

# Call to Action for Seed Sovereignty on 16 October 2012 – worldwide

Seed and agribusiness transnational corporations have been striving for years to increase their control over seeds and the entire food chain. Their hunger for profit threatens small farmers worldwide and ultimately all of us.

**The Campaign for Seed Sovereignty calls for actions against the seed industry!**

**We need seed sovereignty to be able to achieve food sovereignty!**



A new study from Switzerland\* shows that Monsanto and Syngenta hold intellectual property rights on, among others, 62 % of all registered “conventional” varieties of tomatoes and 71 % of cabbage varieties in Europe. The top ten of the worlds biggest seed companies\*\* are controlling 73 % of the global seed market, with just three of them controlling over half of the market (data from 2009). The same companies are also behind the development of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and are trying, despite a lot of resistance from farmers and consumers, to introduce these dangerous seeds, making farmers dependent not only on their patented seeds but also on their chemical products.

These corporations are promoting a highly industrialised model of agriculture that depends on high inputs and is based on monocultures. It guarantees them massive profits, while destroying ecosystems and social relations and contributing to climate change.

The seed and agro-industry is intimately linked to the chemical and petroleum industries, forming powerful alliances of vested interest which have close contacts with political power. Both on national and international levels major seed companies use their economic and political influence to impose new laws that serve their interests. One example is the new EU seed law, which is expected to be presented for approval in the near future. They eliminate competition from small companies by buying them up, monopolise the market and criminalise farmers by taking them to court.

In many countries seed activists are struggling to maintain locally adapted and diverse seeds, free of all legal protection, and to keep GMOs off our fields and plates. Many different forms of involvement and action, from local and collective saving and swapping seeds, political campaigns, to self-defence initiatives against GMO fields, are all steps on the way to seed and food sovereignty.

Let's unite our efforts to create a powerful protest against the seed industry and their socially and ecologically destructive activities.

We call for actions: let's organise **political actions** on the **16 October in many countries in front of the offices of the big seed companies or their lobby organisations.**

**We count on you! Investigate, find out which seed company is dominant in your region and is maybe controlled by one of the top ten seed companies, organise a creative protest action and get in contact with the seed sovereignty campaign.** We will put all actions on the website [www.seed-sovereignty.org](http://www.seed-sovereignty.org) to make our joined struggle visible, and share information, ideas and action material.

Why this date? The **16 October is the UN World Food Day and an international action day for the worldwide network of Via Campesina** to fight for food sovereignty and the interests of peasants and consumers. We see our initiative as part of this worldwide struggle.

This year, the Indian scientist, activist and author Vandana Shiva is calling on food and seed activists and their supporters all over the world to join the “seed emergency campaign” and reject unjust laws that are handing over control over our genetic resources to a handful of corporations and governments. **The Seed Freedom Movement has asked us to become seed defenders and /or seed savers and take a firm stand against the erosion of our right to seeds.** The 16 October is the perfect occasion for European seed sovereignty movements to show their support for this new international movement.

**Our demands are:**

- open access to fertile and diverse seeds free of any form of legal protection or patenting;
- the right for farmers and gardeners to obtain seeds from their harvest, to re-sow, distribute and sell them;
- a new model of agriculture based on local, small-scale food webs rather than monocultures requiring high inputs;
- new agricultural and trade policies promoting production for local needs and not global “free” trade, dominated by transnational corporations;
- policies that favour the needs of farmers and consumers, health and the environment instead of profits for big business.

**Join the struggle and get in contact with us: [info@seed-sovereignty.org](mailto:info@seed-sovereignty.org)**

\* “Strukturen und Entwicklungen des Schweizer und internationalen Marktes für Saatgut am Beispiel ausgewählter Gemüsesorten“, ed. Berne Declaration et al.

\*\* The top ten seed companies in 2009 (in decreasing order of size): Monsanto, DuPont (Pioneer), Syngenta, Group Limagrain, Land O'Lakes/Winfield Solutions, KWS AG, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, Sakata and DLF-Trifolium A/S. But, beware: these better known names often hide behind the more benign-sounding names of small seed companies that they have bought up by the hundreds.

**Links:**

Campaign for Seed Sovereignty: [www.seed-sovereignty.org](http://www.seed-sovereignty.org)

Via Campesina on **World Food Sovereignty Day in 2011**: <http://viacampesina.org>

Seed Freedom Movement: [www.seedfreedom.in](http://www.seedfreedom.in)

Declaration to sign for Seed Freedom: <http://seedfreedom.in/declaration>