

# Food Safety Bills: More Dangerous than the Patriot Act

*By gail combs, Opednews.com*

## Or, how to bypass the US Constitution by using "Food Safety"

The food borne illnesses making headlines in recent years, did not happen by chance. The food safety bills are not about protecting consumer health. The full horror of these bogus Food Safety bills can not be appreciated until it is understood that greedy corporations and corrupt government officials have colluded so that a select few can profit from the pain and suffering caused by illness and by the starvation of children around the world! Worse, our main safeguard against unethical corporate behavior and government corruption, the mass media sold us out for the price of their advertising dollars. Despite clear evidence that Con-Agra was shipping E. coli-tainted burger, the USDA ignored John [Munsell's](#) pleas for an investigation until several months later when a woman died and they were forced to investigate. John said a top newspaper's reporter interviewed him for several days, the article was written and ready to print when the owners of the "press" stepped in and suppressed the article in fear of corporate retaliation. Monsanto had two reporters in Florida fired and had broadcaster Derry Brownfield kicked off the air. So what is this information the transnational Ag Corporations are going to such great lengths to suppress?

The story starts decades ago in the 1990's. Between the 1950's and 1990's a few corporations had consolidated their power by buying or forcing out their competition and then vertically integrating from "Farm to Fork". In the quest to eliminate competition and increase their ability to [dictate prices](#), corporations bought up railroads, shipping lines, packing facilities, even supermarkets and banks at staggering rates. For example by 1986 Cargill, Continental, Louis Dreyfus, André and Bunge , all privately owned by seven families, [controlled](#) 85-90 percent of global grain trade.

The wealth and size of these transnational agribusinesses make them [politically](#) powerful. They are big money contributors to the political system in the United States and elsewhere. Their staff moves in and out of government administrations and bureaucracies allowing them to sidestep the regulations THEY create to kill the competition. To further consolidate their death grip on the food supply, agribusiness insisted that agriculture be put on the international trading table for the first time at the GATT talks in Uruguay. Key players in this little drama are VP of [Cargill](#), Dan Amstutz who [wrote](#) the draft Agreement on Agriculture for the World Trade Organization(WTO AoA), Monsanto (Calgene) employee Ann Veneman who lead the GATT trade delegation for much of the time, and Mickey Kantor, another lead US trade representative, who subsequently became a Monsanto board member. Back at home, Clinton's **Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations** was led by Robert Shapiro, chairman of Monsanto at the time WTO was ratified in 1995. Marcia Hale, a former assistant to President

Clinton and director for intergovernmental affairs, was director of international government affairs for Monsanto.

What were the key issues placed on the table? First open borders and no tariffs so cheap tax subsidized grain from the EU and USA would bankrupt third world farmers and their land could be consolidated into large corporate farms. Second worldwide [patents](#) on plants and animals allowing corporations to control all aspects of food production. Third unlike other trade agreements, WTO was given [teeth](#) by way of trade sanctions for enforcement and a complete blackout on any information leading to the sanctions placed by the three WTO judges. Fourth and the worst for the US consumer, was the replacement of the "*precautionary principle*" (do no harm) with "*scientific risk based assessment*" or the "*if it doesn't look like it will kill anyone go for it*" principle. The last issue was "*harmonization*" of food safety regs. That means the US, Europe and third world countries must bring their food safety regs in line so they are essentially the same. In other words the EU and USA are expected to lower their food standards so they can be met by third world members of WTO! In a nutshell transnationals want to do away with national sovereignty and replace it with laws THEY write using WTO and [UN committees](#).

During the debate on approving the WTO Agreement, Congress was justifiably worried that the multinational pact was in conflict with U.S. Sovereignty. Arguments for ratification were vehemently endorsed by Clinton Administration officials who were eager to get the agreement passed Congress. Congressional fears were lulled by pointing out Congress is ultimately responsible for changing the laws of the United States; and second, the U.S. is entitled to withdraw from the WTO. Also a feature of the Uruguay Round agreements are described as follows:

*"The URAA puts U.S. sovereignty and U.S. law under perfect protection. According to the Act, if there is a conflict between U.S. and any of the Uruguay Round agreements, U.S. law will take precedence regardless when U.S. law is enacted. § 3512 (a) states: "No provision of any of the Uruguay Round Agreements, nor the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance, that is inconsistent with any law of the United States shall have effect.*

*"Specifically, implementing the WTO agreements shall not be construed to "amend or modify any law of the United States, including any law relating to (i) the protection of human, animal, or plant life or health, (ii) the protection of the environment, or (iii) worker safety", or to "limit any authority conferred under any law of the United States, including section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974." [source](#)*

Once the Transnational corporations and their puppets in government got WTO ratified in 1995 they [leaped into action](#) to consolidate their position. By 1996 the first two pieces were in place.

The first was Dan Amstutz with the "Freedom to [Farm Act](#) of 1996." Aside from bankrupting so many farmers that [Congress](#) had to step in, the act dismantled the United States [food reserve](#) system. Despite scientific [studies](#) showing bio-fuels use from 29 to 57% more fossil fuel than they replace, laws were passed mandating escalating use of bio-fuels and an ongoing artificial grain shortage was created. In 2008 worldwide [food riots](#) broke out and the USDA announced "[our cupboard is bare](#)" Unfortunately there is now no longer any method for renewing US food reserves. The grain traders even responded to the food crisis by writing a letter to President Bush discouraging the replacement of reserves because it would "distort" grain prices. They suggested instead a monetary fund, from which they would profit, when failed food crops pushed prices sky high and the government bought their reserves.

*"In summary, we have record low grain inventories globally as we move into a new crop year. We have demand growing strongly. Which means that going forward even small crop failures are going to drive grain prices to record levels. As an investor, we continue to find these long term trends..very attractive" 2008 [Food shortfalls](#) predicted.*

As South African farmers who planted Monsanto's GM-maize this year found out, relying on this year's harvest, especially when a corporation controls the seed, is risky at best. They suffered extensive [crop failure](#) when 82,000 hectares produced hardly any seeds due to an alleged "underfertilisation process in the laboratory". With no grain reserves and wide spread use of GM seed this could put a frightening weapon in the hands of a corporation not known for its compassion.

The second action taken in 1996 was the adoption of the [international HACCP](#) rules. [HACCP](#) replaces the old US government's hands on in your face type inspection. Now the corporation are doing the testing and the government inspects corporate paperwork instead. Since corporations are now the inspectors, is it any wonder that in July 2003, after the Con-agri E. coli recall, GAP [released](#) a major report titled "Shielding the Giant: USDA's 'Don't Look, Don't Know' Policy for Beef Inspection. Or that Mr. Stan Painter, Chairman, National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals testified during the Congressional investigation into the Hallmark/Westland downer cow scandal:

*"It (the recall of Hallmark/Westland Meat) highlights one of the problems that we have attempted to raise with the agency ever since 1996 when the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) inspection system was put in place. There seems to be too much reliance on an honor system for the industry to police itself. While the USDA investigation is still on going at*

*Hallmark/Westland, a couple of facts have emerged that point to a system that can be gamed by those who want to break the law. It (HACCP) shifted the responsibility for food safety over to the companies." [source](#)*

Yet despite government investigations, and "Over 1000 non-compliance reports – weighing some 16 pounds" no one-least of all Sec of Ag Ed Schafer-is sitting in jail!!! Instead, we are getting "new food safety laws" that just happen to conform with the World Trade Organization wishes. The USDA insists the USA conform with WTO "traceability" by making small US farmers ( [but not the corporations](#)) individually tag and track their livestock, and by allowing plants and animals across the [border](#) from countries known to have disease despite farmer protests. The FDA whines we must "harmonize" our laws with the international laws or face terrible consequences, ALL conveniently forgetting

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President Bush sign a [directive](#) in July of 2004 ordering the CIA to protect our food supply. So WHY are hostile foreign interests and traitors inside our government allowed to act with impunity?

Did Cargill and Monsanto profit? " [Cargill's](#) net worth over the last five years has gone from U.S. \$5,942 million in 1996 to U.S. \$7,888 in 2000, at a time when commodity prices have reached their lowest level in well over 100 years.." and " [Monsanto](#) announced record profits today, citing \$2 billion for the 2008 fiscal year compared to \$993 million in 2007", while [food riots](#) breakout all over the world.

So far in the USA we have been lucky to get off with an increase in food born illness and a few deaths. In other parts of the world the transnational Ag corporations aggressive [monopolization](#) of the food supply has caused a [child](#) to starve to death every 30 seconds, caused [farmers to suicide](#) every 32 minutes in India, many by drinking Monsanto pesticides, and in Mexico, caused the [number of farmers](#) to drop an astounding 75% from 2.3 million in 1992 to 575,000 in 2002. Meanwhile Monsanto, Cargill and ADM [happily sign](#) agreements to [steal and patent](#) Mexico's seed genetics with the [UN's blessing](#) and the [EU passed laws](#) making the sale of un-patented seed impossible. The Joint Communication from the African Group said the WTO patent agreements (TRIPS) "[could damage the livelihoods of 1.4 billion farmers worldwide and undermine food sovereignty and food security](#)" With the passage of the bogus food safety bills the transnational Agri-corporations will be handed the final weapon needed to drive out independent farmers and even home gardeners. The

[bills](#) allows "*the Administrator*" to confiscate farmland, conduct surveillance and warrant-less entry on anyone "*holding food*" (thats YOU) with no judicial review over even the appropriateness and validity of punishments for as yet unstated "*crimes*"

What do they care if US farmers join the ranks of those committing suicide, what do they care if more children starve because food prices are too high? What do they care if the term "[Premises](#)" [strips away](#) our constitutional rights, reduces US property owners to mere [stakeholders](#). Despite repeated requests by farmers, the USDA refuses to change the term from "premises" to "property" or even answer for whom they will be holding the property rights. Dr Nina Fedoroff science and technology advisor to the US secretary of State [says](#): "*There are probably already too many people on the planet.*" She stressed the need for humans to become much better at managing "*wild lands*" No doubt she wants to transfer all that stolen farmland to the "[Wildlands Project](#)" after starvation reduces the number of people in the USA and worldwide to the appropriate level.