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Monsanto Masters the Dark Arts

Monsanto turned out the lights yesterday after the ladies of MADGE Australia, Cropwatch, and Gene Ethics arrived to deliver bags of GM canola roadside weeds. Agri-chemical giant Monsanto is the patent holder of the GM Roundup Ready canola crop recently planted in Australia. Bob Phelps of Gene Ethics also attended.

After obligatory photos in the Monsanto lobby, the ladies went to the door. It was locked. Then the Monsanto lights went out.

MADGE Australia's Madeleine Love explained the visit.

"The GM weeds were Monsanto's property, and they were on our roadsides. We'd prefer not to be cleaning up, but we didn't want to leave them there to contaminate GM free crops."

"They were physically removed from beside farmer Gai Marshall's GM free canola crop near Berrigan, NSW. There are many more, further up the road."

"Monsanto was told about their GM weeds, but they didn't come and clean them up. Monsanto has a record of suing farmers who accidentally have these GM plants on their property [Percy Schmeiser]."

"We don't know anyone in Australia who would want GM weeds, so we were returning them to their owners. Strangely, Monsanto didn't seem to want them either."

Bob Phelps from Gene Ethics had invited Monsanto to receive the weeds at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre where the 4th International Conference on Coexistence between Genetically Modified (GM) and Non-GM based Agricultural Supply Chains. But when they didn't come Monsanto was called to say the weeds would be brought directly to their office.

Madeleine Love continued "The lights were on when we arrived, but when we were ready to go in we found the door was locked. We could see the receptionist by the wall beside the door, and then the lights went out. We could see the staff sitting behind the partitions."

"The lights weren't on, but Monsanto was at home."

"We waited some time, and rang again but they didn't answer. I had to leave but the others sent out for coffee and food because it was getting near lunch time."

"This event has shed a whole new light on True Food's "Eating in Dark" expose on how Food Standards Australia New Zealand is failing us on genetically engineered food <http://bit.ly/3u28lp>."

(In a dramatic new story Monsanto has withdrawn its European application for a new GM corn after the EU raised Safety questions. This GM corn had already been approved in Australia against the advice of biosafety experts.

http://www.gmfreecymru.org/news/Press_Notice9Nov2009.htm Monsanto pulls GM corn amid serious food safety concerns

<http://www.bioscienceresource.org/news/article.php?id=43> Transgenic high-lysine corn LY038 withdrawn after EU raises safety questions)

The ladies left the lobby pondering how many Monsanto staff it takes to turn on a light.

Monsanto's Michael Leader later spoke at the GECC 09 conference, where MADGE Australia's Fran Murrell is attending.

Contacts:

Jessica Harrison	0407 307 231
Fran Murrell	0401 407 944
Madeleine Love	0447 762 284