

Corn Growers Meet With Glickman To Urge USDA To Abandon Terminator Technology

WASHINGTON D.C. — The American Corn Growers Association (ACGA) met with Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman recently to encourage USDA to abandon the research and development of the "Terminator" technology.

USDA holds a co-patent for this technology with Delta & Pine Land Company.

Terminator is the name given to a genetic engineering technique that renders second generation seed sterile, preventing farmers from keeping back seed for the next growing season. This technique forces farmers to purchase new seed every year.

In the meeting, the ACGA expressed disappointment that USDA would use public dollars to help develop a technology that is not in the best interest of nor benefit to production agriculture.

"The ACGA expects more from our department of agriculture. We expect advocates for farmer rights and well being. We expect partners working to expand our domestic and overseas markets. We expect a resource of valuable information that can make our farms more profitable. We do not expect public funding for research that makes seed sterile," said Gary Goldberg, chief executive officer of the ACGA.

Among others joining the ACGA at the meeting with the secretary was the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA and the National Family Farm Coalition. Collectively, the following recommendations were made to the Secretary:

- USDA should cease negotiations with Delta & Pine Land on the licensing of its jointly held patent and abandon all research on genetic seed sterilization, including research grants to university scientists.
- USDA should adopt a strict policy prohibiting the use of taxpayer dollars to support genetic seed sterilization.
- USDA should use public research dollars to re-invigorate public plant breeding for family farmers and sustainable agriculture.
- USDA should insure that farmers and citizens are involved in determining research priorities.

"Having a handful of biotechnology companies controlling the production and distribution of seed makes farmers hostage to the economic exploitation by this industry. We will lose our ability to choose the seeds we want to plant and the option of holding back that seed for another year," said Goldberg.

"The ACGA appreciates the time that the secretary gave to us to discuss this important issue. We urge him to address our concerns and re-institute trust in the USDA as an advocate for the production agriculture," said Goldberg.

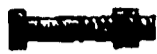
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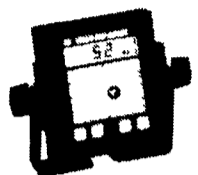
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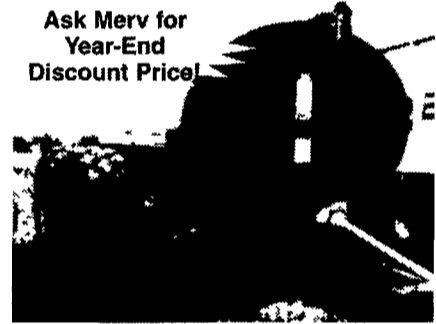


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