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Greenpeace Canada: Question Mark Asks if You Know What's in Your Food

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA--(Marketwire - Aug. 8, 2007) -

Greenpeace activists made a 61-meter long question mark in a field containing genetically engineered (GE) corn near Abbotsford, British Columbia this morning to highlight the absence of any GE food labeling in Canada.

Greenpeace also put the government of British Columbia on notice by locating the question mark in the riding of B.C. minister of public safety and solicitor general John Les, and submitting a report on GE toxicity to health minister George Abbott. Both were made public at a news conference this morning, which called on British Columbians to sign a petition demanding the Premier adopt mandatory labeling for the province.

"We're asking the Ministers to put consumers first and put labels on GE products," said Josh Brandon, agriculture campaigner with Greenpeace. "People have the right to know what's in their food, especially when so many GE foods on our store shelves have been associated with health risks."

Greenpeace's report to the "Conversation on Health," a public consultation led by the health ministry, compiles information on the toxicity of three varieties of GE corn grown and sold in Canada. It cites a French research institute's findings that Monsanto's NK603 corn-the corn located in the Abbotsford field-was found to be toxic to rats in recent clinical trials. Peer reviewed research cited in the report also found immune response abnormalities in salmon and further evidence of toxicity in rats for Monsanto's MON810 and MON863 corn.

"Monsanto GE corn is a dangerous product. We have evidence it is toxic in rat feeding trials. Genetically engineered crops also spread throughout the environment and the food system without control. Greenpeace has labeled this field with a question mark to remind people genetic contamination is out there and it needs to be stopped," said Brandon.

Recent polls in Quebec and B.C. have shown overwhelming support for mandatory labeling of GE foods. In Quebec, a Leger Marketing poll released in May showed 86 per cent support for mandatory labeling. A Strategic Communications poll released in January showed 79 per cent of British Columbians want mandatory labeling before the next provincial election.

Forty countries around the world already have mandatory labeling legislation, including Europe, South Korea, Japan and Australia. Last year, the Quebec government released a report showing that the cost of GE labeling would be only a fraction of previous estimates done by industry. And the B.C. Provincial Health Officer has already recommended mandatory labeling.

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Greenpeace launches petition demanding that the BC government introduce mandatory labeling before next election.

The petition can be downloaded here:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/campaigns/ge/latest-developments/mandatory-labelling-of-ge-food>