

GM alfalfa's release in Canada delayed as farmers reject it

A GM version of alfalfa, a staple in livestock feed, was supposed to be launched in Canada this year. The product, produced with technology by Monsanto, the world's largest seed-and-chemical company, has already been approved by the federal government. U.S.-based Monsanto and Forage Genetics International (which created the GM alfalfa varieties using Monsanto's technology) delayed issuing licences for the seed in Canada after protests in Montreal, Lévis, Quebec City and 35 communities in other provinces.

Genetically altered seeds — the DNA of which has been engineered to resist such threats as pesticides, disease, or environmental conditions — are a growing phenomenon in farms across the globe. Canada already permits GM soybeans, canola and livestock corn, and is considering giving the green light to GM apples and salmon. GM alfalfa is already grown on some U.S. farms.

Farmer Marcel Groleau is relieved. He and his brother raise 100 dairy cows in Thetford Mines, and he was worried that GM alfalfa would spread beyond the few farms that might decide to grow it and contaminate conventional and organic farms across Quebec. "Organic farmers will suffer significant commercial losses because GM contamination means they won't comply with Canadian Organic Standards," Groleau explains.

The widespread resistance among farmers and seed companies is one reason that the seed won't be released this year, says Victor Lefebvre, Quebec director of Pickseed, a company that had planned to sell GM alfalfa. "The seed is very, very close to market, but nobody is ready to jump on it," he says.

Read the full, original article: [Quebec farmers oppose release of genetically modified alfalfa](#)