

Farmers need to regain control of seeds, public plant breeding research

During last year's Farm Bill debate, Sen. Jon Tester introduced an amendment to clarify a proposal from the previous Farm Bill. Tester has long promoted more public research into conventional breeding techniques at places like land grant universities to only better Montana meats and seeds.

Tester's proposal called for public research on public cultivar development through conventional breeding.

Recently on the documentary TV series VICE, Tester talked about bioengineered plant seeds and how farmers since the beginning of time have always had control of their seed. Tester said patented transgenic seeds offer a different way of doing business for agriculture.

When it comes to most bioengineered crops, farmers cannot save seed. The patented offspring is the intellectual property of the corporation that created the seeds back at the lab.

Even much agricultural research at public universities across the nation is somehow not part of the public domain.

Many conventional farmers traditionally saved their seed and replanted for a new season. On our farm, we have been saving seed garlic for more than two decades. We grow three varieties that have adapted well to the unpredictable growing conditions near the 49th parallel.

There are far too many big-weather challenges ahead for Montana growers to ignore. Farmers across the nation need more access to public seed research and classical breed development.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Save Seed for Genetic Diversity](#)