

Voters targeted Monsanto, Syngenta in Oregon GM crop bans but hit farmer neighbors instead

Voters in Jackson and Josephine counties banned genetically engineered plants last week. It's not entirely wrong to consider the result a victory for organic Davids over agribusiness Goliaths. Syngenta and Monsanto, which are in the GE, did contribute to the opposition campaign. But fixating on campaign contributions gets you only so far.

Syngenta and Monsanto don't live in Jackson or Josephine Counties. People do, and some of them are farmers who are now less free to use their land as they see fit than they were just weeks ago. The farmers affected by the ban don't use GE crops because they want to help agribusinesses. They use them because doing so suits their own purposes.

The GE crop ban is, above all, a property rights issue. Voters who saw in the election an opportunity to hit Monsanto and Syngenta with a crowbar ended up hitting their neighbors instead. Those neighbors aren't going anywhere, their livelihoods have been affected by popular vote, and the measure explicitly thumbs its nose at the notion that Oregon protects the ability of farmers to operate in the face of development by squeamish urbanites. For these reasons, the fighting may not be over, even though the voting is.

Affected farmers in Jackson County have plenty of reasons to be angry and to fight back in whatever way they can. As farmers and others elsewhere in Oregon watch the fight play out, they should be relieved that lawmakers have prohibited locally imposed bans elsewhere, and they should be prepared to fight any effort during or after the 2015 legislative session to backtrack.

Read the full, original article: [Swinging at Monsanto, but hitting farmers](#)