

Negative effects of patents

The whole of the food chain (breeders, farmers, processors, retailers, consumers) could be affected if patents are granted on seeds, plants, fruits and derived products.

Seed market – Control by a few international corporations

Because of eliminated competition, only a few corporations control the proprietary seed market and thus the basis of our food (e.g. because of high costs in relation to patents application). Today, only 10 corporations own about 75 % of the international seed market. The three largest, Monsanto, DuPont and Syngenta, control over 50 % of the market.

Increased prices for farmers and consumers

Through the monopolisation of the seed market, corporations are free to determine the prices for their seeds, at the costs for farmers, and ultimately, consumers. We should not allow a few seed giants to decide what is grown in the fields, what will be bred and which price we all have to pay for our daily food.

Less innovation

Contrary to the intended purpose, patents on seeds substantially hinder innovation. These patents can be used to block access to biological diversity needed to breed and to grow plants. Breeders and farmers are not allowed to breed using patented varieties without the permission of the patent holder. If permission is granted at all, a licence fee must be paid to the patent holder. And also in following generations no further breeding can take place without permission of the patent holder.

Less biodiversity & less variety

The diversity of agricultural varieties and wild crops are the main resources for breeders/farmers to develop new varieties. If access to this diversity is hindered, there will be less innovation. Less innovation leads to less new varieties thereby decreasing biodiversity in agriculture and the choice for consumers.

Endangered food security

Given reduced diversity, crops are less capable of adapting to diseases or changing environmental conditions (such as climate change). Therefore high agricultural biodiversity is essential for our food security.