



**As 3 corporations, Bayer, Monsanto and Syngenta, push for the commercial growing of GM crops in the UK, Corporate Watch brings you the Biotech Family Tree 2003. The family tree shows the complex tangle of name changes, spin-offs, joint ventures and acquisitions woven by the biotech industry during 10 years of rapid expansion, consolidation and crisis.**

#### In summary

It shows how a handful of old European and US chemical and pharmaceutical companies invested heavily in seed companies throughout the 1990s, rode out the hype and failure of the 'life science' concept at the turn of the millennium, and have become today's Gene Giants. They seek to change the way our food is produced forever.

Some name changes are inevitable as companies change hands, but others mark deliberate attempts to fake fresh starts and escape the notoriety of an old name. It is important to connect today's shiny new innovators, with their talk about sustainable development and feeding the world, to the parent companies that for years have manufactured hazardous chemicals, and even helped to develop weapons of mass destruction.

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[www.corporatewatch.org.uk](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk)

## Further sources of information

**AISED - Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Diversity.** ([www.aised.net](http://www.aised.net)) A European network that initiates actions and campaigns on environmental and social justice issues. One of our current campaigns is centred on issues surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of food (small local organic farms instead of agribusiness, biotechnology and supermarkets selling genetically modified food).

**Bayer Hazard** ([www.bayerhazard.com](http://www.bayerhazard.com)) Spof website focusing on Bayer CropScience

**CBG Network** ([www.cbgnetwork.org](http://www.cbgnetwork.org)) Formerly known as Bayerwatch the CBG network have been monitoring the activities of Bayer for over 20 years. Their web site includes an archive of their newsletter and press releases.

**Corporate Watch** ([www.corporatewatch.org.uk](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk)) Information on the environmental and social impacts of corporations. Website includes briefings and news items. Briefings and profiles on GM companies

**Econexus** ([www.econexus.info](http://www.econexus.info)) Econexus is a non-profit scientific research organisation and watch dog, focusing on the impact of modern technologies, especially genetic engineering, on the environment, health and society.

**ETC Group** ([www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)) Formerly known as RAFL the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC group) is dedicated to the environmental and sustainable advancement of cultural and ecological diversity and human rights. Their web site includes briefings on issues such as corporate concentration, patents, GM crops and nanotechnology.

### Life Science concept

Companies founded in the late 1990s (e.g. AstraZeneca, Aventis, DuPont, Monsanto, I, and Novartis) based on the idea that combining human healthcare and agri-business interests in one company would lead to profitable 'synergies'. By the turn of the millennium the Life Science concept had failed at least in part due to public opposition to GM crops.

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**Five Year Freeze** ([www.fiveyearfreeze.org](http://www.fiveyearfreeze.org)) A campaign representing NGOs, Unions Religious and Consumer groups calling on the UK Government for a Five Year Freeze on the growing of genetically modified plants and the production of genetically modified farm animals for any commercial purpose: the import of genetically modified foods, plants, farm crops and farm animals, and produce from genetically modified plants and animals; and the patenting of genetic resources for food and farm crops

**Friends of the Earth** ([www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)) Real food pages contain briefings, information and campaigning materials on GM crops.

**New Labour is shown as a pair of busy bees (with rose logos on their backs) cross pollinating the sprouting biotechnology corporations.**

**GM Free Cymru** ([www.gmfrecymru.org.uk](http://www.gmfrecymru.org.uk)) Campaigning for a GM free Wales.

**Greenpeace** ([www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)) Major environmental NGO campaigning on GM issues.

**Genewatch** ([www.genewatch.org](http://www.genewatch.org)) Genewatch UK is a public interest group which aims to ensure that genetic technologies are developed and used in the public interest, and in a way which promotes human health, protects the environment and respects human rights and the interests of animals. Website includes briefings and a searchable GM crops database.

**Genetic Engineering Network** ([www.genetication.org.uk](http://www.genetication.org.uk)) The GEN web site includes numerous resources for people wanting to oppose genetic engineering, or just to learn more. Includes an up-to-date list of where GM crops are being grown in the UK.

### Corporate Watch

Corporate Watch is an independent UK based research group, which works to expose the mechanisms by which corporations operate and the detrimental effects that they have on society and the environment. We have a website which includes detailed profiles of corporations and lobby groups in a variety of industry areas, as well as regular news updates covering corporate and campaign news, analytical articles and book reviews.

**N.G.N.** (<http://members.tripod.com/~ngn/>) The Norfolk Genetic Information Network (NGN) web site includes an archive of the NGN email list. This is a daily updated digest of biotech news from around the world.

**Pesticide Action Network UK** ([www.pan-uk.org](http://www.pan-uk.org)) UK branch of an international network campaigning to eliminate the hazards of pesticides, to reduce dependence on pesticides and prevent the unnecessary expansion of their use, and to increase the sustainable and ecological alternatives to chemical pest control. Their website provides useful information on the pesticide activities of Syngenta, Bayer and Monsanto.

**Polaris Institute** ([www.polarisinstitute.org](http://www.polarisinstitute.org)) The Polaris Institute aims to enable citizens movements to re-skill and re-tool themselves to fight for democratic social change in an age of corporate driven globalization. Their website includes a number of briefings on GM crops.

**Totnes Genetics Group** ([www.toggen.org.uk](http://www.toggen.org.uk)) Non-hierarchical collect of international GM issues in Devon and beyond. Currently home to the amazing Genetix Update and the Life Cycles peddle powered cinema.

**Women's Environmental Network** ([www.wen.org.uk](http://www.wen.org.uk)) Educating, empowering and informing women and men who care about the environment. Campaigning on environmental and health issues from a female perspective. Web site includes good briefings on the science of GM and GM issues.

**Galloping Gene Giants: How big corporations are re-organizing their push for a biotech future and what can be done to challenge this agenda?** by Tony Clarke with Brenda Inouye. 2002. Polaris Institute.

**Hungry Corporations: Transnational Biotech Companies Colonize the Food Chain?** by Helena Paul and Ricarda Steinbrecher with Devin Kuyek and Lucy Michaels. 2003. Zed Books, forthcoming.

**Redesigning Life? The worldwide Challenge to Genetic Engineering?** by Tokar (ED) 2001 Zed Books.

Corporate Watch also produces a bi-monthly newsletter. Our current areas of research include Food and Farming, GM crops, the IP industry, the Post industry and Corporate Structures. Our latest publication 'Degrees of Capture' a report on the involvement of the oil and gas industry in UK universities is out now. For more information contact:

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# A brief guide to the great (and late) biotechnology corporations

## Syngenta

**ICI** British chemical and pharmaceutical company formed in the 19th century. ICI chemicals were involved in chemical weapons research in the 1950's. In 1993 ICI span of their agrochemical, GM crops, seed and pharmaceutical interests to form Zeneca. ICI still exists as a chemical and polymers/paint company.

**Zeneca** British company formed in 1994 from the spin-off agrochemical, GM crops, seed and pharmaceutical sectors of ICI. Zeneca carried out a small number of GM crop trials in the UK during the 1990s. Zeneca merged with Astra to form AstraZeneca in 1999. In 1996 Zeneca launched a joint venture in seeds with Dutch company Cosun called Advanta.

**Astra** Swedish pharmaceutical company founded in the 19th century. Astra merged with Zeneca to form AstraZeneca in 1999.

**AstraZeneca** Swedish/British life science company formed in 1999 by the merger of Astra and Zeneca. In 2000 AstraZeneca spun off their agrochemical and GM crops research business to merge with the agricultural business of Novartis to form Syngenta. AstraZeneca has retained its pharmaceutical, a joint venture with Cosun called Advanta. AstraZeneca continues as a purely pharmaceutical company. AstraZeneca is a classic example how the life-science concept has not worked.

**Cosun** Dutch farmers co-operative formed in the 19th century. It owns seed and food production companies. In 1998 Cosun launched a seed joint venture with Zeneca called Advanta.

**Advanta** Seed company formed in 1998 as a 50-50 joint venture between Zeneca and Cosun. Advanta is one of the largest seed companies in the world. During the 1990s Advanta carried out GM crop trials in the UK under the names of Van Der Harve and Sharpes International Seeds. Advanta markets GM seed in Canada and the US. [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/advanta\\_advanta1.html](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/advanta_advanta1.html)

**Sandoz** Major Swiss chemical, pharmaceutical and seed company founded in the 19th century. Sandoz merged with Ciba-Geigy to form Novartis in 1996.

**Ciba-Geigy** Major Swiss chemical and pharmaceutical company founded in 1970 with the merger of Swiss companies Ciba and Geigy. Ciba and Geigy have long histories of developing pesticides including Atrazine and DDT. Ciba-Geigy merged with Sandoz in 1999 to form Novartis.

**Hilleshog** Hilleshog was initially a Swedish sugar beet breeder and seed producer. Sandoz bought Hilleshog in 1989. Hilleshog is now the brand under which Syngenta Seeds markets sugar beet. If GM sugar beet is successfully commercialised in the UK it is likely to be marketed by Hilleshog.

**New Farm Crops** New Farm Crops (NFC) is a British plant breeder and seed producer. NFC was bought by Ciba-Geigy in 1994 and is now one of the operating fronts for Syngenta Seeds. NFC carried out a small number of GM crop trials in the UK in the late 1990s.

## Bayer CropScience

**Hoechst** German chemical and pharmaceutical company founded in the 19th century. Hoechst was part of IG Farben in the later war years (see section on Bayer). In 1994 Hoechst set up a joint venture with Schering called Aventis. Hoechst merged with Rhône-Poulenc in 1999 to form Aventis.

**Schering** German chemical and pharmaceutical company founded in the 19th century. In 1994 Schering set a joint venture with Hoechst called AgriVo. Schering retained a stake in Aventis CropScience which it sold in 2002 as part of the Bayer CropScience deal. Schering still survives today as a pharmaceutical company and has no involvement in GM crops.

**Bayer** German chemical and pharmaceutical company founded in the 19th century.

Between the mid-1920s and mid-1940s Bayer was part of the notorious IG Farben along with BASF and Hoechst. IG Farben developed chemical weapons and used slave labour. At the end of WW2 several IG Farben executives were jailed for war crimes. Bayer had considerable agri-chemical interests but no direct involvement in GM crops before its merger with Aventis CropScience. Bayer and Schering in 2002, to form Bayer CropScience. Bayer is the only large company to hang on to something approaching the life-science concept, keeping agriculture, chemicals, polymers and pharmaceuticals within one company. See: [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/bayer/bayer1.html](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/bayer/bayer1.html)

**Aventis** Aventis was established as a French/German life science company that spanned agriculture and pharmaceuticals. It was formed in 1999 with the merger of Hoechst and Rhône-Poulenc. In 2001 following the Starlink GM contamination scandal, Aventis abandoned the life science concept and started looking for a buyer for its agricultural business, Aventis CropScience, which was eventually sold to Bayer in the form Bayer CropScience in 2002. Aventis still exists as a purely pharmaceutical company and is a classic example of how the life science concept has failed. See: [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/publications/GMbriefings/aventis1.html](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/publications/GMbriefings/aventis1.html)

**Rhône-Poulenc** French chemical and pharmaceutical company founded in the late 19th century. It conducted a small number of GM crop trials in the UK in the 1990s before merging with Hoechst to form Aventis in 1999.

**AgriEvo** An agri-chemical and GM crops joint venture between Hoechst (60%) and Schering (40%) formed in 1994. AgriEvo carried out a large number of GM crop trials in the UK in the 1990s. AgriEvo subsequently went on to become the major part of Aventis CropScience when Hoechst and Rhône-Poulenc merged to form Aventis in 1999.

**PGS** A small agricultural biotechnology research company attached to the University of Gen in Belgium. PGS owned a number of important GM crop patents, including the hybrid technology that Bayer CropScience now uses in its Seed Link oil seed rape. PGS conducted a number of GM crop trials in the UK in the mid 1990s. AgriEvo bought PGS in 1996.

## Monsanto

**Monsanto 1** US chemical company formed in the early 20th century. Monsanto was involved with the production of PCBs, dioxins and the defoliant/chemical weapon Agent Orange. By the 1990s, as well as a rapidly expanding interest in GM crops Monsanto was involved in agrochemicals, seeds, chemicals, sweeteners, GM Bovine Growth Hormone, polymers and pharmaceuticals. Monsanto spun off its chemicals division in 1997 to form Solvita. Throughout the 1990s Monsanto bought up a number of seed companies including PBI Cambridge in 1998 and during the mid 1990s began aggressively to push the commercialisation of GM crops. Whilst this was successful in the US, Monsanto's pro-GM PR campaign in Europe disastrously backfired and led to a focus for international opposition to GM crops. Monsanto has conducted UK field trials of GM crops since 1995. See: [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/monsanto/monsanto1.html](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/monsanto/monsanto1.html)

**Monsanto 2** In 2000 Monsanto merged with Pharmacia & Upjohn and was renamed Pharmacia. The bovine growth hormone, GM crops and seed business retained the Monsanto name and was run as a subsidiary 87% owned by Pharmacia. In 2002 Monsanto and DuPont agreed to drop a number of outstanding legal actions and entered into an important technology and patent sharing agreement.

**Monsanto 3** Monsanto sold its remaining stake in Monsanto. Monsanto is now a relatively small stand-alone agricultural company, a fraction of its size in the mid 1990s. The majority of its income comes from sales of Roundup herbicide and GM crops. Monsanto is the biggest seller of GM crops in the world with big sales in US, Canada and Argentina and smaller sales in India and South Africa. In the UK Monsanto is currently taking legal action in its attempts at GM commercialisation.

Monsanto has 2 varieties of GM sugar beet developed in conjunction with Syngenta, which are most of the way through the UK commercialisation process. Monsanto is helping to flood Europe with new GM applications putting pressure on the EU to drop its moratorium. Monsanto is currently pushing for the commercialisation of GM wheat in the US and Canada. All is not going well for Monsanto: its share price plummeted in the second half of 2002 following the sell off by Pharmacia, compounded by the departure of its CEO at the end of the year. See: [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/monsanto.html](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/monsanto.html)

**Pioneer Hi-Bred** The world's largest seed company founded in the US in 1926. Pioneer was bought by DuPont in 1998. Pioneer markets GM crops including many containing insect GM crop traits from Monsanto and Aventis. Pioneer has conducted a small number of GM crop trials in the UK.

**PBI Cambridge** Plant Breeding International Cambridge is a major UK based cereals and potato breeder. PBI was originally owned by the publicly owned Plant Breeding Institute and was then bought by Unilever in 1987. PBI conducted several of its own GM field trials in 1998 before being bought by Monsanto in 1998.

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**DuPont** DuPont is a US chemical company founded in the early 19th century. DuPont's background is in explosives, polymers, chemicals, petroleum and pharmaceuticals. It was also heavily involved in the Manhattan Project (US Atom Bomb development). By the late 1990s DuPont had shed its petroleum business and become a life science company. In 1998 it bought Pioneer Hi-Bred and became the world's largest seed company. DuPont sold its pharmaceutical interests to Bristol Myers Squibb in 2001. DuPont markets GM crops through Pioneer Hi-Bred. It has plans to manufacture industrial products (e.g. polymers) from GM crops. Pioneer and DuPont have had comparatively little involvement in GM crops in the UK. At a global scale they are still very important. DuPont entered into a technology sharing agreement with Monsanto in 2002. See: [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/duPont/duPont1.html](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/biotech/duPont/duPont1.html)

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