

Meet Brett Begemann, the ‘evil wizard’ behind Monsanto

Before you can finish typing “Monsanto employees” into Google, the search engine suggests “Monsanto evil.”

The world’s largest-grossing seed seller ranks between one and 15 on any list of the world’s most-hated corporations. The annual “March Against Monsanto,” world-wide protests against genetic modification, drew an estimated two million people in some 400 cities last year.

Caught in this food fight is Brett Begemann, Monsanto’s mild-mannered president and chief operating officer since last October, the son of a farmer who looks like a fellow you’d see winning a produce contest at the state fair.

“The biotech-derived products that we eat are the most highly tested and regulated components in what we consume,” Begemann says. A new seed must be reviewed by the Department of Agriculture.

Then there’s a voluntary check from the Food and Drug Administration. If the GM seed includes insecticides or pesticides, as most do, the Environmental Protection Agency gets a look. It takes about \$100 million to get one seed from discovery to market. Crops that are bred conventionally, on the other hand, undergo no government testing. **None.**

Begemann takes personally the charge that Monsanto is poisoning food.

“It just blows my mind,” he says, “that anybody would ever imagine that I would ever be involved in producing any kind of food that would ever put me, my family or now a grandson at risk.” He adds: “I go to the same grocery store that everybody else goes to.”

He talks about “having a dialogue” and “coming to the table” with those concerned about genetic modification. It remains to be seen if that strategy will quell a backlash based mostly on fear and emotion.

Read full original story: [Meet Mr. Frankenfood](#)