

US court orders GMO beets destroyed

December 1 2010

A federal judge has ordered what is believed to be the first-ever destruction of a genetically modified crop in the United States, saying that the altered sugar beets were planted illegally.

US District Judge Jeffrey White in California granted a preliminary injunction Tuesday sought by the Center for Food Safety and other groups, which contended that the Monsanto-produced sugar beet [crops](#) were planted without proper environmental review.

He delayed implementation of the order until December 7 to allow time for an appeal.

White said in his ruling that "there is a significant risk that the plantings pursuant to the permits will cause [environmental harm](#)."

He added that despite efforts to prevent contamination or cross-pollination of crops, there was no guarantee that the GMO crops would not affect other plants.

He said there have been examples of contamination and that "these incidents are too numerous for this court to declare confidently that these permits provide sufficient containment to protect the environment."

Paul Achitoff of Earthjustice, the lawyer for the plaintiffs, said the US Department of Agriculture, which was named as the defendant for issuing the permits "thumbed its nose at the judicial system and the

public by allowing this crop to be grown without any environmental review."

At issue is the planting of so-called Roundup Ready beets that allow the agribusiness giant Monsanto's Roundup herbicide to be used without harming the crops themselves..

"Herbicide resistant crops just like this have been shown to result in more [toxic chemicals](#) in our soil and water," Achitoff said.

"USDA has shown no regard for the environmental laws, and we're pleased that Judge White ordered the appropriate response."

The center, which actively opposes biotech crops, said the case was the first in which a judge had ordered the destruction of plantings.

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Citation: US court orders GMO beets destroyed (2010, December 1) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-12-court-gmo-beets.html>

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