



# FOOD OF THE FUTURE?

## Part II: November 15–17, 2001

### A Dialogue on the Social and Ethical Issues of Genetically Modified (GM) Foods Vancouver, BC

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#### CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The Centre for Innovation in Management in the Faculty of Business at Simon Fraser University and the Centre for Applied Ethics at the University of British Columbia are planning a Dialogue Conference on the social and ethical issues associated with biotechnology and food, November 15-17, 2001. This is the second in a two-part conference. Part I which focused on the scientific issues surrounding genetically modified foods, was held in early May.

The Dialogue Conference in November will bring together on an invitation basis, 150 thought leaders representing all major points of view. Participants will engage in generative dialogue on what the biotechnology industry must do to develop and maintain a social license to operate. Social and ethical issues identified by attendees during the first part of the conference will be the focus of Part II. The goal of the Part II Dialogue Conference is to facilitate an inclusive and deep conversation between stakeholders, to build greater understanding and establish a foundation for positive action in this complex and conflicted area of public dialogue.

The two-day gathering will be held at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University in downtown Vancouver – the first conference facility in North America purpose built in the round to foster transformational dialogue and thinking.

#### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

We are inviting corporate, government and civic society organizations to join us as sponsors of this groundbreaking Dialogue Conference. The Centre for Innovation in Management at SFU is funded from sponsors and grants, and does not access university monies. Your sponsorship of this Dialogue conference is therefore essential in order for the conference to proceed. We must raise a total of \$75,000.00.



## FOCUS

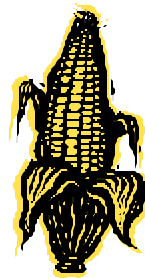
During Part I, several social and ethical issues were raised with the understanding that they would be considered and examined in greater depth during Part II. These include:

- Public right to know - labeling of GM food
- Transparency of the regulatory process
- Corporate control of food and agriculture
- Intellectual property rights (patenting of genes, plant breeders' rights)
- Threshold levels of GM food in organic food - how do conventional and organic farmers co-exist?

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A diverse group of organizations and individuals from across Canada have come together to guide the design of the conference. The Steering Committee for the conference is composed of these members:

- Ben Bradshaw, Dept. of Geography, SFU
- Kai Alderson, Ethical Funds Inc.
- Herb Barbolet, Farm Folk/City Folk
- Allan Brown, Dupont Canada
- Conrad G. Brunk, Co-Chair Royal Society Panel, Food Biotechnology
- Carolyn Egri, Faculty of Business, SFU
- Margaret Gadsby, Aventis CropScience
- Joy Kennedy, Task Force for Churches and Corporate Responsibility
- Brewster Kneen, Farmer, Food Activist, and Publisher of The Ram's Horn
- Myriam Laberge, Centre for Innovation in Management, SFU
- Michael McDonald, UBC Centre for Applied Ethics
- Zamir Punja, Dept. of Biological Sciences, SFU;
- Ann Svendsen, Centre for Innovation in Management, SFU
- Burleigh Trevor-Deutsch, Ethics Advisor, BioteCanada
- William Leiss, Faculty of Management, University of Calgary (advisor on risk communication issues)



“Proponents claim that GM foods ... in short, are safe for humans, animals and the environment, will improve human health and will help maintain the family farm in both developed and developing countries. ... Critics claim that GM crops will in fact hurt farmers in the developing world, as large multinational corporations come to control the international seed market, and poor farmers can no longer save seed to use in the next growing season. Some Canadian farmers have expressed concern that they will not be able to find international markets for their genetically modified crops due to the current controversy. Some people also question the ethics of manipulating plant life in this y. There is also concern that the long-term effects of these foods on human health have not been properly examined, and that problems may emerge in the future. Environmental concerns include fear that transgenes from modified crops will ‘drift’ into neighbouring environments and affect other plant life, that biodiversity will decrease and that animals and insects who eat these plants will be negatively affected. Underlying these concerns is an expressed lack of public confidence in the regulatory capacity of governments to deal effectively with this new technology. Some have expressed concern that regulatory capacity may be compromised in countries where governments also promote GM foods and crops as part of their economic growth agenda.”  
Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee, Special Projects

## SPONSOR BENEFITS

As a sponsor of the November Dialogue Conference, you will not only gain these valuable benefits, but will also contribute to increasing understanding, and enhancing the level of thoughtful dialogue on the issues surrounding biotechnology and food:

- **Leadership reputation.** Sponsors will demonstrate leadership in the biotechnology area and be recognized as visionary, progressive, and solutions-oriented.
- **Partnership in On-Going Dialogue.** Sponsors will have an opportunity to form an on-going partnership with the Centre for Innovation in Management and others to facilitate future dialogue and learning on biotechnology and other issues affecting business and society.
- **Understanding of Social and Ethical Issues.** Sponsors will gain an appreciation of the social and ethical concerns felt by specific stakeholders.
- **Finding Solutions.** Through participation and financial contributions sponsors will help Canadians identify solutions to critical social and ethical issues surrounding genetically modified food crops.

“Is it possible to have public policy discussions that are informed, allow meaningful participation on the part of all stakeholders, and build trust?” – Michael McDonald, *Biotechnology, Ethics and Government. A Synthesis* (Report to the Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee, October 2000)

## CONFERENCE HOSTS

The **Centre for Innovation in Management (CIM)**, located in SFU’s Faculty of Business, is a partnership of faculty, researchers, business leaders and social entrepreneurs dedicated to helping business create social as well as shareholder value. CIM conducts research, organizes and facilitates dialogue conferences and disseminates new ideas in the areas of stakeholder relations.

The **Centre for Applied Ethics**, University of British Columbia is an interdisciplinary unit conducting research in business and professional ethics, health care ethics, ethics and technology, citizenship and multiculturalism, and animal welfare using a range of methodologies from the human, social and natural sciences.

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