



STOP GOLDEN RICE!

The genetic modification of rice is a threat to rice genetic diversity and the rights of all farmers and consumers in the world particularly in Asia, where rice is the staple food crop. Farmers, who have nurtured, conserved and improved thousands of rice varieties for centuries stand to lose their rights over these seeds as giant transnational companies in collaboration with public institutions like the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) are racing to patent rice genes and seeds for profit. Golden Rice, the genetically modified rice engineered to express beta-carotene is being pushed among Asians as a supposed remedy to Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD). There is evidence of inherent uncertainty in transgene functioning, and a lack of definitive information on its biosafety. In the presence of numerous widely available plant and animal sources of beta-carotene in Asia, introduction of an expensive GE rice as a magic-bullet solution to VAD is irrational and unnecessary.

We, the participants of the Asian Farmers' Conference on Golden Rice believe that the genetically engineered rice should not be released and that the lies and deceptions of Syngenta and IRRI should be exposed. In reality:

- Golden Rice is a Trojan horse, masquerading as a humanitarian technology to make GMOs more acceptable to society;
- Golden Rice is highly likely to have adverse impacts to human health and environment;
- Golden Rice cannot be a solution to VAD. Addressing VAD requires holistic approach to nutrition including lipids, minerals and access to safe drinking water. All traditional food cultures have simple methods to provide complete nutrition to people;
- The investments made on Golden Rice could have been used for making supplementations and nutritious foods available to combat VAD.

Hunger and malnutrition cannot be dealt with techno fixes; the approach has to be holistic by addressing socio-economic inequities and ensuring access to resources as well. A biodiversity based food system, drawn on both cultivated and uncultivated food resources, is the only rational answer to solve nutrient deficiencies, including VAD.

Together we are launching a stronger and intensified campaign in Asia to stop Golden Rice; to defend and protect our traditional crop varieties; safeguard the environment and the health of our people; and oppose the increasing control of seeds and agrochemical TNCs over farming and agriculture.

We are calling upon our governments to stop the field testing and commercialization of Golden Rice. We are calling upon IRRI and Syngenta to stop making a business out of agriculture, and recognize the rights and wisdom of small-scale farmers.