

- If you or another group member are describing the issue:
  - Overview of genetic engineering and the threats of GE in agriculture
  - Place the local campaign in statewide or national context
  - Describe the local campaign using your primary messages
- If you are showing a film:
  - We suggest you show *The Future of Food*, either the whole film (90 minutes) or selected segments.
- Guests' reactions/Q&A (10-20 minutes).
- Call to Action (5 minutes):
  - Describe ways people can stay involved; emphasis on donations, but also volunteer needs
  - Make sure you've brought materials with you that can help people take action right then and there (your own group petition, talking points on your campaign for letters to the editor or to your target decision maker, etc)
  - Ask guests to sign up to become house party hosts, to volunteer, or to discuss gaining endorsements for your work from community groups, businesses, or organizations they are involved with
- Make sure everyone has signed in—pass around sign in sheet again.
- Thank guests for coming, wrap up (5 minutes).

#### *Follow Up*

- Send thank you cards to all guests
- Talk with your group about how the process went, and refine for future house parties
- Add all attendees to your database of supporters
- Touch base with guests who expressed interest in hosting their own house parties

*Drawn from the Organic Consumers Association [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org) and Californians for GE-Free Agriculture [www.calgefrees.org](http://www.calgefrees.org)*

## Sample House Party Invitation

You can print these on sturdy 8-1/2"x11" paper divided in half and mail them with a response card printed on 8-1/2 "x11" paper divided in thirds.

*Please join us for an educational and hopeful presentation.*

Jane Smith invites you to a house party sponsored by **GMO-Free Kauai**. We will be screening the award-winning film, *The Future of Food*, discussing the local movement to resist genetic engineering, and suggesting ways you can support the movement for a GMO-Free Kauai.

*Where:* Jane Smith's home, 81 Kamookoa Road in Kilauea (please call 828-xxxx for directions)

*When:* Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> 7-9pm

*What:* 15-20 people, organic food and beverages, a 30 minute clip of the film, discussion of the local GMO-free movement, and a request for contributions to support our campaigns.

Hawaii is the world capital for the open-air testing of experimental genetically engineered crops. GMO-Free Kauai is a community organization working to move Kauai agriculture away from genetic engineering and towards sustainable, locally-based farming practices that are safe for our health, environment, and economy. Come learn more about this important issue and ways you can support GMO-Free Kauai's work to oppose genetic engineering and promote local agriculture.

*Please RSVP to Jane by August 14<sup>th</sup> at 651-9603*

### Response Card

**Please RSVP by August 14<sup>th</sup>**

**I/we will attend the gathering at Jane Smith's home on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and will bring  
\_\_\_ guests.**

**I/we are unable to come, but would like to be invited to future gatherings to learn  
about GMO-Free Kauai.**

**Please add us to your mailing list.**

## Sample House Party Thank You Note

Everyone who donates to your campaign should receive a thank-you note, to let them know their contribution is appreciated and important. Try and send thank-yous to everyone who attends a house party, but be extra sure to send them to donors.

Here is a sample letter, to be sent by the party host to donors who came to the party. Try and send these out no more than a week after the event, and ideally write them out by hand. Thanking your donors is an important step in building a relationship with people who contribute and forming a solid foundation of donors for your group.

\*\*

Dear [first name],

Thank you for attending our house party last week and for your generous donation to GMO-Free Kauai.

A grassroots campaign like ours, with thousands of volunteers, relies on donors like you. Working together on Kauai, we will be able to stop genetic engineering and move local agriculture back towards self-sufficiency and sustainability for our island environment and for our health.

We hope you will continue to support GMO-Free by volunteering and spreading the word about this issue to your family and friends.

If you need further information regarding volunteering or hosting a house party, please call GMO-Free Kauai at 651-9603.

Looking forward to working with you in the GMO-free movement!

Sincerely,

Jane Smith



## Organize a Benefit Concert

Benefit concerts can be a whole lot of fun and can help bring many new people in your community to this movement. You can find new volunteers, build visibility for your group, and raise some money while you're at it. Concerts can also be a celebration for group members, a reward for their hard work, and they give new sectors of the community (musicians, music-lovers, businesses, etc) a chance to get involved in your campaign in their own way.

That said, organizing a concert is a lot of work in itself. You'll need a committee of volunteers who are prepared to devote a fair amount of time to the event: a concert coordinator, a band liason, someone in charge of producing flyers, someone in charge of organizing an information/action table, someone in charge of publicity, someone in charge of collecting donations, etc etc. Only organize a big event like this if your group has plenty of energy and volunteers, and if it fits in with your group strategy to boost your publicity and bring in new volunteers at this stage in your work.

Many of the elements of organizing a concert are used to organize benefit auctions, dinners, and other big community events.

### Prepare for the concert

- If you don't already have a fundraising team in your group, form a sub-committee to work on planning the concert
- Ask a good local musician, a band, or a few bands to donate their time and play a concert for your group
- Find a concert venue (many towns have public venues you can rent inexpensively or for free; call your town government, let them know you're a part of a community/non-profit group, and ask for venue suggestions)
- Decide how much to charge for tickets
- Publicize like crazy:
  - design eye-catching flyers and post them all around town
  - hand out invitations
  - post invitations on email listserves
  - contact all your members/supporters with a phone call, mailing, or an email and let them know about the event
  - post event details on your website
  - call into local radio shows and announce the event
  - get it advertised in the "community calendar" section of your local newspaper(s), radio station(s), and TV station(s)
- Make sure you have enough informational flyers, fact sheets, volunteer sign-up sheets, and petitions to have at the concert
- Pick an action or multiple actions that people can do at the event
  - Possible actions include letter-writing, postcards to sign, petitions to sign, etc.
  - if you don't have any current actions needed for your campaign, check [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org) or [www.centerforfoodsafety.org](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org) for current national action alerts on genetic engineering
  - make sure you have all the materials needed for people to do those actions (pens, paper, clipboards, etc)
- Plan a follow-up event that attendees can come to

- Help carry on the momentum of the fundraiser by giving attendees an opportunity to get more involved in the campaign. Some possible follow-up events:
  - A group meeting open to the public
  - A guest speaker
  - A film showing
  - An action (rally, demonstration, etc)
  - A letter-writing event
  - Make small flyers to give to all attendees about the follow-up event
- Decide who from your group will be the “emcee”
- Decide who will be liason with the musician/band
  - Make sure they have the sound equipment they need
  - Make sure your donor-musicians know who to contact with questions

*Optional:*

- Ask local businesses for donations of food to have at the event
- Ask local businesses for donations of prizes you can raffle off at the event
  - Sell raffle tickets at the door

**At the concert:**

- Set up an informational/action table at the venue
  - Lay out articles, fact sheets, etc.
  - Have information about your group and how people can get involved
  - Materials for the action people can take that night
- Have musician liason ready to welcome musician(s) and make sure that the musician/band’s equipment is ready to go
- Decorate venue
  - If you have a group banner, hang it up in a visible place
- Have some people stationed at the door to collect/sell tickets
- Have some people at the information/action table ready to talk with guests
- Have emcee introduce the event:
  - Welcome attendees
  - Briefly explain about the issue
  - Briefly explain about your group
  - Let guests know where they can pick up more information, make further donations, and what actions they can take that night
  - Tell them about the follow-up event
  - Introduce the musician/band
- At the end of the concert, have emcee:
  - Thank the musician/band
  - Thank guests for coming
  - Remind them to take materials on the way out
  - Remind them about the follow-up event (a public meeting, a speaker, film showing, etc)

**After the concert:**

- Send thank you cards to all musicians and businesses who donated to the event
- Call people who signed up to volunteer at the concert; introduce yourself, find out what they’re interested in, invite them to the follow-up event
- Hold the follow-up event
- Celebrate with the concert planning team: go out for a team dinner, go dancing, do something to recognize the hard work put into the event and the success of the

event (raising money is just one goal; building visibility, finding new volunteers, and educating your community are other things events like this can do)

## Chapter 5: Local Resolutions

### Introduction

As the movement to resist genetic engineering in the United States has progressed, more and more Americans have begun looking to the very local level to make the changes they seek on this issue. In recent years, resolutions opposing--and ordinances banning--GMOs from cities, towns, counties, and tribal lands have been passed in communities across the US.

These efforts have had a profound effect on increasing local awareness about the hazards of genetic engineering, garnering media attention to the issue, and sending a message nationally and internationally that here in the home country of many of the world's biggest genetic engineering corporations, a resistance movement is growing.

This chapter of the toolkit provides materials for people looking to pass town or county level resolutions to resist genetic engineering. These materials are largely drawn from efforts in the state of Vermont, where over 100 towns have passed resolutions opposing GMOs, and we thank the Institute for Social Ecology's Biotechnology Project for allowing GEAN to share these resources with you. There is also a fact sheet included about GE-free zones you can use to spread the word and build support for your campaign, and a petition you can use to help build support among local farmers for your resolution.

While this chapter focuses primarily on passing town and county resolutions, you can also opt to focus on an even more local level—you can pass resolutions in your school, your place of worship, or in clubs you belong to. This can help you quantify the support for your efforts in the community for policy makers, the media and others, and can be used to set tangible goals for your outreach and education work. For instance, you can set a goal to have 25 local organizations and businesses pass resolutions opposing GE in the coming year. Included in this chapter is a document activists in Hawaii are using to move local organizations and businesses to pass resolutions opposing genetic engineering that you can adopt for your own community.

If you are interested in passing a town, county, or local-level resolution on genetic engineering, please contact GEAN for strategy advice and media support at [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org) or the Institute for Social Ecology's Biotechnology Project at [biotech@social-ecology.org](mailto:biotech@social-ecology.org) or by calling 802-454-7138.

## ***How to bring the Town-to-Town Campaign to your town***

*By Brian Tokar, Institute for Social Ecology's Biotechnology Project*

The Town-to-Town Campaign on Genetic Engineering has played a crucial role in invigorating local organizing and education around GMOs throughout Vermont. Some of the lessons of our campaign are applicable to any local situation, whereas other aspects would need to be modified considerably outside of those northern New England states that have an intact Town Meeting tradition. Even in New England, we've found that different rules and procedures apply in different states. In Maine, for example, the town selectboard needs to approve the resolution wording and hold a public hearing before a resolution can be added to the Town Meeting agenda. Thus the process takes quite a bit longer than in other states.

In states that don't have a tradition of Town Meeting, the process usually involves bringing a resolution to your town or city council or county commission. In some states, such as California, counties can hold referenda on issues, and proposed measures to counter the threat of GMOs can be taken directly to the voters. But in most locales, the only available procedure is to go through an elected governing body. Find out as much as you can beforehand about what kinds of issues have been addressed by your town or city council, and who some of the most sympathetic council members are. They will be able to help you navigate the process, and make sure there will at least be a public hearing on your proposal before it is voted on.

In any case, be sure to give yourself enough time to see the whole process through, and to maximize the educational and media opportunities raised by bringing an issue before the town. Seek creative, colorful ways to make the issue visible in your community, and get people talking about it. Several organizations around the country, including GEAN and the ISE, are able to offer helpful hints and ideas. Let us know how it's going, and how we can help!



Institute for Social Ecology Biotechnology Project  
1118 Maple Hill Rd.  
Plainfield, VT 05667 USA  
802-454-7138  
biotech@social-ecology.org

## Campaign Steps

Organizing to pass a resolution in your local jurisdiction can be as engaging or as simple as time and energy allows. Please adapt these steps to your own particular situation:

- **Contact the Genetic Engineering Action Network** (563-432-6735, [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org)) to see who else in your area has been active on GE issues. Start building a network of people to work with you. You may want to consult with people who have organized around other issues in your community and get advice from them.
- **Consult your Town or City Clerk** to find out what your local rules are on bringing an issue to the town/city government or to a town meeting. If you have town meetings, find out how many signatures you need to get an issue onto your town warning (agenda). Also confirm the deadline by which signatures need to be submitted. If you don't have town meetings, find out what the necessary steps are to get the town/city council or board of supervisors to consider a resolution. You may be able to find a sponsor on the council to bring your resolution forward, or you may be able to put something on the agenda by collecting a certain number of signatures of people in the community. Some cities and towns have a more complex process, whereby the wording of citizen petitions needs to be pre-approved or discussed in a public hearing in order for the petitions to be valid. Make sure you know all the rules that apply in your town.

Included in this section is a sample petition form you could use to gather signatures, with places for printed name, street address, signature, and optional information from those who want to help out.

- **Choose your resolution wording.** This toolkit offers a variety of examples and more are available from GEAN or from the Institute for Social Ecology office (802-454-7138, [biotech@social-ecology.org](mailto:biotech@social-ecology.org)) [without the “-” they’ll land at the site of an obscure software company!]. Most of these are examples of non-binding city or town resolutions that advocate for restrictions on the growing and/or selling of genetically engineered organisms, which is the campaign we outline in this section. If you are interested in pursuing a binding town/city ordinance on GMOs, please contact GEAN. There is a different set of strategy considerations to take into account when advocating for an ordinance, including how your city could deal with enforcement issues and possible state laws that prevent towns from taking binding action on this issue. Resolutions are likely much easier to pass through your town/city government than a binding ordinance.
- **Hold a community meeting** to plan your effort. Try to attract a diversity of participants, including local farmers, perhaps by holding a potluck dinner. It may be appropriate to arrange visits to local farms to discuss the issues. Please see “How to Develop a Local Group” for more ideas about organizing an initial campaign meeting.
- **Educate yourself and others** about genetic engineering. Assemble a packet of information that you can hand out to people when you’re gathering signatures. Feel free to draw from the materials in this toolkit (please see the “Resources” section for ideas of outreach materials to use), and contact GEAN or the ISE for more.
- **Get advice from trusted sources.** It may be a good idea to talk with supportive members of your city/town/county council or select board before collecting signatures to be sure you understand the process you need to follow to get your resolution considered, and to ensure that the petitions you’re using have all the information they need on them. Schedule a meeting with

someone on the council/board who you think will be friendly to your cause, and talk about your plan with them.

Also, think of which other groups in your community have presented resolutions to the town. Schedule meetings with them to find out about their experience, and to hear their advice about running successful campaigns to pass resolutions in your community.

- **Start gathering signatures.** You may need to collect a certain number of signatures to get your resolution on the town meeting agenda or to have the resolution considered by the council/supervisors/selectboard. Even if you don't need a set number of signatures for your resolution to be considered, it is a good idea to collect petition signatures to show the degree of support for your resolution in the community. This will also maximize the number of people you will educate about the hazards of genetic engineering in the course of your town resolution campaign.

It is important to get help with signature collection. Seek out supporters of your effort to help with signature gathering; consider approaching existing farmer or environmental groups for help, or talking with friendly local businesses or natural food stores to help secure support for your signature collecting efforts.

- **Map out the best locations for petitioning** in your town, such as local co-ops and other food stores, the Post Office (where feasible), coffee shops, and other well-traveled public places. Petitions posted on bulletin boards are helpful to start, but it usually requires a more person-to-person approach to obtain a strong number of signatures. Get as much help as you can.

- **Make sure you and people you know are registered to vote** in your city or town. Have voter registration materials readily available.

- **Practice speaking** about GMO issues. You will likely have an opportunity to testify before the council/board or to speak at the town meeting on this issue. Get a group of friends together and practice what you want to say. Also, find out if there is a time limit for how long you can speak during the meeting, and practice getting your comments to fit in that timeframe.

## **Prepare for the meeting**

After you have received confirmation that your resolution will be discussed by your town, city, or placed on the ballot, the excitement has only just begun!

The weeks leading up to a vote or Town Meeting Day present unparalleled opportunities for public outreach, education and discussion about genetic engineering and how it affects us and our communities. Please consider the following ideas for raising public awareness as you prepare to present your resolution in public.

- **Call your friends** or interested petition signers to remind them to attend any public meetings where your resolution will be discussed. Encourage the most talkative and articulate ones to help you present the resolution or testify at the meeting. When the time comes, it will be nice to know that there are other people on your side who are prepared to speak in favor of the resolution.

- **Communicate with farmers.** It is helpful to inform local farmers (organic and conventional) of the resolution before it is heard at the town meeting, whether or not you think they will support it. This way you are able to present the issues in your own words, and also give

farmers the opportunity to discuss their questions, concerns, or support. Depending on your comfort level, you can approach farmers in your community in a number of ways:

- call them to talk about the resolution;
- arrange an in-person visit;
- write them a letter describing the resolution, and soliciting their suggestions;
- organize a meeting for farmers in your town to discuss the resolution and its implications with your organizing group and with each other.

You can also develop a special list of farmers who sign on to support the resolution, and present that at the meeting. Because farmers are so directly impacted by genetic engineering, it is important to solicit their support and to help their voices be heard by elected officials and your community members.

• **Collect letters of support** from sympathetic farmers and other influential people. Consider who in your town influences other community members and the people on your town council/selectboard. Ask these people to write or sign letters of support that you can bring to public meetings. If they are outspoken about their views, ask them to testify or help present the resolution at the meeting.

• **Write letters to the editor.** Local newspapers provide a great forum for introducing your resolution and the issues around genetic engineering to a wider public. Encourage supporters to submit letters to all of the daily and weekly papers in your area. Send copies of letters and articles to GEAN.

• **Hold a public forum.** One of the best ways to educate people and alert them to your resolution is to organize a public event. Many towns across the US have held panel discussions and film showings; both are good vehicles for organizing and for presenting the many ways that GE impacts our lives. Present your opinions openly and comfortably and invite discussion on the issue. Make sure that people know about the resolution or article that is coming up for a vote, and how they can get involved with the organizing process. In the “Resources” section of this toolkit is a list of films you could show at a forum, and speakers you could invite to give a public talk. Also, look over the “House Party” section in the fundraising piece of the toolkit for suggestions on holding a smaller gathering at your home. If you’d rather not organize an event, post information on genetic engineering in central public places (general stores, post offices, natural food stores, health clinics and food co-ops).

• **Notify local media.** Seek out potentially sympathetic reporters and pitch them the story. Or send press releases to your local newspapers, radio stations, and other local media. A press release can include a brief description of the resolution, a sentence about your connection to regional and national efforts, and some concise statements about the problems with genetic engineering (a sample press release is included in this section). If you write your press release in the form of a news story, some of the smaller local papers may choose to print it as submitted. Local talk shows and radio news programs often have large and active listenerships. Be careful about planning your media strategy so as not to prematurely tip off potential opponents who could invest large sums of money to defeat your resolution.

• **Develop a strategy** to deal with potential opposition. Be prepared for people opposing your article or resolution at your Town Meeting or public forum. Before any decision-making meeting, in addition to familiarizing yourself with information to counter popular arguments, you may want to consider compromise positions and alternative wordings (to make the resolution shorter, change potentially contentious wording, etc.) Have this language ready before town



meeting so that you can quickly add it to the debate on the floor in the interest of passing something, rather than nothing at all, while remaining confident that 90 percent of GE resolutions in Vermont to date have passed.

## More campaign steps

### After your town's vote . . .

- **Call GEAN** at 563-432-6735 or email [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org). Please let us know what happened in your town. Did your resolution pass? Exactly what wording passed? Did your town seem generally supportive of the resolution? If it was voted down, do you understand why? Do you have thoughts on changing the wording, or the process for next year? What would have helped you in your efforts? What advice would you give others working in your region? Which groups helped you to bring the resolution to vote?

- **Media!** You will greatly increase the impact your town resolution has on the future of genetic engineering by sharing your story with others through the media. Contact your local reporters, newspapers, and radio stations and let them know what happened in your town. Ask them to write an article, or offer to write one yourself. Send a letter to the editor and encourage other people to do the same. Send your press release to GEAN and ask us to use the Green Media Toolshed media service to help you get media coverage. Your success will help activists in other cities and towns pass their own local resolutions, and the media coverage of your victory will help increase the pressure on local, state, and federal elected officials to pay attention to citizens' concerns about genetic engineering and to pass progressive legislation on GMOs.

- **Write to your legislators**, state and federal. Tell them about the resolution that your town passed and urge them to take action. Although the federal and state governments have largely ignored the issue of biotechnology, municipalities passing resolutions are helping to wake them up!

- **Help develop structures for ongoing organizing.** Passing a town resolution can be a powerful first step in developing a local group to resist genetic engineering over the long-run. Once you have this victory under your belt, you can move on to work on other strategies in this toolkit or on another campaign. Your resolution may also inspire you to connect with organizers in other communities in your state, to share your experience and offer to provide organizing advice and support for their local efforts.

- **Monitor follow-up and implementation** of your resolution or ordinance. Keep a close watch on any actions taken by city or town officials following your vote. Make sure all steps that were agreed to by voters are actually carried out. If your resolution mandated notifying elected representatives of your town's position, offer to help town officials draft this letter and assemble helpful supporting materials. If there was opposition in your community to the resolution, find out more about it. Continuing to talk with farmers is an important part of on-going work.

## Sample Resolutions

Here are nine sample resolutions that have passed in cities and towns. Currently, over 100 similar resolutions have passed in towns and cities in the US. As shown below, resolutions can be very short and sweet or long and substantial.

### **Boston, Massachusetts, March, 2000**

#### RESOLUTION OF COUNCILOR MAURA HENNIGAN

WHEREAS: Genetically engineered foods have never been proven safe, nor are genetically engineered foods tested by any federal agency as the Food and Drug Administration requires only that the companies engineering these foods state, on the "honor system" that the foods are safe with no further testing required; and

WHEREAS: Cornell University researcher, John Losey, and other researches indicated in repeated tests that the larvae from Monarch Butterflies were dying at an alarming rate from toxic pollen generated from the genetically engineered corn near their feeding sites; and

WHEREAS: A class action lawsuit has been brought against the Food and Drug Administration by some of the nation's most prominent anti-trust lawyers for rushing these novel, unpredictable and untested food technology products to the market; and

WHEREAS: Numerous bioengineers and related distinguished scientists have gone on record stating this technology clearly is different from traditional breeding methods and is highly probable to exhibit a host of undesirable health and environmental risk factors as well as great potential for negative cascade effects in the genetic cross-pollination of beneficial plants, insects and other fragile ecosystems directly linked to the breeding of this novel experimental food production technology; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council, in meeting assembled, urges the Federal Government to require labeling of genetically manipulated foods and further urges a moratorium on the production of any more of these foods until acceptable testing systems are in place; and Be It Further

RESOLVED: That March 26, 2000 be declared YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT DAY in the City of Boston.

### **Austin, Texas, May, 2000**

WHEREAS: Genetically engineered foods have never been proven safe, nor are genetically engineered foods tested by any federal agency as the Food and Drug Administration requires only that the companies engineering these foods state, on the "honor system" that the foods are safe with no further testing required; and

WHEREAS: Cornell University researcher, John Losey, and other researchers indicated in repeated tests that the larvae from Monarch Butterflies were dying at an alarming rate from toxic pollen generated from the genetically engineered corn near their feeding sites; and

WHEREAS: A class action lawsuit has been brought against the Food and

Drug Administration by some of the nation's most prominent anti-trust lawyers for rushing these novel, unpredictable and untested food technology products to the market; and

WHEREAS: Numerous bioengineers and related distinguished scientists have gone on record stating this technology clearly is different from traditional breeding methods and is highly probable to exhibit a host of undesirable health and environmental risk factors as well as great potential for negative cascade effects in the genetic cross-pollination of beneficial plants, insects and other fragile ecosystems directly linked to the breeding of this novel experimental food production technology;

Now, Therefore Be It RESOLVED:

That the Austin City Council, in meeting assembled, urges the Federal Government to require labeling of genetically manipulated foods and further urges a moratorium on the production of any more of these foods until acceptable testing systems are in place;

Be It Further RESOLVED:

That the Austin City Council endorses House Bills 3883 named the "Genetically Engineered Food Safety Act," and 3377 and its companion Senate Bill 2080 named the "Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act."

### **San Francisco, California, July, 2000**

WHEREAS, consumers of any food product have the right to complete confidence and thorough knowledge of any ingredient in their food or other products; and

WHEREAS, genetically engineered (g.e.) foods have not been adequately tested by any federal agency for long-term impacts on human health or the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) suggests only that companies engineering foods state that g.e. foods are safe, but requires no further testing; and

WHEREAS, competent scientific researchers have suggested that g.e. foods, seed, and other products could pose risks to the environment, including damaged soil ecology, harmful effects to wildlife, increased use of farm chemicals, and other potential effects; and

WHEREAS, scientists and other researchers have indicated that g.e. crops may harm beneficial insect species, such as Monarch butterflies, as well as threatened and endangered insect species; and

WHEREAS, g.e. materials could have serious impacts on levels of toxins in food, antibiotic resistance, cancer, immuno-suppression, and allergic reactions, and may be particularly threatening to children and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, in the event of a serious health impact and an ensuing lawsuit, the federal government has not yet assigned liability to the commercial developers of G.E. foods; and

WHEREAS, G.E. foods are growing in prevalence in the United States and around the world, without sufficient regulation or research; and

WHEREAS, many community organizations, representing farmers and sustainable agriculture interests, as well as consumers, environmentalists and others, have argued for a moratorium on G.E. foods, and some countries have effectively—if not officially—instituted a moratorium, including France, Italy, Denmark, Greece, and Luxembourg; and

WHEREAS, the European Commission has agreed on terms to guarantee the labeling of G.E. foods; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley's Unified School District's Food Policy, adopted in August of 1999, establishes a goal of serving organic foods to the maximum extent possible in Berkeley's schools; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley's Board of Education and the Berkeley City Council have approved resolutions to urge the federal government to ban the growing, disseminating, and marketing of products that contain G.E. organisms until they have been proven safe for human consumption and for the environment; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment hereby requests the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to write a letter to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) stating that all G.E. foods should be labeled clearly, that all G.E. material should be thoroughly researched and regulated, that liability should be assigned to the commercial developers of G.E. foods, and that, until there has been a violation of this Ordinance, in addition to confiscation and destruction of any organisms that are found to be in violation, the Agricultural Commissioner shall impose a monetary penalty on the person, firm, or corporation responsible for the violation, taking into account the amount of damage, any potential damage, and the willfulness of the person, firm, or corporation. these materials are proven safe, that the FDA, the EPA, and the USDA should establish a moratorium on these products; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to request that all City departments and agencies, including those in City Hall, give preference to certified organic food vendors during any and all contract negotiations; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to require that, by January of 2001, special events held by City departments and City agencies, including those in City Hall, give preference to caterers that avoid G.E. ingredients and use certified organic foods; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to urge the San Francisco Unified School District to serve certified organic lunches; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to request that the Department of Consumer Assurance provide educational materials about G.E. foods to grocers and where possible to the general public in San Francisco.

### **Hartford, Hartland, Royalton, West Windsor, and Sharon, Vermont, March 2003**

Whereas many foods that we eat have been genetically engineered or contain genetically engineered ingredients, and

Whereas genetically engineered foods are fundamentally different from conventional foods in that they have foreign DNA from bacteria, viruses, animals or plants spliced into their genetic codes, and

Whereas such foods can have unpredictable effects on human health, and

Whereas consumers cannot avoid buying such foods since no foods in this country are labeled for genetically engineered content, and

Whereas the principles of democratic society require being able to make informed choices,

Therefore the residents of the town of Hartford vote to call upon our legislative and congressional representatives to work toward the mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered food products.

### **Middlesex and Hyde Park, Vermont, March 2004**

Whereas genetically engineered (GE) foods and crops are likely to cause long-term damage to the environment, threaten the integrity of rural, family farm economies, and can have serious impacts on human health;

Whereas GE crops have been found to contaminate other crops through cross-pollination, and are stringently regulated in more than 30 countries; and

Whereas citizens throughout Vermont and the United States are taking steps to address concerns about GE foods at the state and local levels because Congress and federal regulatory agencies have failed to adequately address this issue, shall the residents of Middlesex:

1. Call upon our elected officials, including Vermont legislators, Congressional representatives and U.S. senators, to support the mandatory labeling by manufacturers and processors of all genetically engineered food and seeds, as well as a moratorium on the further growing of GE crops until there is credible and independent scientific evidence that these products are not harmful to our health, the environment, and the survival of family farms, and
2. Declare our support for legislation at the state and federal levels that will shift all liability from farmers to the commercial developers of GE technology [*Alternate language: "that will make the commercial developers of GE technology liable..."*] for any damages resulting from the growing of GE crops, and
3. Declare our opposition to the planting of genetically engineered seeds in the Town, and resolve to actively discourage the planting of GE seeds, as a step toward making Vermont a GE-free planting zone by the 2005 growing season. [*Note: in prior years, several towns used the language, "and declare a moratorium on the planting..."*]

### **Thetford, Vermont, March 2004**

The Town of Thetford is concerned that unlabeled and unregistered genetically engineered seeds are being sold for use by Vermont farmers. We urge the state regulatory agencies to study the long-range consequences of this to Vermont agriculture, particularly as it affects organic farmers. Cross-pollination of crops has not been sufficiently tested. We support a two year moratorium on the use of genetically engineered crops in Vermont until this is done.

### **Rutland, Vermont, March 2004**

The voters of the City of Rutland call upon the Governor, our State Legislators, and the Regulatory Agencies to require all Genetically Engineered (GE) food and seed be labeled as such. (Passed by a vote of 2140 to 601).

### **Cummington, Massachusetts, May 2004**

Whereas the people of Cummington are concerned about the long-term health of our environment and of our local farms and farmers;

Whereas genetically engineered (GE) crops have not been proven safe for the humans or for the ecosystems with which they interact;

Whereas GE crops have been found to contaminate other crops and local flora through cross-pollination, causing unintended and unknown changes to their biology;

Whereas GE crops and products containing them are strictly regulated in more than 30 other countries; and

Whereas citizens throughout the United States are taking steps to address their concerns about GE crops in response to the failure of Congress and federal regulatory agencies to adequately address the issue;

The residents of Cummington hereby resolve:

1. To encourage a local moratorium on further growing of genetically engineered crops until there is credible and scientific evidence that these products are not harmful to our health or our environment.
2. Call upon our state and federal governments, including the Massachusetts Legislature, the U.S. Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to support the mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered foods and seeds and the full assignment of liability to the commercial developers of genetically engineered foods.
3. Agree that the Clerk shall send copies of this article to the elected representatives for this town, including the Massachusetts State Legislators, the Governor, the Commissioner of the Department of Food and Agriculture, and our Congressional Representative John Olver and Senators John Kerry and Edward Kennedy.

**Brooklin, Maine, April 2005**

Shall the town vote to voluntarily protect its agriculture and marine economies, environment and private property from irreversible genetically modified organism (GMO) contamination by declaring Brooklin a GMO-free zone?

*[Passed by voice vote.]*

**Charlemont, Massachusetts, May 2006**

The citizens of Charlemont resolved to:

1. To encourage a local moratorium on the growing of Genetically Engineered crops until there is adequate scientific evidence that these products are not harmful to us or our environment.
2. To call upon our state and federal governments, including the Massachusetts Legislature, the U.S. Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to support the mandatory labeling of all Genetically Engineered foods and seeds, and to support the assignment of liability to the corporate developers of Genetically Engineered crops (rather than to farmers.)

## Farmer Pledge of Support

While organic farmers have been among the most vocal supporters for a moratorium on growing genetically engineered crops, the views of so-called “conventional” farmers vary widely. The generally pro-agribusiness Farm Bureau claims to speak for these farmers, and has in most places taken a firmly pro-GE position. But many disagree. For example, prior to the 2004 Vermont legislative session, activists with the ISE Biotechnology Project and Rural Vermont developed a petition geared towards conventional dairy farmers. Their outreach efforts led to 120 conventional dairy farmers in the state signing the petition (below).

It will greatly strengthen your campaign to pass a town resolution if you follow the lead of Vermont organizers and focus on making farmer outreach a backbone of your campaign. Gaining the support of all kinds of farmers in your community (not just organic, but conventional, too) will help demonstrate the importance of restricting GMOs for the future of local agriculture.

Feel free to adapt the petition below and use it while doing outreach to farmers in your community.

**We the undersigned conventional dairy farmers of Vermont are committed to cultivating only non-GE (genetically engineered) crops for the following reasons:**

1. We recognize that “coexistence” of genetically engineered crops and non-GE crops is not possible because of genetic drift.
2. We respect our neighbors’ right to plant crops without the threat of cross-pollination from GE crops.
3. We want to maintain the pure image that Vermont products have on the market.
4. We are concerned that the cultivation of GE crops will create insects and weeds that have a higher resistance to insecticides and herbicides, which will be more difficult to control in the long run.
5. We are concerned because GE foods have not been proven safe for human consumption.
6. We do not want to further the corporate consolidation of our family farms and food.

Until genetically engineered crops were introduced into Vermont, different types of farmers could farm side by side and not threaten each other’s livelihood. Now, these GE crops threaten our farms and our markets. We believe that taking a time out from GE crops in Vermont would allow time for our policy to catch up with the technology and would support Vermont’s standards for producing high quality, safe food and would ensure a strong, viable market for Vermont products.

We, the undersigned, ask that you protect our state from the contamination and other problems caused by genetically engineered crops. We will not plant these seeds until we are sure that they will not threaten our neighbors or our environment. We are calling on the state legislature and administration to protect our farms, our food, and our families by supporting legislation to mandate the labeling of GE seeds sold in Vermont, to place the burden of liability for GE crops on the corporations who sell the seeds, to protect non-GE farmers from patent infringement suits, and to place a moratorium on the planting of GE crops in Vermont.

**GMO-Free Hawai'i**  
**A Project of Hawai'i SEED**  
**PO Box 4661 ~ Hilo, HI 96720 ~ (808) 331-1211**

**GMO-Free Hawai'i Sign-On Statement**

**A) We have serious concerns about the risks genetic engineering poses to the economic viability of agriculture in Hawai'i, to the integrity of native ecosystems, and**

**to our public health.**

**B) We support locally-based agricultural systems that create real food security for Hawai'i while protecting human health and the environment.**

**• Be it resolved that we also support the actions listed below:**

\_\_\_1. The establishment of a "public right to know" regarding the location and nature of all experimental and commercial GMO field sites in Hawai'i

\_\_\_2. Labeling of all GMO foods and seeds grown in the state

\_\_\_3. A moratorium on the patenting of indigenous Hawaiian flora and fauna, and on the patenting of human genes taken from native Hawaiian peoples

\_\_\_4. The assignment of liability for any health, environmental or financial damages incurred from GMO crops to the corporations, institutions, and patent holders who developed the GMO crops, and never to local farmers and growers

\_\_\_5. Independent testing for GMO contamination of conventional and organic crops, to be paid for by those institutions and corporations growing GMOs in Hawai'i

\_\_\_6. Independent peer-reviewed studies to evaluate the short- and long-term economic, health and environmental implications of GMOs in Hawai'i; to be compared with alternative agricultural options including organic agriculture

\_\_\_7. The right of growers' associations in Hawai'i to veto the field testing and/or commercial release of genetically engineered varieties of their commodity in order to protect their markets

\_\_\_8. The establishment of this town/community/island/county as a GMO-Free Zone

\_\_\_9. A minimum five-year moratorium on open-air growing and testing of genetically engineered plants and animals in the State of Hawai'i

\_\_\_10. Preventing contamination of a farmer's pure non-GMO seed; and protecting a farmer's right to save seed

\_\_\_11. Eliminate tax credits for Hawaii's highly controversial agricultural genetic engineering industry

**GMO-Free Hawai'i respects you and your organization and will only associate your name or your organization's name with the positions in this sign-on statement. If you or your organization cannot support all of the points, please indicate which actions you can support by placing a check mark in front of each point you support.**

**\_\_\_\_\_I/We agree with all of the points and actions outlined in the GMO-Free Hawai'i sign-on statement.**



\_\_\_\_\_ I/We agree with the first two introductory points (A and B) as well as the numbered actions that are checked above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Group/Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people represented: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

☀ Please return by mail to HAWAII SEED, PO Box 4661, Hilo, HI 96720. Please return by e-mail to [gmofreehawaii@riseup.net](mailto:gmofreehawaii@riseup.net). Questions, please call (808) 331-1211.

For Immediate Release:  
802.279.0985

For more info: Doyle Canning (mobile)

## **2003 Town Meeting: 36 More Towns Vote Against Genetic Engineering**

**Wednesday press conference at Gardener's Supply, Intervale Rd. in Burlington,  
10:30 AM**

Nearly 40 Vermont towns, from Brattleboro north to Bakersfield, voted at Town Meeting this week for resolutions opposing the genetic engineering (GE) of food and crops. As of 10:30 PM Tuesday evening, 36 have supported their resolutions, 4 have tabled the issue and 3 voted against it. A total of 69 Vermont towns have now gone on record against GE foods, beginning in 2000.

The details of the resolutions vary considerably from town to town, but all the resolutions call upon legislators and congressional representatives to support the labeling of GE foods. Most also support legislation for a moratorium on the planting of GE crops. Many towns have also declared that companies developing GE crops should bear legal liability for all harm resulting from these crops, instead of individual farmers. At least nine towns passed language either calling for a moratorium on the planting of GE crops in the town, or actively discouraging the planting of GE crops.

"This is an important milestone toward making Vermont the first state to go GE-Free," said Jim Moulton of Jamaica, Vermont, a volunteer organizer with the Windham County Genetic Engineering Action Group. "This would be a tremendous boon to our state's farm economy and to the integrity of Vermont's environment." The groups that make up the Town-to-Town Campaign are supporting legislation that has been introduced in the Vermont House, as well as working closely with farmers and local communities across the state that are wanting to take local action.

The following towns have passed resolutions this year (final language will be available in a few days):

Andover, Bakersfield, Brattleboro, Brownsville, Cabot, Chester, East Montpelier, Eden, Fletcher, Glover, Goshen, Halifax, Hardwick, Hartford, Hartland, Johnson, Landgrove, Londonderry, Middlebury, Morristown, Newark, Plymouth, Peru, Rochester, Rockingham, Royalton, Salisbury, Shoreham, Sharon, Tunbridge, Underhill, Vershire, Westford, Weston, Weybridge, Windham.

Resolutions were tabled in Albany, Arlington, Peacham and Fairfield, and voted down in Cornwall, Barnet and Wilmington.

Representatives of the sponsoring organizations, and people from towns that passed resolutions, will be speaking to the press at the Gardener's Supply greenhouse on Intervale Road in Burlington at 10:30 AM on Wednesday. There will be a rally on the State House lawn at noon on Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.

*(See [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org) to download pdf attachments to Chapter 5, GE-Free Zones Literature and Vermont Town Resolution Literature)*

## Chapter 6: rBGH-free Dairies

### Introduction

Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH or rBST) is a genetically engineered drug produced by the Monsanto Corporation. It is injected into dairy cows and induces them to increase milk production by 5-15%.

The FDA approved rBGH in November 1993 amidst widespread criticism from government leaders and scientists (including many inside the FDA) who questioned the objectivity of the approval process. In reviewing the scientific evidence, both Canadian and European scientists concluded that significant questions and problems remain regarding human health and animal welfare.

Based on this evidence, all 25 nations of the European Union have banned rBGH, as have Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. In fact, most industrialized nations of the world have disallowed its use. The U.N. food safety organization, Codex Alimentarius, has declined three times to declare the drug safe.

In the United States, awareness of the dangers of rBGH is growing, and concerned citizens across the country are moving their local dairies to go rBGH-free. Many consumers in Maine have refused to buy dairy products from rBGH-treated cows that there is virtually no milk sold there from cows that have received it. In northern California, most dairy farmers and dairies have also stopped using the drug in response to consumer demand. Efforts to educate the public around the hazards of rBGH and persuade decision makers against rBGH have been successful thanks to the efforts of GEAN affiliates, including the Center for Food Safety, the Organic Consumers Association, and Consumers Union.

In Oregon, a campaign spearheaded by the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility is moving dairy after dairy to make an rBGH-free pledge. Rick North from Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (Oregon PSR) has put together incredible resources for individuals and groups that want to run campaigns to move their own local dairies to stop using rBGH.

This campaign is a great choice for grassroots groups. It includes specific jobs for a variety of volunteers, from research and fact-finding to negotiating with companies and doing media work, the bulk of the materials you need to run the campaign have already been developed, and they are winnable. This is a great way to educate your community about some of the dangers of genetically engineered products, to change the corporate practices of some of the businesses in your community, and to bolster your group with concrete, achievable goals.

The power of your success in moving your local dairies to make an rBGH-free commitment will grow immeasurably when you share it in the media. News stories will help organizers in other communities feel inspired, and it will show dairies across America that rBGH is soon to be a product of the past.

This chapter of the toolkit provides resources for an rBGH-free dairies campaign, information about rBGH from experts, and literature to use or adapt in your community. For example, the position statement from Health Care Without Harm, an international coalition working to transform the health care industry, provides compelling evidence on the health hazards of rBGH. If you choose to launch this campaign, please contact GEAN at [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org) or Rick North with Oregon PSR at 503-968-1520, or [hrnorth@hevanet.com](mailto:hrnorth@hevanet.com).

## Campaign Steps

### First-tier steps in the campaign:

The first steps for an rBGH-free dairies campaign are similar to other campaigns, and are based on gathering important information and support of key allies.

- 1. Contact Rick North at Oregon PSR** ([hrnorth@hevanet.com](mailto:hrnorth@hevanet.com)) or GEAN ([info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org)) for campaign strategy support and guidance;
- 2. Ask a local insider in the dairy industry** to give you advice, preferably someone that works for or previously worked for an rBGH-free dairy;
- 3. Obtain the names and contact information of all dairies** based in the state, and whether they allow rBGH;
- 4. Obtain the names, contact information, and what milk brands are served** in your state:
  - a. hospitals;
  - b. colleges, including community colleges;
  - c. school districts, including parochial/private;
  - d. coffee shops/restaurants.

### Second-tier steps in the campaign:

Once you have done this initial fact-finding work to prepare for your campaign, there are a number of steps you can take to start moving your local dairy(ies) to go rBGH-free. Strategies will vary depending upon your location, local dairy situation, other groups willing to help, materials you wish to produce, number and type of volunteers, and, of course, finances. Here are some suggestions of activities that can help your campaign be a success.

- 1. Educate your community.** Spread the word about the hazards of rBGH through presentations to community groups, including clubs, schools, and religious institutions. rBGH has absolutely nothing to offer but increased disease rates in cows and possible health risks to humans--the only reason it is still on the market is that consumers don't know about it. The more consumers know about rBGH, the greater the pressure will be on dairies to phase this hormone out of their products. Included in this chapter of the toolkit is a PowerPoint presentation, developed by Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, which you can feel free to use and adapt in your own outreach work. Also included is Oregon PSR's 8-page brochure, which is applicable for any location in the country. It is also available on the website at [www.oregonpsr.org](http://www.oregonpsr.org).
- 2. Contact institutions that buy dairy products** such as hospitals, restaurants, coffee shops, schools, grocery stores, and catering companies. Try and schedule meetings or presentations with the people who make buying decisions at those institutions to share your information about rBGH with them. Ask them to change to rBGH-free products for their customers.
- 3. Contact dairies directly** and ask them to go rBGH-free. Schedule meetings and presentations with dairy representatives, and let them know why it's so important for them to stop using rBGH.

**4. Build consumer pressure on dairies:** Included in this chapter is a postcard concerned consumers can sign and send in to your target dairy. Hearing from customers is a powerful motivator for dairies to make responsible decisions on rBGH. Organize a postcarding day with a group of volunteers—you can set up a table at a film showing, fair, or in front of a local organization or business and ask passers by to sign postcards, which you can then collect and send in to the dairy yourself. Also be sure to bring these postcards with you when making presentations to local groups so people can sign them right then and there. The more postcards you can collect and send to the companies still using rBGH, the greater your chances will be of moving them to make an rBGH-free commitment.

## The rBGH Elevator Speech

An “elevator speech” is one in which you can quickly tell someone what you’re doing, capturing the essence of your activity and giving your most powerful points in a few brief statements.

Before starting the rBGH-Free Oregon Campaign, Oregon PSR polled over 100 people to determine what issues resonated the most. These were the top ones:

1. rBGH is associated with possible higher cancer rates in humans
2. Most industrialized nations of the world have banned rBGH.
3. rBGH is harmful to cows’ health, increasing their disease rates.

Since rBGH is unknown to most Americans, you must begin with a definition. Here is a sample elevator speech:

“rBGH is a genetically engineered growth hormone injected into cows that makes them give more milk. It’s also known as rBST. About 10-15% of dairy cows in Oregon are given this drug. Most industrialized countries in the world, including Canada and all 25 nations of the European Union, have banned the hormone, primarily because it increases disease rates in cows and may be linked to increasing cancer rates and antibiotic resistance in humans.

The Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility has started the rBGH-Free Oregon Campaign to educate the public about rBGH. For more information, you can check their website at [www.oregonpsr.org](http://www.oregonpsr.org).”

Oregon PSR suggests you use whatever wording you find comfortable, but strongly recommend you include these main points. If you have time, you can add other details that are found on the rBGH-Free Oregon Campaign Fact Sheet.

## rBGH-free Oregon Campaign Fact Sheet

### Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), Oregon Chapter

**Definition:** Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH or rBST) is a genetically engineered drug produced by the Monsanto Corporation. It is injected into dairy cows and induces them to increase milk production by 5-15%. It's estimated that 20-25% of the cows in Oregon are given this drug.

**Background:** The FDA approved rBGH in November 1993 amidst widespread criticism from government leaders and scientists (including many inside the FDA) who questioned the objectivity of the approval process. In reviewing the scientific evidence, both Canadian and European scientists concluded that significant questions and problems remain regarding human health and animal welfare.

Based on this evidence, all 25 nations of the European Union have banned rBGH, as have Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. In fact, most industrialized nations of the world have disallowed its use. The U.N. food safety organization, Codex Alimentarius, has declined three times to declare the drug safe.

In the U.S., so many consumers in Maine have refused to buy dairy products from rBGH-treated cows that there is virtually no milk sold there from cows that have received it. In northern California, most dairy farmers and dairies have also stopped using the drug in response to consumer demand.

#### **The problems with rBGH:**

- Increased cancer risk: When rBGH is injected into a cow, it elevates levels of another powerful growth hormone, IGF-1, which in excessive amounts has been linked in hundreds of studies to an increase in breast, prostate, colon, lung and other cancers in humans. Numerous scientific studies suggest IGF-1 in milk survives digestion and enters the bloodstream in sufficient quantities to potentially trigger increased cancer rates.
- Antibiotic resistance: Cows given rBGH may experience higher rates of mastitis, a painful udder infection. Mastitis is commonly treated with antibiotics such as penicillin, amoxicillin and erythromycin, which are also used to treat infections in humans. Bacteria resistant to these antibiotics can pass into humans through dairy products. This can result in increased antibiotic resistance in humans, a major health problem that is worsening each year.
- Harm to cows: In addition to mastitis, rBGH has been demonstrated to increase the incidence of 16 different harmful effects in cows, including birth disorders, increased pus in milk, hoof problems, heat stress, diarrhea, and other gynecological and gastrointestinal disturbances.



**Labeling:** The FDA ruled that dairy products from cows treated with rBGH are not required to be labeled. Consequently, most people that consume these products don't realize it. However, some dairies label their products rBGH-, rBST- or artificial hormone-free. Also, certified organic dairy products, by definition, don't come from cows treated with rBGH.

**What you can do:** Avoid unnecessary risks to your health by checking the labels and buying only dairy products free from rBGH-treated cows. Contact supermarkets and schools to support the use and sale of rBGH-free products. You can also sign up for our e-mail update list to learn more and stay current on the campaign.

**PSR's Goal: Discontinue the production of any dairy products within Oregon from cows treated with rBGH. This will be done through a wide-ranging grass roots consumer education and action campaign.**

**To find out how you can help, or for more information:** Contact Rick North, Project Director, at 503-968-1520 or [hnrnorth@hevanet.com](mailto:hnrnorth@hevanet.com) or visit <http://www.oregonpsr.org/programs/campaignSafeFood.html>

(SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR DOCUMENTATION)

### **DOCUMENTATION**

#### **rBGH increases mastitis rates in cows:**

Broom D. et al, Report of the (European Union) Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare on Aspects of the Use of Bovine Somatotropin, <http://europa.eu.int> , accessed March 1999.

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Kronfeld D., Concerns about bovine somatotropin, Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association., July 15, 1993, 203(2):190-192.

Kronfeld D., Recombinant bovine somatotropin and animal welfare, Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association., June 1, 2000, 216(11):1719-1720.

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Juskevich J. and Guyer G., Bovine Growth Hormone: Human Food Safety Evaluation, Science, Aug. 24, 1990, 249(4971): 879-883.

Miller M. et al, unpublished report MSL 8673, Monsanto Agricultural Company, 1989.

Torkelson A. et al, Concentrations of IGF-1 in bovine milk, Journal of Dairy Science, 1988, 71(52).

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#### **IGF-1 in milk may survive digestion:**

Anderle, P. et al, In Vitro Assessment of Intestinal IGF-1 Stability, Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Jan. 2002, 91:1.

Cooperative Research Centre, Women's and Children's Hospital, N. Adelaide, Australia, Journal of Endocrinology, 1995, 146:215-225.

Kimura T. et al, Gastrointestinal absorption of recombinant human insulin-like growth factor-1 in rats, Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, 1997, 283:611-618.

Playford R. et al, Effect of luminal growth factor preservation on intestinal growth, Lancet, April 1993, 3(341):843-848.

rBST Internal Review Team, rBST “Gaps Analysis” Report, Health Protection Branch, Health Canada, April 21, 1998.

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## Sample Letter/E-mail to Dairy Using rBGH

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I have just learned that you use milk from cows injected with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH).

(IF TRUE) Because you are using this hormone, I have stopped buying your products and switched to \_\_\_\_\_, a dairy that is rBGH-free. In addition (AGAIN, ONLY IF TRUE), I have told people I know (my sister, parents, next-door neighbor, etc.) about this hormone and recommended they consider rBGH in their dairy purchasing decisions.

I have a number of reasons for avoiding your dairy products and believe the FDA has made a serious mistake in allowing this hormone to be used in the U.S. According to the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility:

rBGH in cows' milk elevates the levels of another growth hormone which in excessive amounts has been linked in numerous studies to promotion of increased cancer rates in humans.

rBGH has been shown to increase disease rates in cows, including painful mastitis. The use of this drug has been condemned by both the U.S. Humane Society and Humane Farming Association.

The treatment of this increased mastitis by antibiotics can create antibiotic-resistant bacteria, some of which can pass into humans. This may lead to increased antibiotic resistance, a very serious medical problem.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and all 25 nations of the European Union have banned the use of this hormone, primarily based on animal health grounds and concerns about human health.

I would very much appreciate it if you would stop using this hormone in cows supplying your milk. Thank you for your consideration.

I would also appreciate a written response to my letter (or e-mail).

Sincerely,

Your name

P.S. (IF TRUE) I estimate that I used to spend \$\_\_\_\_ per (month, year) on your products. I enjoyed them but will not go back to them as long as you are using rBGH.

## Consumers' Guide to rBGH-free Dairy Products

The Organic Consumers Association maintains a list of sources for rBGH-free dairy products, which we've included below. This isn't a complete list of all the dairies in the country that have rBGH-free products, and it is changing all the time, as more communities move their local dairies to go rBGH-free, so please see <http://www.organicconsumers.org/rBGH/rbghlist.cfm> for the most current list.

Feel free to take sections of this list and make a local buyer's guide for your state or region. Also, be sure to call your local dairies and ask them about their policies on rBGH for a more comprehensive and accurate list of rBGH-free products in your community. When you call your dairies, express your concern about rBGH, and offer to come make a presentation about the dangers of rBGH if they have not yet made an rBGH-free commitment.

### *rBGH-free (Organic)*

*These milk and dairy companies carry some or all organic products.*

**\* indicates that it comes from a family farm**

#### **Available Nationwide**

- Alta Dena Organics (Cheese), City of Industry, CA, 800/535-1369, available nationwide.
- Horizon Organic Dairy (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Cream, Whipped Cream, Yogurt, Cheese, Butter, Sour Cream, Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese), Boulder, CO, 888/494-3020, available nationwide
- Morningland Dairy Cheese\*, Mountain View, MO, 417/469-3817, available nationwide and by mail order.
- Organic Valley\* (Milk, Cheese, Butter, Cream Cheese, Cottage Cheese, Sour Cream, Cream, Powdered Milk), La Farge, WI, 608/625-2600, <http://www.organicvalley.com>, available nationwide.
- Stonyfield Farms (organic line) (Yogurt and Ice Cream), Londonderry, NH, 603/437-4040, available nationwide.
- Wisconsin Organics\* (Milk, Cheese, Butter), Bonduel, WI, 715/758-2280, available nationwide and at their own retail store in Bonduel.

#### **California**

- Straus Family Creamery\* (Milk, Butter, Yogurt, Cheese), Marshall, CA, 415/663-5464, <http://www.strausmilk.com>, available in California, Arizona, and New Mexico.
- Alta Dena Organics (Cheese), City of Industry, CA, 800/535-1369, available nationwide.
- Stremick's Heritage Foods, LLC (distributes throughout Western U.S.)  
<http://www.stremicksheritagefoods.com>

## Colorado

- Horizon Organic Dairy (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Cream, Whipped Cream, Yogurt, Cheese, Butter, Sour Cream, Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese), Boulder, CO, 888/494-3020, available nationwide.

## Iowa

- Radiance Dairy\* (Milk, whipping cream, yogurt, and several cheese), Fairfield, IA, 641-472-8554, available at Hy-Vee, Econo Foods, and Everybody's Whole Foods in the Fairfield area and at New Pioneer Co-op in Iowa City.

## Indiana

- Trader's Point Creamery (certified organic, rBGH-free, grassfed milk, cheese and yogurts) 9101 Moore Road, Zionsville, IN 46077 [www.tpfororganics.com](http://www.tpfororganics.com) 317-733-1700

## Maine

- Hart-to-Hart Farm\* (Cheese and licensed Raw Milk), Albion, ME, 207/437-2441, available at the farm and at farmers' markets throughout central Maine (call for locations).
- Nezinscot Farm\* (Cow's or Goat's Milk, Cheese, Butter), Turner, ME, 207/225-3231, available at their own store in Turner; cheese available by mail order.

## Massachusetts

- Bart's Homemade (Low-Fat Organic Ice Cream), Greenfield, MA, 413/774-7438, available in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and at their own store in Greenfield.
- Brookside Farm\* (Milk and Cream), Westminster, MA, 978/874-2695, available in Massachusetts.

## Missouri

- Morningland Dairy Cheese\*, Mountain View, MO, 417/469-3817, available nationwide and by mail order.

## Montana

- Lifeline Farms (Cheese)\*, Victor, MT, available on the West Coast. For store locations, call Mountain Peoples, 800/679-8735, <http://www.csf.Colorado.edu/co-op/mountain.html>.

## New Hampshire

- Stonyfield Farms (organic line) (Yogurt and Ice Cream), Londonderry, NH, 603/437-4040, available nationwide.

## **New York**

- Hawthorne Valley Farm\* (Cheese, Yogurt and Quark Cheese), Ghent, NY, 518/672-7500, available on the East Coast. Raw milk and cheese also available at their own local store and at the Union Square Farmers' Market in New York City.
- Butternut Farms\* (Cheese), NY, 607/783-2392, <http://www.butternutfarms.com>, available in the Northeast and by mail order.
- Natural by Nature (Cheese, Cream, Buttermilk, Eggnog, Ice Cream, Butter, Yogurt, Cream Cheese, Milk, Pudding), Sunnyside Farms, Brooklyn, NY, 718/257-7600, available on the East Coast and in the Midwest.

## **Oregon**

- Echo Spring Dairy (organic line) (Milk, Sour Cream, Cottage Cheese), Eugene, OR, 541/753-7331, available in Idaho, Oregon, and northern California.

## **Pennsylvania**

- Kimberton Hills Farm\* (licensed Raw Milk), Kimberton, PA, available at Kimberton Whole Foods Store (610/935-1444) and at the farm (610/935-0314).
- Seven Stars Farm\* (Yogurt), Phoenixville, PA 610/935-1949, available in the East and Midwest.

## **Vermont**

- ORGANIC BUTTER: Animal Farm Butter, Orwell, VT, 802-623-6599, <http://www.animalfarmvt.com/> available at Middlebury Natural Food Coop in Middlebury, VT
- Butterworks Farm\* (Yogurt, Cream, Cheese, Cottage Cheese), Westfield, VT, 802/744-6855, available in the Northeast and at the farm; cheese also available by mail order.
- Organic Cow of Vermont (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Sour Cream, Cottage Cheese, Butter, Cream, Eggnog), Chelsea, VT, 800/769-9693, available on the East Coast.

## **Washington**

- Greenbank Farms Cheese (organic line), Stonefelt Cheese Co., Preston, WA, 425/222-5500, available on the West Coast, in the Northwest, and at their own store in Preston.

## **Wisconsin**

- Ranovael Organic Dairy\* (Cheese, Butter), DePere, WI, 920/336-2820, cheese available by mail order, both products available at their own store in DePere.

- Cedar Grove Organic Cheese, Plain, WI, 608/546-5284, [www.cedargrovecheese.com](http://www.cedargrovecheese.com), available in the Upper Midwest, at their own store in Plain, and by mail order (877/275-8354). [Mail@cedargrovecheese.com](mailto:Mail@cedargrovecheese.com)
- Organic Valley\* (Milk, Cheese, Butter, Cream Cheese, Cottage Cheese, Sour Cream, Cream, Powdered Milk), La Farge, WI, 608/625-2600, <http://www.organicvalley.com>, available nationwide.
- Wisconsin Organics\* (Milk, Cheese, Butter), Bonduel, WI, 715/758-2280, available nationwide and at their own retail store in Bonduel.

## rBGH-free (but not organic) Brands

**These milk and dairy companies carry some or all rBGH-free products.**

### Available Nationwide

- Alta Dena (Milk, Buttermilk, Chocolate Milk, Eggnog, Cream, Sour Cream, Yogurt, Natural Select Butter, Ice Cream, Cottage Cheese, and all Cheeses except for cream cheese), City of Industry, CA, 800/MILK123, available nationwide.
- Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, S. Burlington, VT, 802/846-1500, <http://www.benjerry.com/ca/> available nationwide
- Biazzo Dairy Products (Cheese), Riverfield, NJ, 201/941-6800, available nationwide.
- Brown Cow Farm (Yogurt and Milk), Antioch, CA, 925/757-9209, <http://www.wholemilkyogurt.com>, available nationwide.
- Cascade Fresh (yogurt) Available nationwide. rBGH-Free, antibiotic and steroid free. For store locations, look on our web site [www.cascadefresh.com](http://www.cascadefresh.com) or call 800.511.0057.
- Crowley Cheese of Vermont, Healdville, VT, 802/259-2210, <http://www.newenglandcheese.com/companies/crowley.html>, available nationwide and by mail order.
- Egg Farm Dairy (Butter, Cheese, Ice Cream, Cream), Peekskill, NY, 800/CREAMERY, available at their local retail store, by mail order, and nationwide at gourmet food stores.
- Family Farms Defenders\*, (Cheese), Madison, WI 608-260-0900, available in Madison, WI and nationwide by mail order
- Franklin County Cheese (Bagel Factory Cream Cheese, Shaw's Cream Cheese, Bruegger's Bagels Cream Cheese—eastern US only, All Seasons Kitchen @, Lombardi's - Cream Cheese and Mascarpone, Vermont Butter and Cheese - Mascarpone), Enosburg Falls, VT, 802/933-4338, [www.franklinfoods.com](http://www.franklinfoods.com), available nationwide.
- Grafton Village Cheese, Grafton, VT, 800/472-3866, 802/843-2221, <http://www.graftonvillagecheese.com> available nationwide and by mail order.
- Great Hill Dairy (Cheese), Marion, MA, 508/748-2208, <http://www.greathillblue.com>, available by mail order or nationwide at gourmet stores.
- Kate's Homemade Butter, Old Orchard Beach, ME, 207/934-5134, available nationwide.
- Land O Lakes' Original (Milk) Arden Hills, MN 651-481-2222 Available nationwide.
- Lifetime Dairy (Cheese), Lifeline Food Co., Seaside, CA, 831/899-5040, <http://www.lifetimefatfree.com>, available nationwide.

- North Farm Cooperative\* (Cheese), Madison, WI, 800/236-5880, 608/241/2667, <http://www.northfarm-coop.com>, available nationwide and by mail order.
- Salemville Cheese, North Farm Cooperative, Madison, WI, 800/236-5880, nationwide and by mail order.
- Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar Cheese\*, Shelburne, VT, 802/985-8686, available nationwide, by mail order, and at their own farm-site store.
- Tillamook Dairy is located in Oregon, distributes nationwide and includes web sales here <http://www.tillamookcheese.com/>

## California

- Clover Stornetta Farms (Milk, Cheese, Sour Cream, Yogurt), Petaluma, CA, 800/237-3315, <http://www.clo-the-cow.com>, available in northern California.
- Joseph Farms Cheese, Joseph Gallo, Atwater, CA, 209/394-7984, <http://www.josephfarms.com>, available in the Northwest, Southwest, South, and Hawaii.
- Alta Dena (Milk, Buttermilk, Chocolate Milk, Eggnog, Cream, Sour Cream, Yogurt, Natural Select Butter, Ice Cream, Cottage Cheese, and all Cheeses except for cream cheese), City of Industry, CA, 800/MILK123, available nationwide.
- Brown Cow Farm (Yogurt and Milk), Antioch, CA, 925/757-9209, <http://www.wholemilkyogurt.com>, available nationwide.
- Lifetime Dairy (Cheese), Lifeline Food Co., Seaside, CA, 831/899-5040, <http://www.lifetimefatfree.com>, available nationwide.
- Berkeley Farms (Full line of dairy products), Hayward, CA, 510-265-8600, <http://www.berkeleyfarms.com>, available in Northern California.

## Connecticut

- Rustling Winds Creamery (Cheese, Milk but bring your own container), Falls Village, CT, 860/824-7084, available at their farm store; cheese available by mail order.
- Calabro Cheese Corp., East Haven, CT, 203/469-1311, <http://www.calabrocheese.com>, available on the East and West Coasts and in Ohio.

## Florida

- Golden Fleece Dairy\*, (Milk), Lecanto, FL, 352.628.2688, available in Florida.

## Illinois

- Oberweiss Dairy (Milk and Ice Cream), Aurora, IL, 630/897-6600, available in Illinois.

## Louisiana

- Mauthe's Dairy\* (Whole Milk, Skim Milk, Creole Cream Cheese), Folsom, LA, <http://www.mauthescreolecreamcheese.com/index.htm>, (985) 796-5058, available in New



Orleans area, Crescent City Farmers Markets, Covington Farmers Markets and on line at <http://www.mauthescreolecreamcheese.com/purchase.htm>

## **Maine**

- Kate's Homemade Butter, Old Orchard Beach, ME, 207/934-5134, available nationwide.

## **Massachusetts**

- Balance Rock Farm (Milk), Berlin, MA, 978/838-2024, available at their farm store in Berlin.
- Brigham's Ice Cream, Arlington, MA, 800/BRIGHAMS, <http://www.brighams.com>, available in the Northeast.
- Crescent Creamery (Milk), Pittsfield, MA, 800/221-6455, available in the Northeast.
- Dorchester Ice Cream, Boston, MA, 617/282-9600, available in the Northeast.
- Great Hill Dairy (Cheese), Marion, MA, 508/748-2208, <http://www.greathillblue.com>, available by mail order or nationwide at gourmet stores.

## **Michigan**

- Crooked Creek Farm Dairy (Milk, Ice Cream), Romeo, MI, 810/752-6095, available at farm dairy store and at select stores in southeast Michigan.
- Jilbert's Dairy (Milk, Ice Cream), Marquette, MI, 906/225-1363, available in Michigan upper peninsula through Wisconsin border.
- Pollard Dairy (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Whipped Cream), Norway, MI, 906/563-8815, Michigan upper peninsula, northeastern Wisconsin.

## **Minnesota**

*All of these brand carry a no rBGH or no BST label.*

- Sonny's Ice cream (Icecream), Minneapolis, MN 612-822-8189. Available in the Twin Cities metro area and the Chicago area and by phone orders. Sonny's ice cream is currently not labeled. All dairy ingredients are from the Pride of Main Street Dairy.
- Polka Dot Dairy (Milk, Half and half, Whole cream, Buttermilk ), Hastings MN, 651-437-9023. Available at all Tom Thumb stores in Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- Valley View Farms (Milk, Half and half, Whole cream, Buttermilk), Hastings, MN 651-437-9414. Available in Eastern Minnesota and Western Wisconsin.
- Pride of Main Street (Milk, Icecream), Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-8300 Available only in Minnesota.

- Schroder Simply Right (Milk) 651-487-1471, Mapelwood, MN  
Schroder also bottles rBGH-free milk for SuperAmerica that is sold only in returnable ½ gallons under the SuperAmerica label. Available in MN and Western Wis.
- Kemp's Select (Milk), Kemp's Marigold Foods, Minneapolis, MN, 800/726-6455. Available in Minnesota and Eau Claire, WI area.
- Land O Lakes' Original (Milk) Arden Hills, MN 651-481-2222  
Available nationwide.

## **New Hampshire**

- Hatchland Dairy\* (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Egg Nog, Cream), N. Haverhill, NH, 603/787-2388, available in New Hampshire and Vermont.
- McNamara Dairy\* (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Eggnog, Cream), West Lebanon, NH, 603/298-6666, available in New Hampshire and Vermont.

## **New Jersey**

- Farmland Dairies (Milk, Chocolate Milk, Cream), Wallington, NJ, 1800/327-9522, available on the east coast.
- Biazzo Dairy Products (Cheese), Riverfield, NJ, 201/941-6800, available nationwide.

## **New York**

- Derle Farms (Milk with "no rBST" label only), Brooklyn, NY, 718/257-2040, available in New York and New Jersey.
- Egg Farm Dairy (Butter, Cheese, Ice Cream, Cream), Peekskill, NY, 800/CREAMERY, available at their local retail store, by mail order, and nationwide at gourmet food stores.

## **Ohio**

- Buckeye Grove Farm Cheese (cheese), Aged farmhouse cheese produced using only Grade A hormone free, unpasteurized Jersey cow milk. Available nationally at [www.buckeyegrovefarmcheese.com](http://www.buckeyegrovefarmcheese.com) or in person at 50543 Twp. 141 Beallsville, OH. 43716 740/926/1904.

## **Pennsylvania**

- Erivan Dairy Yogurt\*, Oreland, PA, 215/887-2009, available on the East Coast and in the Midwest.

## Tennessee

- Cruze Farm Dairy\*, (Churned Buttermilk, Un-homogenized Whole milk, Icecream available seasonally), Knoxville, TN, (865) 525-6966, available in Knoxville, Sevierville, and Maryville, TN

## Texas

- Promised Land Dairy, (Milk) Floresville, TX, (210) 533-9151, <http://www.promisedlanddairy.com>, available in TX, AR, OK, LA, KS AND MO.

## Vermont

- Thomas Dairy (Milk, Cream, Egnog, Chocolate Milk, Butter, Sour Cream, Yogurt, Buttermilk), Rutland, VT, 802/773-6788, available in central Vermont.
- Monument Farms\* (Milk, Cottage Cheese, Buttermilk, Cream), Middlebury, VT, 802/545-2119, available in Vermont and at their own store in Weybridge, VT.
- Booth Brothers Dairy (Milk, Cream, Chocolate Milk, Egg Nog), Barre, VT, 802/476-6605, available in Vermont and New Hampshire.
- Orb Weaver Farm\* (Cheese), New Haven, VT, 802/877-3755, available in Vermont, by mail order, at the farm, and at Murray's Cheese Shop in New York City.
- Vermont Family Farms\* (Milk), Vermont Milk Producers, Whiting, VT, 802/897-2769, available in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and upstate New York.
- Wilcox Dairy (Milk, Ice Cream), Manchester, VT, 800/262-1223, available in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and in upstate New York.
- Blythedale Farm Cheese\*, Corinth, VT, 802/439-6575, available in the Northeast.
- Sugarbush Farm\* (Cheese), Woodstock, VT, 800/281-1757, available in the Northeast and by mail order.
- Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, S. Burlington, VT, 802/846-1500, <http://www.benjerry.com/ca/> available nationwide.
- Franklin County Cheese (Bagel Factory Cream Cheese, Shaw's Cream Cheese, Bruegger's Bagels Cream Cheese—eastern US only, All Seasons Kitchen @ @, Lombardi's - Cream Cheese and Mascarpone, Vermont Butter and Cheese - Mascarpone), Enosburg Falls, VT, 802/933-4338, [www.franklinfoods.com](http://www.franklinfoods.com), available nationwide.
- Crowley Cheese of Vermont, Healdville, VT, 802/259-2210, <http://www.newenglandcheese.com/companies/crowley.html>, available nationwide and by mail order.

- Grafton Village Cheese, Grafton, VT, 800/472-3866, 802/843-2221, <http://www.graftonvillagecheese.com> available nationwide and by mail order.
- Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar Cheese\*, Shelburne, VT, 802/985-8686, available nationwide, by mail order, and at their own farm-site store.

## Virginia

- Shenville Creamery, (Entire line of products Yogurt, Ice Cream, Fluid Milk, Fresh Cheeses, Dips) Timberville VA 1-877-600-7440, <http://www.shenville.com/pages/351204/>, Available in Richmond and northern VA at most Kroger stores.

## Washington

- Smith Brothers Dairy (Milk), Kent, WA, 206/682-7633 <http://www.smithbrothersfarms.com>, available in Washington

## Wisconsin

- Chippewa Valley Cheese, (Cheese ), Osseo, WI , 715-597-2366, [www.chippewavalleycheese.com](http://www.chippewavalleycheese.com), available in WI, MN, ND, AR and by mail order from their website.
  - Family Farms Defenders\*, (Cheese), Madison, WI 608-260-0900, available in Madison, WI and nationwide by mail order.
  - Cedar Grove's Family Farmer Cheeses\*, Plain, WI, 608/546-5284, <http://www.execpc.com/~cgcheese/>, available in the Upper Midwest, at their own store in Plain, and by mail order (800/200-6020).
  - North Farm Cooperative\* (Cheese), Madison, WI, 800/236-5880, 608/241/2667, <http://www.northfarm-coop.com>, available nationwide and by mail order.
  - Salemville Cheese, North Farm Cooperative, Madison, WI, 800/236-5880, nationwide and by mail order.
- Westby Cooperative Creamery\* (Cottage Cheese, Sour Cream, French Onion Dip, Butter, Cheese), Westby, WI, 800/492-9282, <http://www.westbycreamery.com>, available in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois and at their own store in Westby; cheese available by mail order.

- **indicates that it comes from a family farm**

February 11, 2003

The Honorable G. Steven Rowe  
Attorney General  
6 State House Station, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Petition to Suspend Use of State of Maine Quality Trademark for Milk and Milk Proteins

Dear General Rowe,

I am writing to you after a discussion I had with Marilyn Anderson from the Maine Coop Voices United. She told me of the attempt by Monsanto to force Maine to allow milk from cattle treated with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rbGH) to be eligible for the Maine "Seal" (currently prohibited by present law) and for the Attorney General to legally prosecute dairies that advertise that their milk comes from farmers that pledge not to use milk from rbGH-treated cattle. Since I testified before the Maine legislature when they were hearing the original mandatory labels bills for milk and other dairy products derived from rbGH-treated cattle, I would like to weigh in on a few issues that are used in Monsanto's Petition. I will argue that: milk from rbGH-treated cattle differs from milk from untreated cattle, unanswered questions exist about certain safety issues associated with milk from rbGH-treated cattle, labeling milk as to use of rbGH does not deceive consumers, and FDA does not require a "contextual statement" on milk labeled as coming from cattle not treated with rbGH. In sum, we support the right of Maine to use its Quality Seal in the way that it presently does (i.e. by requiring that 80% of the milk come from dairies in Maine and that farmers pledge not to use rbGH) and urge you to deny Monsanto's Petition. To grant Monsanto's petition would endorse the idea that consumers do not have a right-to-know whether their milk comes from cows that have not been treated with rbGH (or from farmers who pledge not to use rbGH), which we think would be a bad idea.

I. Milk from rbGH-treated cattle differs from milk derived from untreated control cattle

Monsanto attempts to argue that milk from rbGH-treated cattle "is equivalent in all respects to other milk." We disagree. First, Monsanto's rbGH differs from cattle's natural growth hormone. A cow's natural growth hormone is a protein that consists of 190 or 191 amino acids. Monsanto produced a version of the natural bGH which differed by a single amino acid (methionine), which was added to one end of the molecule (the N-terminus). This difference facilitated the production of rbGH by bacteria, e.g. the yield of rbGH produced per bacteria was higher when the gene coded for an rbGH molecule that ended with a methionine than one that did not. Thus, milk from rbGH-treated cattle will contain rbGH, while milk from untreated cattle will not.

Monsanto's rbGH product, POSILAC, which has an extra amino acid (methionine) at one end of the molecule is also more immunogenic (e.g. stimulates the immune systems more) than natural bGH produced by a cow's pituitary gland, e.g. there are differences in how the immune system reacts to a cow's natural bGH and Monsanto's rbGH. A paper published in 1994 using Monsanto's rbGH product, "Identification of antigenic differences of recombinant and pituitary bovine growth hormone using monoclonal antibodies," demonstrated "that small differences in structure, for example through additional N-terminal amino acids, can markedly change the immunogenic characteristics of a protein" (Erhard et al., 1994: pg. 16).

Thus, rbGH differs from cow's natural bGH in ways that can be detected by the immune system. Further, some of the bGH in cow's milk will consist of rbGH; conversely, rbGH will not occur in the milk of untreated cows. So, the presence of rbGH in the milk of cows treated with rbGH constitutes a difference with the milk from untreated cows.

Second, Monsanto's own studies have shown that milk from rbGH-treated cattle has elevated levels of insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) compared to milk from untreated cattle. IGF-1 is a protein hormone found in the milk of all mammals. In addition, bovine IGF-1 and human IGF-1 are identical (i.e. they have the exact same amino acid sequence). Prior to gaining approval for POSILAC in the fall of 1993, Monsanto submitted a number of studies to the FDA concerning the effect of rbGH on milk levels of IGF-1. There were four studies mentioned in the FDA's Freedom of Information Act summary of the data used to gain approval for POSILAC; the first three of these studies were also discussed in the 1990 paper in *Science*, "Bovine growth hormone: food safety evaluation," authored by two FDA scientists, Judith Juskevich and Greg Guyer (Juskevich and Guyer, 1990). I briefly discuss all four studies below.

The first Monsanto study (Torkelson et al., 1988) involved 18 cows and an rbST dosage of 500 mg injected every 14 days, with milk collected 7 days after each of 3 injections. The study found that "After each of the 3 doses, mean milk IGF-I in controls was 3.22, 2.62 and 3.78 ng/ml and in treated cows was 3.80, 5.39 and 4.98 ng/ml, respectively. Differences between treated and control groups was [sic] significant after the second and third doses" (FAO, 1993: 121). Thus, the average IGF-I concentrations were increased by 18%, 106% and 31.7% for injection cycles 1, 2, and 3, respectively in the treated groups compared to controls.

The second Monsanto study (White et al., 1989) involved 18 cows and an rbST dosage of 500 mg injected every 14 days, with milk collected 7 days after each of 3 injections. As in the Torkelson et al. study, mean milk IGF-I concentrations were statistically significantly higher after the second and third doses. Mean milk IGF-I in controls was 3.17, 3.34 and 3.35 ng/ml and in treated cows was 3.50, 5.33 and 4.68 ng/ml, respectively. Thus, the average IGF-I concentrations were increased by 10%, 60% and 40% for the first, second and third doses, respectively in the treated group compared to controls.

The third Monsanto study (Miller et al., 1989) involved 64 cows and an rbST dosage of 500 mg injected every 14 days, with milk collected 7 days after each of 10 injections. The study found that "milk concentration of IGF-I was increased across the 10 injection cycles" (FAO, 1993: 126). For primiparous cows (i.e. those giving birth for the first time, aka first calf heifers) the increase was 74%, from 3.5 ng/ml to 6.1 mg/ml for control and rbST-treated cows, respectively. For multiparous cows, the increase was 41%, from 3.9 ng/ml to 5.6 mg/ml for control and rbST-treated cows, respectively. Both results are statistically significant.

The fourth Monsanto study was conducted at the Monsanto Animal Research Center in O'Fallon, Missouri and reported in late 1993 in the US FDA's Freedom of Information Act Summary of the data used to gain approval for POSILAC, Monsanto's rbST product. This study involved 18 cows, an rbST dosage of 500 mg injected every 14 days, with milk collected 7 days after each of three injections. IGF-I levels were statistically significantly elevated in milk from rbST-treated cows. Indeed, the milk IGF-I levels of treated and control cows did not even overlap, i.e. the milk IGF-I level from the 9 rbST-treated cows was higher than any of the levels found in the milk of control cows: "During the study, milk IGF-I concentrations ranged from 3.16 to 3.35 ng/ml for control cows and from 3.49 to 5.31 ng/ml for treated cows. The difference in milk IGF-I between control and treated cows was statistically significant at the 5% probability level" (FDA, 1993: 121).

In sum, all four studies done by Monsanto found statistically significant increases in levels of IGF-1 in milk from rbGH-treated cows compared to milk from untreated cows. The study by Miller et al. (1989) used the largest number of cattle (64) and had the longest duration of experiment (10 injection cycles or 140 days) and found increases in mastitis of 74% and 41% for primiparous and multiparous cows, respectively. According to label directions, POSILAC can be used starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> week after lactation and can be used to the end of the lactation cycle. Since a normal lactation period is ten months, this means using about 20 injection cycles. So, Monsanto's own data show that there is a significant increase in IGF-1 levels in milk from rbGH-treated cows compared to milk from untreated cows.

II. Unanswered questions do exist about certain safety issues associated with milk from rbGH-treated cattle

Contrary to Monsanto's and FDA's assertion, there are still certain safety issues associated with milk from rbGH-treated cattle that have still not been fully resolved. The primary unanswered safety question revolves around IGF-1.

The issue of IGF-1 and its potential human health impact was raised by both the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the American Medical Association (AMA) in the early 1990s just after the paper, "Bovine growth hormone: food safety evaluation," written by FDA scientists and published in *Science* demonstrated that milk from rbGH-treated cows had statistically significantly higher levels of IGF-I compared to milk from untreated cows. The NIH held a Technical Assessment Conference on BST in December 1990. In a statement issued by the NIH Health Expert Committee after the Conference, they stated "Whether the additional amount of insulin-like growth factor 1 in milk from [rbGH-treated] cows has a local effect on the esophagus stomach or intestines is unknown" (NIH, 1991). One of the six recommendations for further research in the report was "Determine the acute and chronic actions of IGF-I, if any, in the upper gastrointestinal tract".

Three months after the NIH conference, in March 1991, the Council on Scientific Affairs on the AMA published a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* entitled "Biotechnology and the American Agriculture Industry." The section that talked about human health impacts of rbGH use stated, "Further studies will be required to determine whether ingestion of higher than normal concentrations of bovine insulin like growth factor is safe for children, adolescents, and adults" (AMA, 1991: 1433).

These warnings of the need for more research on the potential safety implications of IGF-I were very prescient, as discussed below. At the time of these warnings, it was known that, besides its effect on human metabolism, IGF-I had been associated with the growth of numerous tumors, including colon (Tricoli et al., 1986), smooth muscle (Hoppener et al., 1988), breast (Rosen et al., 1991), and others (Pavelic et al., 1986). A basic question that was not known at the time, however, was whether IGF-I in milk could survive digestion; that's in large part why both the NIH and the AMA called for further research.

The US FDA has maintained that IGF-1 does not survive digestion. Furthermore, FDA argues that even if IGF-1 does survive digestion, the levels in cow's milk (from 1-13 ng/ml) are so low compared to levels in human sera (about 100-200 ng/ml), that there would be no effect on the total serum levels of IGF-1 so there would be no adverse health effect.

We believe the FDA is wrong on both accounts. First, a couple of studies done in the mid-1990s suggest that IGF-I may survive digestion. A rat study, published in 1995, found that IGF-I, in the presence of casein (the major milk protein), easily survived digestion in the stomach, enabling it to pass into the small and large intestine (Xian, et al., 1995). The presence of casein also had some protective effect in the duodenum and dramatically increased the half-life of IGF-I in the intestine. The authors concluded that using casein may make it possible to give therapeutic oral doses of IGF-I: "It can be concluded that IGF-I cannot be expected to retain bioactivity if delivered orally because of rapid proteolysis in the upper gut, but the use of IGF antibodies and casein could represent useful approaches for IGF-I protection in oral formulae" (Xian et al., 1995: 215). Another rat study done in 1997 clearly demonstrated significant gastrointestinal absorption of recombinant human IGF-I (rhIGF-I) (remember that human IGF-1 and bovine IGF-1 are identical). After oral administration of rhIGF-I at the dose of 1.0 mg/kg body weight (half the dosage that FDA found to be completely digested and not orally active), the study "found that a considerable amount of rhIGF-I was absorbed into the systemic circulation and that the bioavailability was 9.3%. . . . The coadministration of aprotinin and that of casein enhanced the bioavailability further: 46.9% and 67.0%, respectively" (Kimura et al., 1997: 611). Since determination of the blood levels of a protein can be a bit tricky (various methods have their advantages and drawbacks), the authors used three analytical methods. All three methods clearly showed that both casein

and aprotinin lead to statistically significant increases in absorption of IGF-I. The authors concluded that "[t]hese results strongly support the feasibility of the p.o. [peri oral] administration of rhIGF-I" for therapeutic purposes in humans (Kimura et al., 1997: 618). This paper clearly showed that IGF-1 can survive digestion when in the presence of casein, the major protein in milk.

Second, and more important, a series of papers published in the late 1990s and as late as 2002 have found higher levels of serum IGF-1 to be associated with increased risk of a number of cancers, especially prostate (Chan et al., 1998a; Harman et al., 2000), colon (Ma et al., 1999; Giovannucci et al., 2000), lung (Yu et al., 1999) and premenopausal breast cancer (Toniolo et al., 2000). Indeed, a paper ("Role of the insulin-like growth factor family in cancer development and progression") published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in 2000 laid out a biological mechanism to explain the link between IGF-1 and cancer (Yu and Rohan, 2000).

As for the argument that levels of IGF-1 in milk are too low to alter concentrations of IGF-1 in human serum and so there could be no health effect of the increased levels of IGF-1 in milk from rbGH-treated cattle, a paper published just last fall shows this argument may be incorrect as well. A team of scientists at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston used data from a large, long-term (25 years) study of more than 1,000 nurses who record their diets carefully and who were then watched for changes in health. The study found that higher serum levels of IGF-I were found in the women who consumed the most dairy products and noted that other studies had found a link between increased dairy intake and increased serum IGF-I levels. As the study noted: "Our most consistent dietary finding was the positive association of IGF-I levels with total dairy and milk intake. . . Two other studies have supported an effect of milk intake on IGF-I levels. A randomized trial of 204 men and women where the intervention was to encourage consumption of three servings/day of nonfat milk to affect bone remodeling found that the 101 subjects in the intervention group had a statistically significant 10% average increase in serum IGF-I levels, whereas the control group had no change in levels (Heaney et al., 1999). In addition, Ma *et al.* (2001) observed a positive association between intake of dairy food and IGF-I levels among 318 men enrolled in the Physicians' Health Study. . . . *These results raise the possibility that milk consumption could influence cancer risk by a mechanism involving IGF-I.* In fact, positive associations between milk intake and risk of prostate cancer have been reported (Chan et al., 1998b; Talamini et al., 1986; Tzonou et al., 1999; La Vecchia et al., 1991; Talamini et al., 1992; and Schuurman et al., 1999). In the NHS, one or more servings of milk/day was associated with a higher risk of serous (sic) ovarian cancer (relative risk, 1.66; 95% confidence interval, 1.10 - 2.51) compared with three or fewer servings/month (Fairfield et al., 2000)" italic added (Holmes et al., 2002: pp. 859-860). A copy of this paper is appended to this letter.

A Reuters new story about this new study (copy attached), issued on September 10, 2002, quoted the lead author on the study, Dr. Michelle Holmes, discussing how this research suggests that IGF-I can be associated with various cancers: "Pregnancy may lower a woman's risk of cancer but drinking milk could raise it, researchers reported on Tuesday. . . . This is the first study to report that the more pregnancies a woman had, the lower was her blood level of IGF-1, Holmes said. 'Pregnancy is known to protect against several cancers such as breast and colon cancer. It is possible that the mechanism of this protection could be through lowering IGF-1 levels.' . . . 'We concluded that greater milk consumption was associated with higher levels of IGF-1,' said Holmes. *'This association raises the possibility that diet could increase cancer risk by increasing levels of IGF-1 in the blood stream. However, more research must be done to determine whether milk consumption itself is directly linked to cancer risk'* " italics added (Reuters, 2002).

All this new research on IGF-I published in the late 1990s and early 2000s—its connection with various cancers, its ability to potentially survive digestion when in milk, and the connection between increased milk consumption and increased sera levels of IGF-I—clearly show that there are still unanswered health questions associated with the consumption of milk from rbGH-treated cows. Clearly, more research into this area needs to be done to answer the questions raised by the new research described above.



### III. Labeling milk as to use of rbGH does not deceive consumers

In their Petition, Monsanto tries to argue that any mention in an advertisement as to whether milk comes from non-rbGH-treated cattle “deceives consumers.” We strongly disagree with these assertions. We note that the advertisements from Oakhurst Dairy and from H.P. Hood that Monsanto refers to clearly state that the farmers pledge not to use rbGH; the ads do not claim that their farmers absolutely don’t use rbGH. Such a claim is truthful because all the farmers do sign affidavits that they do not use rbGH on their cattle.

Monsanto also argues that the ads “mislead consumers by creating the false impression that milk is somehow better if it is produced without the use of rBST. Indeed, these claims falsely suggest that there are health or safety risks associated with milk from rBST-supplemented cows.” We do not necessarily believe that a truthful label—such as “from farms that pledge not to use artificial growth hormone” or “Our Farmers’ Pledge: No Artificial Growth Hormones”—always leads to the conclusion that milk from cows not treated with artificial growth hormones is “safer or superior to non-supplemented milk.” While some consumers may draw such a conclusion from these ads, others may not. Indeed, if such labels are considered to mislead consumers, then, by the same logic, labels such as “contains no artificial flavoring or colorings” or “contains no preservatives” would also be considered to mislead consumers. Yet no one has suggested that such labels should be banned.

Finally, we are concerned with Monsanto’s “request that the Attorney General initiate law enforcement proceedings to challenge deceptive claims in the marketplace.” Such legal proceedings against truthful claims would only serve to chill commercial free speech in this area and would make it virtually impossible for dairy chains to label or advertise milk as to whether it comes from farmers who have pledged not to use rbGH on their cows. The end result would be that consumers may be denied a choice about whether the milk they drink comes from cows that have been treated with rbGH or not. We strongly support a consumers right-to-choose in this area and so ask that you not initiate any legal proceeding against Oakhurst Dairy and H.P. Hood.

### IV. FDA does not require a “contextual statement” on milk labeled as coming from cattle not treated with rbGH

In their Petition, Monsanto suggests that a “qualifying statement,” such as suggested FDA wording “No significant difference has been shown between milk derived from rbST-treated and non-rbST treated cows,” would be needed “to qualify the misleading claims conveyed by the quality Seal or the labels and advertisements.” We strongly disagree with the notion that such “qualifying statements” are needed or required. First, we note that the suggested FDA language is misleading, because differences between milk from rbST-treated and non-rbST treated cows—particularly the statistically significant increases in IGF-I and the presence of rbGH—have been found. Second, the FDA has clearly stated that such a qualifying or “contextual” statement is not required at all. A letter written to Harold Rudnick (Director of the Division of Milk Control in the State of New York Department of Agriculture and Markets) by Jerry Mande (Executive Assistant to then FDA Commissioner David Kessler) and dated July 27, 1994, clearly shows this: “as I indicated, the bottom line is that a contextual statement is not required, that in many instances a statement like ‘from cows not treated with rbST’ would not be misleading and in no instance is the specific statement ‘No significant difference. . .’ required by FDA. . . the intent of our guidance was to have a uniform voluntary rbST labeling regime among states, that states were not necessarily pre-empted from developing alternative programs. For example, a state that has right-to-know would not be pre-empted by FDA from requiring rbST labeling even though FDA has determined it lacks the basis for requiring such labeling in its statute” (Mande, 1994: 2) (a copy of the letter is included as an attachment to this letter).

In sum, FDA has clearly stated that a “contextual statement” is not required milk labeled as coming from cows not treated with rbGH. In fact, I would argue that Maine’s Quality Seal program would constitute such an “alternative program” as discussed in the FDA letter above and so would be

perfectly legal. Finally, it should be noted that the Quality Seal program is a voluntary and not a mandatory label.

In conclusion, for all the reasons discussed above, we urge you to deny Monsanto's Petition.

Sincerely,

Michael Hansen, Ph.D.  
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Consumer Policy Institute/Consumers Union

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(See [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org) for pdf attachments to Chapter 6, rBGH Brochure, Health Care Without Harm Position on rBGH, and a Powerpoint Presentation)

## Chapter 7: GM-Free Schools

### Introduction

Working with parents, students, and school officials to take genetically engineered ingredients out of school meals is a powerful way to protect children's health and increase awareness of the hazards of genetically engineered food. GM-free school meals campaigns are important and effective, and it's a great time to embark on this effort as communities all across America are now working to implement GM-free policies in their school systems.

In recent years, parents, school administrators, and students have become increasingly aware of the importance of improving the nutrition of the food served in American schools. The child obesity and diabetes epidemics, the proliferation of ADD/ADHD, and a better understanding of the connection between food and behavior have all contributed to the emergence of a national "healthy school lunch" movement. Several school systems have made sweeping changes to their meal programs, and new parents are consistently the largest group of new buyers of organic food each year.

In addition, the US government has taken steps to upgrade school nutritional standards - the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, for example, states that all school districts with a federally funded school meals program develop and implement wellness policies that address, among other things, nutrition and nutrition education by the start of the 2006-07 school year.

A critical component of improving the health and safety of school meals is the removal of genetically engineered ingredients from school meals. Children face the greatest risk from the potential dangers of GE foods:

- Children are more susceptible to allergies.
- Children are more susceptible to problems with milk.
- Children are more susceptible to nutritional problems.
- Children are in danger from antibiotic resistant diseases.

Schools throughout the UK and parts of Europe banned GM food years ago. In the 1990s, many Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in the US rallied against rBGH and more than a hundred school districts banned milk from rBGH-treated cows. Wisconsin dairy farmer John Kinsman describes the method he used to inspire several schools: "I simply talked to parents of small children. Once mothers heard about this, they didn't rest until their school made the commitment."

A number of school systems in the US have recently instituted nutritional policies that increase the amount of healthy, organic food choices they offer their students. These schools have found this shift not only curbs obesity, but also increases students' abilities to concentrate. In the US, public schools are paid state and federal dollars according to the number of meals served, and those districts that are providing students salad bar and organic options are also seeing school lunch participation increase dramatically, sometimes even doubling, which is a boon to the school as well as to the health of their students.

Focusing on a campaign that exposes the health risks of genetically engineered foods is also an effective way to bring new constituencies into the movement to resist genetic engineering. Public health officials, children, teachers, and parents across the political spectrum can become

deeply engaged in GM-free school meals campaigns, as everyone wants to protect kids from substances that can harm their health. Launching a GM-free school meals campaign will boost the visibility of this issue in your community and broaden the base of support for your on-going efforts to shift agriculture away from genetic engineering.

The Institute for Responsible Technology, the Organic Consumers Association, and others developed excellent materials around GM-free school meals campaigns for groups to use. Some are included in this chapter. The Institute for Responsible Technology and the Sierra Club also created an excellent film, “Hidden Dangers in School Meals,” which you can access from the Institute’s website, [www.seedsofdeception.com](http://www.seedsofdeception.com). The Institute for Responsible Technology and GEAN also offer on-going organizing support and strategy advice for communities adopting these campaigns.

## Campaign Steps

- **Educate yourself, your children, parents, and school officials about the dangers of genetically engineered foods.** Start by grounding yourself in a solid understanding about the hazards of GMO food. The book “Seeds of Deception” provides powerful information about the health risks of GMOs. You can order the book or read highlights at the Seeds of Deception website, [www.seedsofdeception.com](http://www.seedsofdeception.com). Then you can distribute the fact sheet about the dangers of genetically engineered foods included in this section of the toolkit to friends, parents, and school administrators, or organize community screenings of the video “Hidden Dangers of Kid’s Meals” at your home, your local library, or community center. Start developing a list of other concerned community members who would like to work on removing GMOs from your school’s meals.

- **Hold your first organizing meeting:** Call the folks you have identified who would like to get more involved in working on this campaign, and schedule a meeting. This can be an informal affair at someone’s home or a local park, pot-luck style or you can provide snacks. (For more on organizing an initial group meeting, see the “How to Form a Local Group” section of this toolkit.) Find out why the people there are concerned about this issue, and decide together what you would like to accomplish. No GMOs at all in the school? No rBGH dairy products? More organic foods offered? More food from local farms?

Then divvy up some tasks for people to take on before your next meeting. The next steps are likely personal education (point folks towards Seeds of Deception or other information about the health hazards of GMOs so they can deepen their understanding of the issue) and research. You will need to determine what shifts need to be made at your local school(s), who you need to influence to make the changes you seek, and how the school can source the GMO-free ingredients you’d like them to start using.

- **Determine your target decision maker:** Do some research to find out who at your local school has the power to remove GMOs from school meals and phase in healthier food options. Is it the school board? The superintendent? Does the school chef help decide what ingredients are used? Do individual schools make decisions about the meals they serve, or are they part of a bigger city- or county-wide school meals program? Call or drop by your local school, or contact your PTA or school board, and ask them who makes decisions about the ingredients used in school meals.

- **Survey Your Current School Lunch Offerings.** Figure out what is currently being served in the school cafeteria, and where the food is coming from. There are four primary GMO crops in our food supply: corn, cotton, canola, and soy. The majority of all these crops grown in America today are genetically engineered, so unless these ingredients are labeled organic, it is a safe bet to assume they are GE. Many dairy products also come from cows that have been treated with rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone, a genetically engineered hormone)—for more specific information on the hazards of rBGH, please see the “rBGH-Free Dairies” section of this toolkit.

Most processed foods contain one or more ingredients derived from these crops; soy lecithin (an emulsifier), cottonseed oil, corn syrup, and canola (also called rapeseed) oil are in a staggering number of products on our grocery store shelves. When you look into which foods are being served in your local schools, pay attention to which oils are being used, what soft drinks and snack foods are served, where the milk comes from, and if any fresh produce is coming from local farms.

- **Research alternatives:** Spend some time figuring out how the school can source GMO-free ingredients to replace the genetically engineered products they are using. This is important, so you can provide the decision-makers with positive solutions that would allow them to make the changes you seek.

All certified organic foods must be free of genetically engineered ingredients; are there organic alternatives to any of the processed foods they are using, that would not contain GMO ingredients? Could they phase those processed foods out for fresh alternatives? Could they substitute sunflower or olive oil for canola, corn, or vegetable oil? Could they start sourcing fresh fruits or vegetables from local farmers rather than buying frozen vegetables? Which products do local farmers have to offer to schools? What are the differences in price between the GMO-free and genetically engineered ingredients?

The more of this research you can do, the better your meeting with your decision maker will be. If you can list out some of the ingredients or products you want them to phase out, and provide them with a list of alternatives to those items, where they can source the new ingredients, and the differences in cost, you will make it much easier for them to determine which of the changes they are prepared to make. It will also help you understand which changes will be easier for the schools to make and which will be more difficult.

- **Meet with your target decision maker(s):** Once you have come to understand the dangers associated with GMOs in school meals, figured out what is currently being served in school meals, and sourced alternative, GMO-free ingredients, set up a meeting with your decision maker. Share your concerns and your findings with them, and hear what they have to say. The process of phasing GMOs out of school meals and seeing all the changes you seek come to fruition could take some time. If your decision maker is not ready to make all the changes you have asked for right away, be patient and be flexible. If needed, start with smaller steps, changing just one or a few items offered in the school, and just keep working to change the foods offered at your school until they are as safe and as free from genetically engineered ingredients as possible.

- **Celebrate your successes:** If your decision maker agrees to implement some or all of the changes you asked for, be sure to share this victory with the local media. This will not only provide good publicity for your decision maker and your school, it will also help increase community education about this issue and may well inspire other schools to make similar changes. Also, don't forget to contact GEAN and let us know about your success. We can help you share your story widely with the national media and with other GE activists across America. Your success will help build the national narrative about community resistance to GMOs and will be an important next step in moving American agriculture away from genetic engineering.

- **If decision makers are not prepared to make changes:** If you encounter resistance, and the decision maker is not willing to hear you out or make any shifts in the foods served at your school, don't despair. Just ramp up your organizing! Determine who else influences your decision maker. You may want to meet with other important members of the school community, including school administrators, teachers, and the PTA, and garner their support for the campaign. You can ask these groups to sign statements of support, you can collect signatures from parents, students, and community members on petitions to your decision maker, write letters to the editor of the local paper, or organize events to build support for your campaign, garner media attention and put pressure on your decision maker.



If you are having a hard time moving ahead, please contact GEAN or IRT and we will be happy to help however we can. And remember that all you do to increase awareness about the dangers of GMOs creates positive momentum in this movement, and that victory can be measured in many different ways.

## Genetically Engineered Foods Threaten Children's Health

The genetic makeup of plants and animals have been feeding humans for thousands of years. Now genetic engineers are changing that genetic structure in ways that are unprecedented in human history. Genes from bacteria, viruses and insects are being spliced into our food and incorporated into the human diet for the first time ever.

Internal documents from the Food and Drug Administration show that agency scientists warned that genetically engineered (GE) foods might create toxins, allergies, nutritional problems, and new diseases that could be difficult to identify. Although they urged their superiors to require long-term tests on each genetically engineered variety prior to approval, the agency ignored the scientists. Official FDA policy now claims that genetically engineered foods are no different from conventional foods, and do NOT require safety testing. A manufacturer can introduce a genetically engineered food without informing the government or consumers.

**Proven problems with GE foods:** The biotech industry often claims that there have been no proven health problems due to GE foods. This is misleading for a number of reasons.

One is that no one has been monitoring the impacts of GE foods on public health. These foods are not labeled in the US, which makes health affects even more difficult to track. The few animal feeding studies that have been conducted on GE foods have shown grave human health effects, including:

- Damage to the immune system and vital organs
- Potentially pre-cancerous conditions
- Stomach lesions
- Early death in animal test subjects.

Other studies have shown increased infant mortality rates in newborn rats whose mothers were fed genetically engineered soy; potential respiratory and intestinal problems in humans from inhaling genetically engineered pollen; and the creation of new viruses in human and animal cells from genetically engineered vaccines.

**Children face the greatest risk from GE foods:**

- *Young, fast-developing bodies are influenced most*
  - Children's bodies develop at a fast pace and are more likely to be influenced and show the effects of genetically engineered foods. That is why independent scientists used young adolescent rats in their GE feeding studies. The rats showed significant health damage after only 10 days, including damaged immune systems and digestive function, smaller brains, livers, and testicles, partial atrophy of the liver, and potentially pre-cancerous cell growth in the intestines.
- *Children are more susceptible to allergies*
  - Children are three to four times more prone to allergies than adults. Even tiny amounts of allergens can sometimes cause reactions in children.
- *Children are more susceptible to problems with milk*
  - Milk and dairy products from cows treated with the genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (rbGH) contain an increased amount of the hormone IGF-1, which is one of the highest risk factors associated with breast and prostate cancer.
- *Children are more susceptible to nutritional problems*

- A 2002 report by the UK's Royal Society said that genetic modification "could lead to unpredicted harmful changes in the nutritional state of foods." They therefore recommended that potential health effects of GM foods be rigorously researched before being fed to pregnant or breast-feeding women, elderly people, those suffering from chronic disease, and babies.
- *Children are in danger from antibiotic resistant diseases*
  - Children prone to ear and other infections are at risk of facing antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria, due to the use of antibiotic resistant genes in GM food. The British Medical Association cited this as one reason why they called for a moratorium of GM foods.

**How to protect your children from genetically engineered foods:** Although foods with genetically engineered ingredients are not labeled in this country, you can still protect your family from the dangers of these products:

- Certified organic foods cannot contain genetically engineered ingredients. Try and buy as much organic, locally-produced food as possible.
- The majority of American-grown corn, soy, cotton, and canola are now GE. Pay extra attention to these ingredients on food labels, which are in the majority of processed foods on our grocery store shelves. Check out the True Food Network's Shopper's Guide for a comprehensive list of GE foods and their non-GE alternatives at [www.truefoodnow.org/shoppersguide](http://www.truefoodnow.org/shoppersguide).
- Speak with the manager of your local grocery store about the hazards of GE foods and encourage them to source more GE-free products.
- Join together with others in your community to move your local schools to take genetically engineered ingredients out of school meals. Check with the Genetic Engineering Action Network to find out about groups working on this issue in your area at 563-432-6735 or [info@geaction.org](mailto:info@geaction.org) or with the Institute for Responsible Technology, [info@responsibletechnology.org](mailto:info@responsibletechnology.org).

## Further Resources for Creating Healthier School Meals

- INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY — This group is coordinating a national effort at promoting GE Free Schools. <http://www.seedsofdeception.org>
- MODEL SCHOOLWELLNESS POLICIES— Developed by a work group convened by the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity. <http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org>
- GENERATION GREEN — Developed “Safeguard our Students (SOS)” campaign which has as one of its goals to remove genetically engineered ingredients from schools. <http://www.generationgreen.org>
- COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COALITION — Information on Farm to School programs. <http://www.foodsecurity.org>
- CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER HEALTH— Nationwide initiative to improve children’s health and well-being through whole-food nutrition and healthier school environments. <http://www.betterhealthcampaign.org>
- ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS — Partnership of more than 40 national organizations and government agencies set up to address the “epidemic of overweight, sedentary, and undernourished youth” by focusing on changes in schools. <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>
- CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST’S SCHOOL FOODS TOOL KIT. <http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfood/>
- SEED STEWARDS provides an innovative whole-school model using sustainability, food and communitybuilding as themes to integrate learning. <http://www.growseed.org/>
- COMMUNITY SEEDS: A Case Study of Sustainable Agriculture Project —The SAP uses an agricultural service-learning model to both connect students to community-based initiatives dealing with food and agriculture. [http://www.mdihs.u98.k12.me.us/community\\_seeds/](http://www.mdihs.u98.k12.me.us/community_seeds/)

*(See [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org) to download a pdf attachment to Chapter 7, Sample Petition)*

## **Chapter 8: GE-Free Farmers' Markets**

### **Introduction**

Farmers' markets are one of the most visible places where Americans are reclaiming local control of the food they eat and the crops that are grown in their environment. As a result, these markets are an excellent place for people concerned about genetically engineered foods to influence local food policy. There are a number of ways to move your farmers' market away from GE food like encouraging individual farms to make a GE-free pledge or advocating for the market to pass policies prohibiting GE foods from being sold.

GE-Free Farmers' Market campaigns are an effective way to engage farmers and consumers in an effort to advance local control over our food supply. For local groups, these campaigns are a good way to spur you to do outreach to your local farmers, who are directly impacted by genetic engineering. For farmers, passing GE-free policies at the local market can provide a marketing advantage and draw the growing number of Americans who are concerned about eating GE foods to buy from a likeminded farmer.

Remember that every local campaign like a GE-free farmers' market gains enormous power when it gets covered in the media. You can inspire others to work to pass similar policies at another farmers' market and help raise public awareness about the hazards of genetic engineering. Additionally, you will add to the growing national narrative about community resistance to genetic engineering.

This chapter provides materials for advancing the campaign such as literature for consumers and a sample farmer pledge form. Additionally, it includes materials to help GE-Free Farmers' Markets campaigns learn from the successes of others such as strategy considerations, sample market policy language, a graphic for a stall, and a sample press release.

# Campaign Strategy Considerations

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## Ideas for Campaigns

1. Enact a market policy requiring all vendors to be GE-free.
2. Establish a voluntary pledge and create a sign that vendors can display to inform their customers that they offer GE-free products.
3. Offer GE-free logos to vendors and markets that implement a GE-free policy or practices.

## Enforcement

For market managers, an early and important consideration will be the question of enforcement. Market managers are generally careful to not put themselves in the position to add work by guaranteeing or certifying the practices of their vendors. When vendors join a market, they are usually given a policy manual and required to sign a statement of agreement. While the bylaws of some markets may state that the market reserves the right to inspect farms, this probably never happens.

## Build Relationships with Farmers

Regardless of which focus your campaign takes, it will be important to involve vendors early in the campaign. They can be allies and advocates, particularly if you present the GE-free angle to them as a marketing strategy. In some cases, there may be farmers on the Board of the market. At the very least, they will have some kind of relationship with the market staff (sometimes not harmonious, though!), who will certainly have influence on policy decisions. Personal relationships will no doubt be important, either as obstacles or advantages. See if you can develop some trust and alliances with vendors to learn about the market politics and issues.

Remember that farmers selling at your market do not necessarily farm in your region — some drive for many hours to reach markets, especially lucrative and popular ones. Also, the people selling at the market may not necessarily be the farmers who grew the crop; they may be paid help or family members. Particularly in urban areas, consider the fact that you may face language barriers with some farmers and vendors.

## Target the Decision Makers

Be sure to consider who the decision makers are. In many cases, a Board of Directors is responsible for deciding on policy. The staff (e.g., market managers, executive directors), whether or not they have a formal vote on the Board, are also influential. Find out if/when Board meetings are held. Arrange for conversations with individual Board members. Take allied farmers with you to important meetings to be your messengers.

## Frame the Message

When trying to enact a policy, it is more likely to be successful if it is framed as a good business strategy. Since most consumers want their products labeled for GE content, and

a majority prefers not to consume GE foods (particularly fresh produce), the GE-free identity should provide a distinction to farmers and to markets that embrace it. This is particularly important in markets that are highly competitive, either in particular regions or amongst participating farmers. Farmers are usually looking for ways to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

One tool you might want to consider is a poll of customers regarding their preferences about consuming GMO food and labeling, either informally conducted or formally with the cooperation of the manager. This data could then be shared with both vendors and decision makers.

Keep in mind that the market as an entity also has financial interests to consider. They obtain stall fees from their vendors and a percentage of their sales. The better participating farmers do economically, the more money the market makes.

*Drawn from Californians for GE-Free Agriculture's Organizers Handbook, 2005*

# Examples of GE-Free Farmers' Market Policy Language

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## 1. Marin Certified Farmers' Market Association (MCFMA)

Bridget, Executive Director • [www.marincountyfarmersmarkets.org](http://www.marincountyfarmersmarkets.org) or 415-456-3276

The MCFMA is a member-based organization operating nine markets, with a member-elected Board. They passed a GE-free policy several years ago, and though they see this as a marketing advantage, they have not yet made it a major marketing focus.

*Products Prohibited at MCFMA:*

*Crops grown using Genetically Modified (GM) seed planted after March 1, 2000 may not be sold at the market. Consult MCFMA office for a current list of these crops, which include varieties of canola, soy, corn, tomato, radicchio, summer squash, potatoes, cotton and papaya. Note: since there are no labeling requirements for GM seeds, the only sure way to avoid growing crops using unlabelled GM seeds, is to give preference to certified organic agricultural products and processed foods.*

## 2. SF Ferry Plaza Farmers Market

Maggie Gosselin, Programs Manager • [maggie@cuesa.org](mailto:maggie@cuesa.org)

This market is operated by CUESA (Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture), and governed by the non-profit Board.

In policy manual: No crops grown using seed modified with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) may be sold at FPFM.

## 3. Berkeley Farmers Market

Ecology Center • [bfm@ecologycenter.org](mailto:bfm@ecologycenter.org)

On the agreements that farmers sign when becoming vendors, the following statement appears: *Genetically Modified Organisms Ban Agreement*

*I agree that no product or ingredient in any product that I sell at the Berkeley Farmers' Market will be grown from genetically modified seeds.*

## 4. Santa Barbara Farmers Market

Laurence Hauben, Executive Director

Tel: (805) 962-5354 • Cell: (805) 331-1218 • Email: [SBCFMA@rain.org](mailto:SBCFMA@rain.org)

This market is operated by a non-profit corporation, and the Board is comprised of nine farmers. They recently passed a GE-free policy stating that “*no transgenic foods would be sold at the markets*”, and they are currently updating their rules, so this new policy is not yet included in writing.

## 5. Hanalei Farmers' Market

John Parziale, farmer and organizer of GMO-free policy

Tel: (808) 651-6930

The farmers at this market recently passed a policy saying they will not “*knowingly grow, plant, or sell genetically engineered foods or seeds.*” Due to widespread contamination of papayas by the GMO papaya in Hawaii, farmers felt it was important to add the word “*knowingly*” to their resolution.



# A Farmer Pledge to Protect Farmers, Consumers, and the Environment from Genetically Engineered Crops

WHEREAS:

- There is growing evidence that farmers using genetic engineering (GE) technology are experiencing increased input costs and lower crop prices due to international marketplace rejection of GE crops;
- Consumers around the world are increasingly rejecting GE food, and many governments require GE product labeling in response to consumer concerns;
- Genetic contamination because of pollen drift and seed mixing affects farmers by: 1) threatening their ability to produce GE-free crops; 2) exposing them to unwanted legal vulnerabilities such as patent infringement; 3) contaminating organic and non-GE crops, causing market loss;
- GE technology leads to increased weed and pest resistance, requiring increased use of pesticides and herbicides;
- Seed patenting represents a loss of control for farmers on the means of agricultural production, and leads to a dependency on biotechnology corporations.

THEREFORE, as a farmer, I/we:

1. Pledge to not purchase, sell or plant any varieties of GE seeds or crops;
2. Demand a suspension of all further releases and governmental approvals of genetically engineered seeds and agricultural products;
3. Demand that biotechnology companies be held liable for any and all damages that result from the use of their genetically engineered crops;
4. Demand that farmers who reject genetic engineering should not bear the cost of establishing that their product is free of genetic engineering.

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Signature(s)

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Name(s)

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Farm/Company

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Address

City

State

Zip

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Phone

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Email

# Sample Fact Sheet for Farmers

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## Farmer Fact Sheet on Genetic Engineering

### What is Genetic Engineering?

Genetic engineering differs radically from traditional breeding techniques and can only occur in laboratories where scientists are able to transfer gene bacteria, viruses, plants, and even animals to common food crops to capture a desired trait. This process overcomes species barriers that traditional plant and animal breeders could never cross. Genetic engineers have already inserted human genes into rice, jellyfish, and chicken genes into potatoes, and they have developed foods using dozens of other combinations that would never occur in nature. The main crops currently on the market are GE corn, soy, canola, and cotton.

### The True Costs of Genetically Engineered Agriculture

Genetically engineered crops are not standing up to the promises made by the biotech industry. Midwestern, Canadian, and Argentinean farmers who have adopted this technology are experiencing increased input costs and lower crop prices as export market rejection increases - a deadly combination for family farmers.

In the U.S., economic studies revealed that farmers are not saving money with GE varieties and in fact, may end up losing money. Consider these facts:

- Dr. Charles Benbrook, former Director of the Agriculture Board of the National Academy of Sciences, found that Bt corn has cost U.S. farmers \$92 million in the last six years. Yield gains or pesticide reductions have not offset the increased costs associated with the GE seeds.
- Purdue University researchers found that the cost of Bt corn seed exceeds the value of the seed to farmers by more than \$11/acre. Studies of biotech soybeans also show no profits to farmers.
- An Iowa State economist looking at two planting seasons found that GE soybean farmers had no higher returns than non-GE growers did. Even the usually pro-biotech Farm Journal found in interviews with soy growers who planted GE soy fields that non-GE varieties outperformed GE soy by \$1.25/acre.

U.S. export markets are feeling the brunt of consumer rejection abroad. According to American Corn Growers Association, U.S. corn growers have lost \$814 million in the last five years due to the rejection of GE food by foreign markets.

### Consumer Rejection

Consumers throughout the world and increasingly in the U.S. are rejecting genetically engineered food. A PBS/Frontline April 2001 poll found that 65 percent of 21,000 respondents said we should not grow GE crops. An ABC News poll in June 2000 found 93 percent of respondents believe the government should require labeling of GE food, and 57 percent said they'd be less likely to buy GE-labeled foods. Public sentiment is overwhelmingly opposed to the genetic engineering of food in many major U.S. trading partners including the European Union, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Farmers in Canada and the Midwestern United States are

experiencing billions of dollars in losses of export markets because of this widespread marketplace rejection.

## **Farmer Liability**

*"Farmers are being sued for having GMOs on their property that they did not buy, do not want, will not use, and cannot sell," says North Dakota farmer, Tom Wiley. "If I contaminate my neighbor's property, I am held responsible. Farmers need legal protections to ensure that if the biotech industry contaminates their crops with GMOs, the industry is held responsible."*

The pollen from genetically engineered crops does not stay within the boundaries of a GE field, but can drift into neighboring fields. The results are unwanted environmental pollution and a legal nightmare for farmers.

The most well known case concerns Percy Schmeiser, a Canadian canola farmer who was sued by Monsanto after his fields were contaminated by the company's Roundup Ready canola. He unknowingly planted seeds that were genetically contaminated with the genes from Monsanto's RR canola. Monsanto sued Schmeiser for patent infringement, arguing that he owed the company its technology fee as their genes were now on his fields and in some of his seed. The judge found in favor of Monsanto, ruling that it did not matter how the contamination occurred or if the farmer was aware of the contamination. Schmeiser was ordered to pay Monsanto's technology fee, profits from his crop and Monsanto's lawyer fees, totaling more than 150,000 Canadian dollars. He took his case to the Canadian Supreme Court and lost. Percy Schmeiser is not alone. Monsanto has taken legal action against more than 400 U.S. and Canadian farmers for patent infringement.

## **Threats to Sustainable Farming**

Organic farmers in regions where GE crops are being grown are finding their fields are at risk of genetic contamination, putting their markets in jeopardy and burdening them with expensive DNA testing to prove their crops are GE-free. Organic farmers in Canada have filed a class action lawsuit against Monsanto and Bayer, formerly Aventis CropScience, claiming they can no longer grow organic canola because genetic contamination is so widespread. Organic farmers in Argentina filed a similar lawsuit.

## **Keeping Our Community GMO-Free**

Genetic engineering puts export markets in jeopardy, threatens organic and conventional farmers who want to provide a GMO-free product, and risks food safety with genetic pollution. A growing number of consumers in America are becoming concerned about genetically engineered foods, and want a source for non-GMO products. Local farmers still have the choice to go GMO-free and do not have to go down the unpredictable path of genetically engineered agriculture. One way to take a stand on this issue is to pledge to go GMO-free and to advertise your growing practices at the farmers' market, giving the residents of our community the choice to buy food free of genetic engineering.

**News Release**  
April 14, 2005

**Contact:** Joe Farmer, Safe Food Farm  
(808)xxx-xxxx  
Local Organizer, GMO-Free Kauai  
(808)xxx-xxxx

**Hanalei Becomes Home to Hawaii's First  
GMO-Free Farmer's Market**

*Citing consumer rejection, increased production cost, and legal vulnerabilities, local farmers pledge to sell only non-genetically engineered foods*

Today, the nineteen farmers who sell their crops at the weekly Hanalei Farmer's Market unanimously agreed to not knowingly plant or sell genetically engineered seeds or crops. The market became the first in the state to adopt an official policy forbidding the sale of genetically modified organisms.

"Not only have our customers told us they don't want to buy GMOs, but we also know these crops hurt farmers," says Joe Farmer of Safe Food Farm. "They make us vulnerable to lawsuits from the biotechnology companies, they contaminate neighboring crops, and they increase our input costs."

Farmer began circulating a petition among fellow vendors at the Hanalei market last month, in which farmers pledged not to knowingly grow GMOs and called for a suspension of further releases of GMOs into the environment on Kauai. The petition also demanded that biotechnology companies, rather than local farmers, be held liable for any damages that result from the use of their genetically engineered crops. After all the vendors signed on to the petition, they approached the market manager and advanced a policy for the market to be officially GMO-free.

Shoppers at the market applauded the decision. "As a mother," says Sally Mom of Princeville, "I'm very concerned about genetically engineered foods. These crops have never been proven safe for human consumption, and I don't want to feed GMOs to my kids. It's a comfort to know that the food we buy at the Hanalei Market will be GMO-free."

Other farmers' markets on the mainland have passed similar resolutions. In California alone, nine farmers' markets have pledged to be GMO-free. "We are proud to join farmers all over America who are saying no to GMOs and demanding the right to grow crops that are free of genetic contamination," says Jan Kalo, a taro grower from Hanalei. "This policy is one more step in Hawaiian farmers' efforts to stop genetic engineering in local agriculture."

Last year, the Hawaii Coffee Growers' Association passed a unanimous resolution calling on the Department of Agriculture to stop issuing permits for genetically engineered coffee to be tested in open field trials in the islands. In January of this year, Maui Land & Pine passed a policy pledging not to grow GMOs on their agricultural lands, citing consumer opposition to genetically engineered crops. And in March, Native Hawaiian activists secured an agreement from the University of Hawaii to stop research and development of genetically engineered Hawaiian taro.

"While the University and the state government continue to promote biotechnology, it is becoming clearer and clearer that the people and farmers of Hawaii want GMO-free, locally-based agriculture," says Noli Hoye of GMO-Free Kauai. "We are thrilled that the Hanalei farmers took this step, and hope that other farmers on the island and across the state will be inspired to pass similar market policies."

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*Please note this is a sample, not an actual release*

*(See [www.geaction.org](http://www.geaction.org) to download a pdf attachment to Chapter 8, GE-Free Graphic for Stall and Literature for Consumers)*