

# GRAIN's latest publications

## ***Bird flu in eastern India: another senseless slaughter***

**GRAIN, February 2008**

<http://www.grain.org/articles/?id=35>

The carnage of poultry, in which 3.7 million birds were culled, in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal is a striking testament to the failure of the global response to the bird flu crisis. In a flash, one of the world's most dynamic areas of poultry farming has been practically ruined, a priceless stock of biodiversity wiped out, and the livelihoods of millions of poor families pushed to the brink. This has been caused not so much by bird flu as by the response to it.

## ***Fighting FTAs***

**Edited by bilaterals.org, BIOTHAI and GRAIN, February 2008**

<http://www.fightingftas.org>

While global trade talks at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) stagnate, governments and corporations are busy spinning a complex web of bilateral free trade and investment agreements (FTAs). *Fighting FTAs* looks at what this FTA frenzy is really about, how social movements are fighting back, and what strategic lessons emerge from these struggles.

Available in English, French, Spanish and Thai.

Hard copies available on request from [fightingftas@gmail.com](mailto:fightingftas@gmail.com).

See also: <http://www.bilaterals.org>

Bilaterals.org is a collective effort, in which GRAIN participates, to share information about, and stimulate co-operation against, bilateral trade and investment agreements that are opening countries to the deepest forms of penetration by transnational corporations.

## ***Whose harvest? The politics of organic seed certification***

**GRAIN, January 2008**

<http://www.grain.org/briefings/?id=207>

Millions of farmers around the world practise organic agriculture, and over a billion people get most of their food from these

farms. Currently only a small proportion of what they produce is certified and labelled as organic, but the global market for such foods is growing. While some believe that certification is needed to create market opportunities for small farmers, others fear that existing systems are doing the reverse – setting the stage for agribusiness to take over. Now these tensions are coming to a head with seeds. Today, new regulations governing seeds in organic farming, more attuned to the needs of seed corporations than seed savers, are popping up everywhere, with potentially devastating consequences for farmers' seed systems. This Briefing provides the first global overview of regulations concerning seeds in organic farming and assesses what such regulations mean to the future of organic farming and the millions of farmers who sustain it.

## ***A new Green Revolution for Africa?***

**GRAIN, December 2007**

<http://www.grain.org/briefings/?id=205>

For some time now, there has been talk of a new Green Revolution for Africa – because “Africa missed the first Green Revolution” or because “the first Green Revolution missed Africa”. Now a new project, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), is trying to put the concept into operation. This paper describes what a Green Revolution really signifies, why such projects haven't worked before, and why AGRA won't work either – in order to help people trying to take positions at local, national and regional levels.

## ***IRRI Inc – IRRI's betrayal***

**GRAIN, November 2007,**

<http://www.grain.org/articles/?id=33>

On 9 November 2007, in the midst of the Asian Seed Congress, IRRI announced the formation of its Hybrid Rice Research and Development Consortium. This lays the foundation for a direct relationship between IRRI and private seed companies: IRRI supplies the parent lines, while corporations, who gain exclusive rights to the varieties, handle the marketing.

These varieties from which IRRI is willing

to make a profit are based on seeds that it holds “in trust”, seeds that were collected from farmers' fields. Although IRRI may talk about the public benefits of this new Consortium, it cannot gloss over the betrayal that lies at the heart of the operation.

## **Hybrid rice blog**

<http://www.grain.org/hybridrice>

During the first quarter of 2008, GRAIN's hybrid rice blog reported that some seed companies in Bangladesh were again using floods as a pretext to open the door to hybrid rice. We also covered new developments in Malaysia, where the push for hybrid rice continues primarily through joint ventures with Chinese seed companies. One of the new corporations stepping into hybrid rice is the Malaysian conglomerate Sime Darby. While its traditional focus is oil-palm plantations, Sime Darby recently set up a Malaysian joint venture with the global supermarket powerhouse Tesco, and is seeking vertically integrated contract farming schemes to supply Tesco in Malaysia and beyond. To make things easy for the company, the Malaysian government put Sime Darby in charge of developing an economic development “master plan” for the northern part of the country. The linchpin of Sime Darby's plan is a multimillion-dollar seed centre, partly financed by the government, that will seemingly be under the company's control. It says that the centre will focus on developing high-yielding varieties for 10 cash crops, including rice, and, in line with this, it has already signed an R&D agreement with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences for the transfer of germplasm and their know-how with biotechnology. Nestlé is involved in the plans too, through a joint venture partnership to develop and grow red rice in the northern Kedah state. It seems that one of the top five seed companies is also involved, though no names have yet been divulged.

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