

Name.....Class.....Date.....

Aliens!

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) or Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) are organisms in which the genetic material, DNA or RNA, has been altered in the laboratory to bring about a change in its traits. It's a cut and paste job with a trait of one organism replaced with that of another in the DNA or RNA.

Magic Plants?

Plants with genes to fight pests may decrease the use of pesticides. But it could also have bad effects on weeds and small useful insects that are beneficial for the growth of the plant.

Making Millions

Transnational companies have large reserves of genes (in their genebank) of various plants and animals that they want to modify for making medicines, health foods, trees that grow faster and bear perfect fruits and a lot more. The research, these companies say, is to meet the needs (medicine, food) of low-income countries. But actually these companies make millions of dollars selling these modified products worldwide. These products are essentially food and seeds with induced genes.

Who Benefits?

Will small farmers get access to this new technology that the multinationals say has been developed to benefit the developing countries. Or will the entire research be in the hands of a few transnationals that will control the entire business of food production? Will profits be shared?



Share Of The Trade Pie

GM crops are being grown commercially or in field trials in over 40 countries in 6 continents. In 2000, about 109.2 million acres were planted with transgenic crops, the principal ones being herbicide and insecticide resistant soybeans, corn, cotton, and canola. Other crops grown commercially or field-tested are sweet potato resistant to a virus, rice with increased iron and vitamins and a variety of plants able to survive weather extremes.

In 2000, countries that grew 99 per cent of the global transgenic crops were:

United States	68%
Argentina	23%
Canada	7%
China	1%

Now draw and show the share of each country in the trade pie. If the whole circle of the acreage pie is 109.2 million, show the acreage percentage of each country in the acreage pie.

