



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 15, 2012

WikiLeaks: More Evidence of Monsanto's Bullying and Influence-Buying

A cable written in 2007 and released recently by WikiLeaks confirmed the company's important influence at the very highest levels of the U.S. government. Authored by Craig Stapleton, a friend and business partner of then-president George Bush, the cable outlined a response to resistance from various members of the European Union to adopting GM (genetically modified) crops. At issue specifically was France's move to ban Monsanto's GM corn variety:



Country team Paris [Stapleton's code name] recommends that we calibrate a *target retaliation list* that causes some pain across the EU since this [resistance] is a collective responsibility, but that also focuses in part *on the worst culprits*. [Emphasis added.]

The list should be measured rather than vicious and must be sustainable over the long term, since we should not expect an early victory. Moving to retaliation will make clear that the current path [of resistance to the adoption of GM crops] has real costs to EU interests and could help strengthen European pro-biotech [pro-GM] voices.

Other leaked cables documented attempts to influence the Pope himself, who was resistant to supporting GM crops. From the U.S. State Department came this effort to influence the Pope: "...[name blacked out] met with U.S. monsignor Fr. Michael Osborn of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, offering a chance to push the Vatican on biotech issues..." Another cable said: "Opportunities exist to press the issue with the Vatican and in turn to influence a wide segment of the population in Europe and the developing world."

These illustrated obvious attempts to work around many Catholic priests who oppose GM crops as being potentially dangerous not only to the health of human beings but to the environment as well. For instance, a prominent member of the Vatican, Cardinal Peter Turkson, [said](#) that genetically-modified crops are a "new form of slavery," referring to the "[suicide belt of India](#)" where thousands of farmers are committing suicide in desperation over being unable to repay debts incurred to purchase GM seeds.

Anthony Gucciardi, [writing for NaturalSociety.com](#), stated,

Monsanto has undoubtedly infiltrated the United States government in order to push their health-endangering agenda, and this has been known long before the release of these WikiLeaks cables. The U.S. is the only place where Monsanto's synthetic hormone Posilac is still used in roughly 1/3



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of all cows, with 27 nations banning the substance over legitimate health concerns.

Monsanto's bullying tactics in protecting its patents on its GM seeds [are legendary](#), but are only the tip of the iceberg of the company's attempts to influence policy worldwide. The government of India has filed [several lawsuits](#) against Monsanto, while Canada has had [its own difficulties](#) with the corporation. The company paid contractors to dump thousands of tons of highly toxic waste in UK landfill sites, knowing both that it was illegal to do so and that these chemicals were "[liable to contaminate wildlife and people.](#)"

In January, 2005, Monsanto paid a fine for bribing an Indonesian official to avoid an environmental impact assessment on its GM cotton. In 2007 the company was fined in France for misleading advertising about its product Roundup. In Germany Monsanto's attempt to breed GM pigs failed due to overwhelming public outcries. In the United States Monsanto continues its [attempt to prohibit dairies](#) from advertising that their cows are not injected with the company's artificial bovine growth hormone.

And so on. What Monsanto has discovered, and has refined over the years, is that it is more profitable to influence legislation in its favor than to compete in a free market. With friends in high places — including Craig Stapleton, Justice Clarence Thomas (who worked for Monsanto in the '70s), Michael Taylor (who worked for the Food and Drug Administration, then moved to a law firm that had Monsanto as a client, and then was appointed to the FDA by President Obama in 2009), Michael Friedman (who worked at the FDA and now is a VP at Monsanto), Linda Fisher (who was initially employed by the Environmental Protection Agency and then moved to Monsanto as a VP, and then returned to the EPA in 2001), and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (who served as chairman and CEO of G.D. Searle which Monsanto purchased in 1985, putting at least \$12 million into his pocket in the process) — Monsanto has developed crony-capitalism into a high art form. WikiLeaks just confirmed it.

Photo of GM corn: AP Images



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