

## Percy Schmeiser– Yale Presentation – October 2008

### **Forward**

Percy Schmeiser was born and raised in Bruno, Saskatchewan Canada. This agricultural based community of 650 people is located in the heart of Canada's three western prairie provinces. The town of Bruno has a predominant German heritage and is located 90 km (55 miles) east of Saskatoon, which is the largest city in the province of Saskatchewan.

For seventy years, Schmeiser has been involved in agriculture. Following his grandfather and father, he is a third generation farmer and has been farming since 1946. In 1952, he joined the family farm equipment dealership business that was started by his father in 1931.

Schmeiser has served the public in various capacities. On the provincial political level, he was elected as Member of the Legislative Assembly (M.L.A.) for the constituency of Watrous in the Saskatchewan Legislature in 1967. At the municipal level, he served as Mayor for the Town of Bruno from 1963-1982. He also was a town councilor from 1960-1963 and from 1985-1988. Schmeiser re-entered municipal politics in 2003 and served as a councilor and deputy Mayor until 2006.

Schmeiser served as a Director on the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission from 1991-1999. He also was a Director with the Saskatchewan-Manitoba Implement Dealers Association and the President of the White Farm Equipment Dealers Council in Canada.

He is a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Knight of the Knights of Columbus, a past member of his local Lion's Club and a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Schmeiser faced a lawsuit from Monsanto in 1998 over the presence of Monsanto's Roundup Ready canola that had contaminated his fields. He was sued for patent infringement even though he did not, nor had any intention of using Monsanto's product. The dispute went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada where Schmeiser was successful as the Court ruled that Schmeiser did not have to pay Monsanto the Technology Use Fee or damages. The Supreme Court, as part of their decision, also ruled in 5-4 decision that Monsanto's patent on the genetically patented canola was valid.

At the same time, Schmeiser launched legal action against Monsanto for the contamination of his fields by Monsanto's Roundup Ready Canola. This action was settled out of court in March 2008, where Monsanto agreed to pay for the clean-up costs and no restrictions on discussing the details of the case were placed on Schmeiser.

Due to the significance of the issue and these cases, Percy Schmeiser has become a beacon and lightning rod in the fight of farmers to retain their right to plant their own seeds from

previous crops, and to farm without the unwanted contamination of genetically modified organisms or seeds.

Percy and Louise continue to reside in their hometown of Bruno. They have five children fifteen grandchildren and one great grandchild.

### **Percy Schmeiser; The Seed Saver**

I've been farming since 1947 when I took over from my father. My wife and I are known on the Prairies as seed developers in canola and as seed savers. Hundreds of thousands of farmers save their seed from year to year.

I was also a member of the provincial legislature. I was on many agricultural committees, both on the provincial level and representing the province on the federal level. I was mayor of my community and a councillor for over 25 years. So, all my life I've worked for the betterment of farmers and rules, laws and regulations that would benefit them and make their farming operations viable.

The whole issue of GMOs can be divided into three main categories: the first category is the issue of the property rights of farmers versus the intellectual property rights of multinationals like Monsanto. The second issue is the health and danger to our food with the introduction of GMOs. The third issue is the impact on the environment.

I want to concentrate on the issue I'm most concerned with: Property rights of farmers vs. the intellectual property rights of multinationals.

In August 1998 a lawsuit was launched against me by Monsanto. Up to that time, I never had anything to do with Monsanto's GM canola. I'd never bought their seed or gone to a Monsanto meeting. I didn't even know a Monsanto rep. I was not interested in their Roundup Ready canola, nor did I have any intention to grow it. I was 67 years old and was looking gradually retiring from farming.

Personally, I did not believe in the concept of allowing weeds to grow side by side with the canola plants. Using Roundup Ready canola means that the weeds would rob the plants of much needed moisture at the most critical stage of growth. Then the farmer applies the chemical (Roundup) when the weeds reach a certain stage so the chemical kills it.

My farming practice involved spraying my fields with chemical prior to the seeding. In my mind, this allowed the canola plants to grow and not lose the moisture to the weeds. This was the most common and accepted farming practice of canola growers prior to the introduction of GM canola.

The difference though, came to costs. Applying chemicals before germination resulted in a cost of around \$20/acre. Applying Roundup after germination cost around \$4/acre. Seeing a huge profit opportunity (in addition to additional chemical sales) Monsanto allowed farmers

to “license” the technology and introduced a “Technology Use Fee” of \$15/acre on top of the cost of the chemical.

In the lawsuit, there were a number of items that were identified. First of all, they said I had somehow acquired Monsanto’s GM canola seed without a license; that I planted it, grew it without signing their contract and therefore infringed on their patent. They went on to say that the basis or their claim that they had done tests on my fields without my knowledge, and these test showed that my canola had 80 or 90 percent presence of their Roundup Ready canola.

Their demand was that I pay them their Technology Use Fee; damages, because I somehow hurt their reputation and all of their court costs and fees.

In Canada, farmers, seed companies and seed developers are entitled to certain rights and privileges that are enshrined in law under the *Plant Breeders Act*. As a seed developer over my 50 plus years of farming, I was well aware of my right to save and reuse my own seed. It is a typical farming practice to save seeds from one crop to plant next year. That was my customary farming practice and this practice has been followed by farmers since the beginning of agriculture.

However, for Monsanto, the rights they were given as a seed developer were not good enough for them. They successfully sought and were granted a patent on their product, in both Canada and the United States.

To enforce their patent, they made farmers sign a contract for its use. An issue that you rarely hear about in the promotion of GMOs is the level of corporate control that Monsanto imposes on farmers when they sign that contract. When you review the details of the contract, to me this is one of the most vicious contracts on the face of the Earth, and it takes all of farmers’ rights away.

These are some of the main points in a contract with Monsanto; they have them nicely hidden in the small print of the contract.

1. A farmer can never use his own seeds.
2. You must always buy seeds from Monsanto.
3. You must only buy your chemicals from Monsanto.
4. If you commit some violation of this contract, and they fine you, you must sign a non-disclosure statement that you cannot talk to the media or to your neighbors about what Monsanto has done to you. Monsanto often says there have only been a few cases, but we don’t really know because farmers have to sign this non-disclosure statement.

You must pay Monsanto the \$15/acre per year license fee for the privilege of growing GMOs and recently they’ve added another clause - you can no longer sue Monsanto for whatever reason. You can never take Monsanto to court, even if you feel Monsanto did not meets their

requirements under the contract.

Another important issue is you must permit Monsanto's detectives to come onto your land or look in your storage facilities for three years after the date you sign the contract, even though you may only grow it one year.

And who is Monsanto's detectives? They're former or retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers. They go under the name of Robinson Investigation Services of Saskatoon and they cover all of Canada. In the US they use Pickerton Investigation Services, who also claim that they use former policemen as their detectives.

These detectives would go to our local rural municipal offices and pick up maps of who owned what property, and then they would match it up with all fields that were growing canola, and cross reference this with their licensed users. They would then go out to all of the canola fields that were not registered with them, take plants and perform "quick tests" on them to see if there was a presence of their product.

They literally would steal a farmer's plants to do these tests. But they would go even farther than that.

Monsanto runs advertisements where they say that if you think your neighbor is growing GM canola or soybeans without license you should inform on them. If you do this Monsanto will reward you with a gift like a free leather jacket. Believe me, there aren't many people on the prairies who are proud to wear a Monsanto jacket.

What happens when Monsanto gets this tip or rumor? Or if the quick test comes back positive? They immediately send out two of their detectives. They'll go to the farmer's home or farmyard and try to intimidate them. They will say to him or his wife that they have this tip. But, first of all, they'll always say they are ex-RCMP and a lot of times the farmers don't hear the "ex." They only hear police. It's a deliberate form of intimidation.

They'll say they have a tip or a rumor that you're growing GM canola without a license and if they don't pay Monsanto the \$15/acre they will ruin him, and take their farm. I believe that they felt that they could bleed money out of farmers with this threat. Or at the very least force the farmer to grow GM canola. This was an unbelievable level of harassment and intimidation of farmers by these gene police under Monsanto's direction.

Now what do you think happens when these detectives leave the farmer's home? The farmer will wonder which neighbor caused him the trouble. So, now we have the breakdown of farmers not trusting one another and afraid to talk to one another. We have the breakdown of our rural farm culture and society where farmers are not working together or trusting one another.

But Monsanto doesn't stop there. They exercise other means of control though their

extortion letters.

This has been done all across North America. We don't know how many thousands of these letters have been sent out; I have quite a number of them. The letters state: we have reason to believe that you might be growing Monsanto's GM canola, corn or soybeans without a license. We estimate you might have 200, 300 or 500 acres. In lieu of us not taking you to court send us \$100,000 or \$200,000.

Can you imagine the fear in a farm family when they get a letter from a multibillion dollar corporation asking for many thousands of dollars so the company might not take them to court?!

I don't know how many farmers and their wives have heard from on this, crying on the phone after Monsanto's police have been there and saying to me, "What can we do? They've threatened us." All I can do is to advise them to get proper legal advice.

They will state in the extortion letter that you're not allowed to show this letter to anyone and you're not allowed to tell anyone that you've received it or what Monsanto is doing to you. So, a total suppression of farmers rights, freedom of speech and expression.

Monsanto was so intent on heavy handed tactics. I have had farmers tell me that they even used a small airplane or helicopter to fly over their canola fields and then they have dropped a herbicide spray bomb on the field.

About 12 days or so, after the chemical has had time to activate, they'll fly back. If the crop, (which was hit by the spray) has died, they'll know the farmer has not been using Monsanto's Roundup, but if it hasn't died, God help the farmer.

These are the tactics of what Monsanto has done to farmers in Canada and the US. Monsanto's tactics have created a fear culture where farmers are even scared to talk to one another.

My grandparents came from Europe in the late 1890s. I'm a third generation farmer and our families had to work together to build our society, our infrastructure, our schools, our roads and our hospitals. Facing these tactics and the mistrust that has been created has led to the breakdown of communities working together. This is one of the worst things that has happened with the introduction of GMOs.

When we were sued my wife and I immediately realized that 50 years of research and development on our pure canola seed that was suitable and adaptable to certain conditions on the Canadian prairies, climatic and soil conditions and especially diseases that we had in canola, could now be contaminated. We said to Monsanto at the time, "Look, if you have any of your GMOs in our pure canola seed you are liable for the destruction of our property and our pure seed." So, we stood up to them.

At stake were important issues to us. First of all, we lost 50 years of research and development on our seed. Secondly, ourselves, like farmers since the beginning of time saved seeds from the previous year's crops to plant in following years. We felt that if farmers ever lose the right to use their own seed the future development of new seeds and plants suitable to their local climatic and soil conditions would be stopped. Those are the two main reasons why we stood up to Monsanto.

It took two years of pre-trial and in those two years Monsanto withdrew all allegations that I had ever obtained seed illegally. They went as far to tell our neighbors that we stole their seed. They knew this was not true and eventually they did admit in court that all the allegations of theft on our part were false.

But, they still pursued that case that the fact that they had found some of Monsanto's GM canola plants in the ditch along my field, not even in the field, meant I violated the patent. So, it became a patent infringement case. I had no choice where it would be heard. Patent laws are federal, so it was before the federal court of Canada immediately, with one judge. It went to trial in June 2000 and lasted two and a half weeks.

But I always believed that to infringe a patent, you had to use the patented object. Roundup Ready canola, soybeans or corn do not yield more, is resistant to more diseases or drought or provides any health benefit. The only advantage of these Roundup Ready plants is for weed control. The plant can be sprayed with the chemical Roundup and the plant won't die.

To use or violate their patent I would have had to spray their chemical Roundup on my crop and I never did that. Unquestioned evidence that we presented in court showed that I did not purchase Roundup or spray my canola with Roundup.

But in his decision, the judge ruled that that was immaterial. He said the fact that plants were growing in the ditch along my field meant the patent was violated. The judge case ruled that although farmers in Canada have the right by federal law in the *Plant Breeder's Rights Act* to use their seed from year to year, Monsanto's patent law is over and above all farmers' rights.

At that time I also had two scientists pull samples from all my fields. I wanted to know how much contamination my fields had of Monsanto's Roundup Ready canola. I had eight fields of canola in 1998. Samples from these fields were sent to the University of Manitoba and they tested the seeds and found that two of my fields had no contamination or presence of Roundup Ready canola. Others had one percent, some had two percent and one had eight percent. In the ditch along the fields where we first noticed it, contamination was around 60 percent.

The judge said it didn't matter. Even with the fields that had no contamination he said because I was a seed saver and was using my seed from year to year there was a *probability* there could be some of Monsanto's GMOs in those fields also, so the crop all goes to

Monsanto.

So, even on a probability you can lose your rights overnight. That's why my case became so well known worldwide.

Another troubling decision was that the judge ruled it does not matter how Monsanto's GM canola or soybeans or any GM plant gets into a farmer's field. The judge went on to specify how this could happen: cross-pollination, direct seed movement through wind, birds and bees, it doesn't matter. So Monsanto's product can legally contaminate your field, and you are responsible to provide compensation to them because they have a patent on the contaminating material.

No matter how it gets there, it becomes Monsanto's property. The farmer no longer owns his crop.

That's what startled people all over the world; how an organic or conventional farmer can lose a crop and seeds or plants overnight. So all the seeds and plants that my wife and I had developed over half a century now belonged to Monsanto.

The judge also ruled that I was not allowed to use my seeds or plants again as there was "the probability" that it may contain some Roundup Ready canola. So, all our research and development was gone and Monsanto got our crop for nothing.

Monsanto says that they only took plants from the ditch alongside my fields, but I have taken pictures of their investigators where they walk into the fields and take samples of plants. They stole my plants, and it is okay for them to do that and launch legal action against me. Where are my property rights? Apparently, that means nothing when you deal with patent law.

Think how you would feel if a company walked onto your property, into your yard. Took your plants, flowers, produce...anything that you were growing. And then you were told that having your property stolen was okay; the company that took your plants had more rights than you.

We went to the federal Court of Appeal, which took over a year. Then I had three judges, but at the appeal court they only address the issues of facts of law, points of law or where the first judge erred in law. The viability issue and the property rights issue were never addressed.

After trial the federal Court of Appeal stated that although the judges did not agree with all of the first judge's decisions they upheld his ruling. All three judges ruled against me.

Next I requested leave to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. Now it was a pretty depressing time because we didn't know what our chances would be that the Supreme Court would even hear it. We applied in November 2002 and in May 2003 we received the best news so far in the five years of legal battle to this point. The Supreme

Court ruled that it would indeed hear the case. That was a tremendous victory for us.

I'd like to explain the main issues of what the Supreme Court of Canada addressed. There were three areas of appeal that were considered.

1. Is the patent on a life giving form like a plant valid?
2. If the patent was valid, was their infringement?
3. Is Monsanto entitled to the damages, profits, legal expenses etc that was award in the lower courts

Regretfully, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that the patent was valid and that there was infringement. When you review the current definitions of patents and the protection provided to the patent holder, one can understand why the court ruled the way they did; even though the court was split. Therefore as part of their decision, they asked Canada's parliament to review the laws regarding patent rights and the rights of farmers. To this day, no action has been taken by our government.

However, on the most important issue to me personally, the Supreme Court in the end, ruled 9-0 in my favor that I didn't have to pay Monsanto anything...that my profits from my crops were exactly the same, whether or not I had used their product.

This in itself was the issue that started it all. Monsanto launched the legal action against me stating that I was using their product without paying for it. As I said earlier, I contend that I didn't use their product because I never sprayed my fields, and even though that wasn't good enough, I was pleased that the Supreme Court recognized that I had no advantage because Monsanto's product polluted my fields.

The issue of the technology use fee, legal costs, profits and damages was important to me. They sued me for \$1 million because they said I was arrogant, stubborn, didn't do what they wanted and didn't back down when they threatened me. This huge victory for me also has created a dilemma for Monsanto. Even with infringement, the profits to the farmer are exactly the same, so how can Monsanto enforce its patent.

So yes, the Supreme Court ruled that their patent was valid, but perhaps it was a hollow victory for them on that point.

When farmers hear what my family, my wife and I have gone through with our legal battles and the over \$400,000 in court costs and legal fees we had to endure, we ask the question of how can any farmer stand up to them?

It is extremely difficult for the average person to face a multibillion-dollar corporation in court. I would not have been able to do it without people from all over the world, organizations and foundations who made contributions to my legal fees. But the vast majority of donations came from fellow farmers who were concerned about the aggressive and



domineering intimidation tactics that came from Monsanto.

How aggressive were they? While I have given examples of what they would do before trial, After the first trial they were relentless. After the judge initially awarded them the \$153,000, they put a lien on all our land and even our house so I could no longer borrow any more money to fight them. They tried to stop me financially. They tried to break us down mentally. They would come into our driveway and park there all day. When one of us would come out of the house they would take off. They followed us and watched us day after day when we worked in our fields. Their employees repeated said to us that no one stands up to Monsanto and that they would destroy us. They offered \$20,000 in free chemical to any farmer who would testify against us. No one took them up on their offer.

But they have changed the landscape. They changed our rural social fabric our freedom is threatened as farmers. That is a sad commentary on how Monsanto does business with farmers.

I would also like to address two other very important issues come out of this.

First, with the introduction of GMOs always remember there is no such thing as containment. Once you introduce a life form, a life-giving form, into the environment there is no calling back. You cannot contain the wind. You cannot contain the seed movement through cross-pollination - birds, bees, and other animals. You cannot contain it and it will spread as it has on the Prairies.

The other important issue is there is no such thing as co-existence.

Believe me, as a farmer for half a century, I know that once you introduce a GMO gene into the environment, into any seed or plant, it's a dominant gene. It will eventually take over whatever species of plants it gets into. You can't have GMOs in the country and have organic or conventional farmers.

It will all eventually become GMOs. That is the danger. There is no more choice left. Believe me, organic farmers on the Prairies no longer can grow soybeans or canola. All our organic and conventional seed supply is now contaminated with GMOs. Those choices have been taken away for both conventional and organic farmers.

The other issue to remember is canola comes from the brassica family, which includes close cousins such as radishes, turnips and cauliflower. It is now cross-pollinating into the close cousins.

Therefore, we're again destroying many crops that organic farmers no longer can raise.

The other issue is wheat. Wheat is the main crop grown on the area I am from, Canada's prairies. If GM wheat is ever given regulatory approval, it will totally destroy the organic

farmers because wheat comes from the grass family and again will cross-pollinate into both the close and even the distant cousins in canola and wild mustard.

When Monsanto or the other corporations that promote GMO say they'll make buffer strips of so many feet, of half a mile or so - there's no such thing as a safe distance. A whirlwind or windstorm will move plants and seeds great distances.

I get asked a lot why farmers ever started to grow GMOs when they were introduced in 1996. At that time Monsanto told farmers, among other things, that it would be a bigger yield, that it was more nutritious and used fewer chemicals. I think the third point is really what caught the farmers' ears because on the prairies since 1946-47, after the Second World War, farmers started using chemicals by the hundreds of tons each year. A lot were highly potent and farmers realized the damage being done to the environment, human health and animals.

There were other things Monsanto said and you'll hear the same thing today: We'll now be able to feed a hungry world. We'll always have sustainable agriculture. Well, believe me, to feed a hungry world doesn't take the Monsantos of this world. What it takes to feed a hungry world is good government and politics, transportation and economics.

When I speak to farmers in Third World countries - Africa, India, Bangladesh and so on - I tell them at least they have a choice left. We don't have a choice left for many of our crops in Canada. It's all contaminated. And we didn't have anybody to come and tell us what could happen. We believed Monsanto, but worst of all we believed our own federal governments and they let us down on the introduction of GMOs.

They were developed in government agricultural research stations across the Prairies, so Ottawa is fully responsible. They also worked with Monsanto to develop GM wheat on government test plots and research stations. Now it has been reported that if GM wheat is introduced and the government gives regulatory approval the government will get a royalty from Monsanto on every bushel.

What I am saying is that if the government is going to receive royalties from Monsanto on GM wheat how much has it already received on sales of GM canola, corn or soybeans all these years? So it's coming out that our governments have been in bed with Monsanto giving them regulatory approval and worked for them to develop the GMOs.

We have always believed that our government agencies were independent, and were there to protect the public. It is hard to believe that anymore when they partner with the company, accept all of their data as gospel as opposed to conducting independent tests, and share in royalties once approval is given.

Additionally, because of the allowance of GMO's, a new problem that has developed is the presence of "super weeds."

Monsanto wasn't the only company at that time selling GMOs, so, now we are finding the GMOs from more than one company combined in one canola plant, which takes at least three chemicals to control and kill. All Monsanto said was, "No problem. We've now come up with a new, more super-toxic chemical to kill the new super weed." So everything they said about less chemicals turned out to be false.

And their claims on increased yields? Also false. The US Department of Agriculture has admitted that GM soybeans yield is down at least 15% and the yield is down about 6.4% on GM canola.

The third issue of nutrition is that what they're not saying is the quality is way poorer, maybe half, of conventional canola. I won't go into why that is, but it's primarily with the erucic acid content, the greens in canola, which makes it more bitter for cooking.

So, now we have less yield, more chemical use, a new super weed and the quality is much poorer.

I'll say that if anything is going to lead to starvation or hunger it's the introduction of GMOs around the world.

I haven't touched on the economic issue. We as Canadians cannot sell one bushel of canola to the European Union, so one-third of our markets have gone. Now the Monsanto's of the world are pushing to introduce GM wheat where even the Canadian Wheat Board said we would lose over 80 percent of our market.

I was in Japan a couple of years ago and I have a statement by the millers, the processors and the consumers of Japan and South Korea which says what contracts will be cancelled if we introduce GM wheat. That's how serious it is.

What can we do? I think all of us must contact our MPs and members of the cabinet, congressmen and senators as they have done in Europe and Japan. We have the right to know what we're eating. WE have the right to now our food is safe, conducted by independent tests, not Monsanto's own data. I believe that if people knew what they were eating, 90 percent of the Canadian people would not eat GMO foods.

I haven't spoken on the environmental issues or the issue of the safety of food, but in Japan, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and England, extensive testing has been done on the health dangers of eating GMO products.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency did not do one bit of testing. They only used the data supplied to them by Monsanto. Japanese and Netherland governments are now saying that the CFIA reached a fraudulent conclusion.

To give you an example of safety, I received a call from Germany. On German national

television there was a story about a farmer who had illegally grown GMOs. I don't know if it was soybeans or corn, but he had fed it to his cattle and his cattle all died. He contacted me to ask if he could use some of my documents that were submitted to the Supreme Court.

He said the reason it's just coming out now is because he didn't say anything to the authorities. He'd been growing it illegally on behalf of one of the GMO companies. When his neighbors heard that his cattle had died there was an inquiry and he finally admitted he had grown GMOs.

That is just one example. But I can give you all kinds of examples from the US where pigs fed GM soybeans will not reproduce. Once they are off that feed they start to reproduce again.

Remember, it's in Monsanto's interest to have a total control of the world's seed supply whoever controls that will control the food supply. In many Third World nations whoever controls the food supply controls the nation. But I ask, is that in the public's best interest?

Through all of this, I had a lot of confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada and I was pleased with the split decision on the three issues that they had made. But at the same time, we thought our fight was over with them. Unfortunately, another problem appeared.

Because of this dispute with Monsanto, I stopped growing canola. I was terrified of the lower court decision that I was liable to Monsanto if their product appeared. So I changed my farming practices to only grow wheat, peas, barley and oats...all non-GMO crops. Much to my dismay, volunteer Roundup Ready canola started reappearing in my fields again. The volunteer canola reappeared in fields that had not had canola planted on them for eight years!

I called Monsanto and their representatives and asked them to remove the plants. After they confirmed that these volunteer plants were their GMO canola, they agreed to do so. But only if I would sign a release that would prevent me from talking about the contamination.

So that's why I launched the legal action against them. They refused to settle out of court until the day before the trial was to start. But they knew they would lose. So in the end they offered a settlement to me to pay for the cleanup costs and there was no gag-order on the settlement. I had won again, and now in a roundabout way Monsanto for the first time is acknowledging that they are responsible for GMO contamination of a farmer's field.

In conclusion, why did we stand up to Monsanto? My wife and I are in our late 70's. We don't know how many good years we have left and we look at it this way: as a grandfather I ask what kind of legacy I want to leave to my grandchildren. My grandparents and parents left a legacy of land. I don't want to leave a legacy to my children of land, air and water full of poisons. I'm sure all of you tonight feel the same way.

I have been invited to speak all over the world on the rights of farmers and the challenge we

faced in standing up to Monsanto. We believe so strongly in the rights of farmers that as long as our health will allow, we will go on fighting for the right of a farmer to be able to use their own seed.

## **Conclusion**

Genetic engineering of canola seed has impacted Canada's once-thriving canola export market, to the detriment of both organic and non-organic farmers. Hundreds of millions of dollars in export revenues have been lost as a direct result. This is partly because the European Union and other countries don't trust the long-term safety of Genetically Modified (GM) crops and foods, such as gene-spliced versions of canola, soybeans and corn.

It is estimated that 60 to 70 percent of products in our local grocery stores have some GMO content from GM soybeans, corn and canola. And yet, Canadian consumers are unaware, because there are no mandatory rules for GMO labeling.

Governments have given their biotech allies the ability to force-feed GM foods to the citizens without their consent.

The beneficiaries of these actions are limited. GM foods are not ending starvation. They are not the economic miracle that the propaganda would have you believe. GM foods do not result in a reduction of toxic and polluting agri-chemicals, but account for an increase in their use. The financial beneficiary is clearly the biotech industry through increased seed and chemical sales and no one else.

Not only is gene-splicing technology not an economic savior, but it is argued that is a risky, imprecise technology that threatens world ecology. There is considerable evidence that a diet of genetically modified foods could have long-term harmful effects on human and animal health.

Pollen and seeds from genetically manipulated crops spread into adjacent fields and farms and mingle with non-GM crops. This is called genetic pollution. This is what has likely happened in Schmeiser's situation and it has happened to hundreds, if not thousands of non-GMO farmers across North America. It has become increasingly difficult to find corn, canola, and soybeans not tainted by genetically manipulated seed. GM plants have dominant genes; meaning when they cross pollinate with conventional plants the seeds will take the characteristics of the GM plant. There are no walls high enough to keep out GMO pollen from one field to the next.

Additionally, Canada and the United States have allowed biotech companies to conduct secret GM wheat trials. At this time, there is a moratorium on GM Wheat in North America. But if the Canadian or U.S. government allows commercial GM wheat production to go ahead, it would be a disaster ecologically and economically. This certainly would put at risk Canada's multibillion-dollar annual wheat export market.

The interest in Schmeiser's story and message continues to be high. Since the legal action was launched against him, he has spoken to many farmers' groups, universities, agricultural societies, environmentalists, the United Nations and governments around the world. For his desire to advocate on the rights of farmers, Schmeiser has received many awards from around world for standing up for the rights of farmers.

Most significantly, in 2000 Schmeiser received the Mahatma Gandhi Award for the betterment of humankind in a non-violent way and in 2007 he and his wife Louise were named recipients of the Right Livelihood Award for outstanding vision and work on behalf of the planet and its people. The Right Livelihood Award is commonly referred to as the alterative Nobel Prize.