

## Organised Irresponsibility

Reader about German Rope Teams Involving Corporations, Public Regulators,  
Business Development and Lobbying for German Genetic Engineering



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# Preface

This pamphlet introduces the German case of how small research companies interact with state authorities, funding bodies and public research institutions to establish genetically engineered plants as a reality. The text carefully describes the network relations between individuals who act in and through many of the institutions involved.

The pamphlet shows how independent assessment of the risks of genetic engineering is structurally prevented in Germany. State authorities – just like in the UK – are supposed to exercise control over GMOs. This especially concerns questions of safety, environment and health. Case studies show that such control does not exist. The impression is this: a dense network of people and their organisations, capital and its agents, government authorities and its servants ensure that GMOs are released into the environment and used for food production. Not scrutiny but rubber-stamping!

In August 2009 two of the main German GM players (Uwe Schrader and Kerstin Schmidt) discussed in the booklet made a legal challenge against the assumed author of the booklet. They wanted to censor the text. A local court readily complied with the intentions of the GM players and the booklet was not allowed to be distributed anymore. Several weeks and months of struggle followed: the court actively denied the accused the right to defend himself and tried to prevent a legal hearing, i.e., the presentation of proofs for the analysis provided in this text. Clearly the court acted politically. It took a year, finally, until a revision moved this theater's stage to a higher court which actually had a look at the situation and recognised that the GM actors had not in fact challenged the facts laid out in the booklet. However, the text reconstructed these actors of German agricultural GM as dubious and ruthless: a mafia. The court decided that the GM actors had to accept this evaluation (court decision 25th August 2010).<sup>1</sup> Consequently the ban of the distribution was lifted.

<sup>1</sup>Decision 5 U 251/10-45; 9 O 481/09 of the Saarländisches Oberlandesgericht (court) argued that a) the GM actors did not challenge the *factual statements* provided in the booklet (p.10) and b) the reconstruction of these actors as "Gentechnik-Mafia" (p.10), "dubious" (p.11) and "ruthless" (p.12) are not factual claims, but, rather, opinions and thus have to be accepted as such. download the verdict

Unfortunately, even alternative political actors like Green party members or a Marxist newspaper are afraid of powerful GM actors. Thus, they do not support spreading this detailed critique.

The German concept *Seilschaft* has been translated as *rope team*. Literally, the term has connotations to mountaineering. It is a pejorative concept, referring to a group of people working together in a network to promote a common cause (in this case, GM) and "often clandestinely – support each other" (court decision 25th August 2010<sup>2</sup>). Within a rope team, members may be closely *entangled* among each other. The closest equivalent in English seems to be *old boys' network*. We preferred using the concept 'rope team' because it indicates the material and visible links between GM actors. They *weave the thread* of the GM story together and the thread is so powerful that it can be better imagined as a rope. And, then again, having too many threads and ropes intermingled *causes sleaze* – everything but transparent, not easy to get rid of, stable, a medium for further growth.

Find more notes on the translation of the text at the end of the booklet.

This text covers:

**Organised irresponsibility: An Introduction.** An introduction to the topic and the actors involved, portraying the dense network of sleaze made up of science, agencies, and companies.

**Protection for Corporations: EU- and Federal Agencies** Governmental authorities are supposed to act in the interest of the people. This section shows how these authorities are strongly biased and pro GMOs. The most significant organisational effect of the network relations surrounding the authorities is this: methods of control for Genetic Engineering (GE) are shaped by those who conduct the experiments. The cases show that rubber-stamping GE field trial applications represent the rule rather than the exception. This section covers both German as well as European governmental entities.

<sup>2</sup>Page 10 of Court Decision 5 U 251/10-45; 9 O 481/09 of the Saarländisches Oberlandesgericht download verdict

**The Networks' Strongholds** An in depth account of the relations of the GE networks' research nodes.

**Lobby groups and informal networks** A discussion of the lobbyists and revolving informal networks. This section shows how actors move within and between networks and how discourses and public perceptions are altered.

**Genetic Engineering: Controlling oneself and the public discourse** This section sheds light on how so-called research into safety is used to stabilise social and legal environments such that they do not oppose GM. At the same time that biological safety research is carried out it turns obvious that any field trial threatens global contamination.

**A Finger in every pie – But not overtly: The corporations** This section points to the role of corporations and multinationals in controlling the small and medium enterprises (SME) publicly acting in German GM. Actors are well connected between large and global players and local GM initiatives. This booklet concludes by deconstructing the standard claims of GM proponents and pointing to the reasons why others are motivated to take direct action against GM.

The booklet in its original German version contains links and references to all the material on which this analysis is founded upon. These references have been partially translated. To a large degree, however, you will find a straightforward reference to the corresponding footnote in the German version (indicated like this “\*1” for the first footnote), which you are able to access at <http://www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/filz/brosch.pdf>. End of 2010 a book has been published in German language by this pamphlet's author showing in depth the analysis of the material.<sup>3</sup> In the German version you will also find further graphical overview material. We would like to point, especially, to pages 16 and 17. They provide a visualisation of the network structure of actors as well as tabular access to German GM actors' relations.

All general statements made about GM may be safely read as referring to the German case. However, reading about the social and organisational reality portrayed here does not suggest that the situation in other Western countries is likely to be very different. Rather, to be precautionary, we have to assume that equivalent rope teams exist all over Europe.

London, December 2010–January 2011

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<sup>3</sup>For more information, visit <http://www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/buch/index.htm>; the book ISBN's is 978-3-86747-043-8.

# Organized Irresponsibility

## An Introduction

If 78 to 90% of German citizens oppose genetic engineering,<sup>1</sup> why can't they avert it? Here are some indispensable words on authorities supposed to protect consumers and control companies...

[...] GMOs are consistently declared safe by the scientific agency entrusted with the oversight, while EU commission and member countries are split on the issue of the dangers to public health and the environment. [... German environment minister] Gabriel criticised the seesawing that could no longer be communicated to the populace. "What we're doing today is 'organised irresponsibility'"<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 A parable: Imagine, if genetic engineering was building-a-house...

Heinz M. has been in the business for quite a while. He runs a construction business with eleven workers. Often, he co-operates with other firms to share the work. Now, he wants to build his own house. For that he asks for planning permission; this is required by the law. Hence, he sits down and starts writing a list of what he would like. He makes lots of mistakes and leaves many gaps, considering his request a proper application. However he does not adapt to the required formalities. He points roughly to a location – a kilometer or two deviation towards south or east shouldn't cause a problem! M. knows that nobody will scrutinise the request. Why? Because the responsible officer at the council's administration office is his sister; the head of the office had worked in his business before. For years now, he has been forging the

records of local visits – together with his relatives and friends at the council's office. Two forms prompt him to name a site manager and a security officer. He puts himself down as the first; somebody else will be the latter. For another form he has to account for the specialised knowledge. M. fills the field with: "Uncle Kurt once told us about it." He knows that his house-building plan has many disadvantages for the neighbours. However, two of the four affected families include people who are working for his firm. The other two, luckily, do not have any influence. Because he acts cautiously – chatting with his friend at the authority – he ensured that he is officially allowed to immediately start building. If the two independent neighbours tried to sue him, they would not be able to stop him, because by the time the lawsuit would start, his new house would be completed. And they won't have any other chance either. How Heinz M. laughed when his neighbour threatened him getting in touch with the local media and post them information. The local media's income depends on his advertisement, so it would be more economical to not bother paying that postage.

Now, Heinz M. actually hands in his application for a planning permission. In the council's planning authority the application is inspected by a commission. Good for him that one of its members is a the boss of the painting business who will carry out the building project with him. Thus, the boss of the painting business will review his own project. Additionally, among the commission's members are a former business partner of him and two of his former employees. The only external inspector will be focusing on the building process and her main employer is the company which provides the building materials for M.'s project.

Yet, some work is still required to arrange the finances for the project, because, obviously, Heinz M. wants the building to be financed through the state. Hence, good for him, that an old schoolmate is working for the office

<sup>1</sup>Percentages vary according to polls. Most recent poll evaluated: Forsa-Institut as of 2009-05-19, source: [http://www.slowfood.de/w/files/pdf\\_neu/meinungen\\_zu\\_gentechnik\\_190509.pdf](http://www.slowfood.de/w/files/pdf_neu/meinungen_zu_gentechnik_190509.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>from a Reuters release, 2008-07-11, [genfood.wordpress.com](http://genfood.wordpress.com)

which re-distributes the state's income from taxes. He won't check this application in depth. This allows M. to point to some planned activities – activities which he never intends to put into practice – currently subsidised and supported. Pointing to activities that are preferred by the current funding schemes is something M. has been practicing for years and it has always worked. Nobody checked what he was actually doing. Once, a neighbour denounced him to an authority regarding an illegal building project. The authority looked into the offenses of the claimant. The latter, then, received a reply saying everything was fine. Heinz M. laughs: "Nobody was here, looked or asked..."

Well, now position yourself as Heinz M. and imagine you would genetically engineer plants, rather than building houses. Then the approval procedure would work out like described above. The more risky a technology, the more corrupt and interdependent the set of relationships between corporations and old boys networks are. This is what this pamphlet is about. We would be glad to give you a tour through German and European authorities and institutions responsible for genetic engineering. Be assured: the material presented here is merely the surface. The German pamphlet contains many links and additional information. The more you look into it, the worse it is. Behind the glitzy phrases of sustainability, innovation and freedom of science, technology and research, as well as behind the concept of consumer protection, you will find corporations and lobbyists that are not even very difficult to recognise.

## 1.2 Why bother scrutinising the German patron-client networks?

It was so convenient: Talking about GMOs was talking about Monsanto. Books and movies criticising this undoubtedly ruthless corporation experienced record sales, circulations and ratings. Organisations of ethical shareholders of German corporations were left in envy. The campaigns' events filled large auditoriums.

The plant that was 'evil incarnate' could electrify insert 'audiences': MON810. Wherever it was planted, citizens and concerned NGOs would protest. Nobody wanted the uncontrollable seed in their neighbourhood. Not even Germany's environment minister: "I cannot see the added value of Monsanto's GMO products to society," he proclaimed on March 2, 2009 and added – as if BASF, Bayer, or KWS did not exist: "Just imagine the debate on genetically modified products took place in the USA, and the only company with an interest in selling this concoction was pursuing the European economic interests of a single company, just as the EU Commission is pur-

suing the economic interests of an American company."<sup>3</sup>

The uproar is much quieter when German companies and research institutions develop and release genetically modified crops. In some places nothing much happens at all. For example, when Giessen University planted GM barley, all parties in the city council voted in favour of the dangerous experiment, including the Green and Left parties as well as the social democrats, quite in contrast to the radical rejection of GMOs those parties showed in their campaigns.

Why? Is German genetic engineering better? Of course!

At least according to the German environmental protection minister Sigmar Gabriel. Only a few days after the acrid remarks on Monsanto he visited the German seed company KWS Saat AG: "We want to authorise the breeding of GMOs no matter what," he said, "but we do not want collateral damage in nature." Research in this area was indispensable, since the challenges of a growing world population and its energy hunger could hardly be met by other means.<sup>4</sup>

Monsanto's products = no "added value to the society". KWS Saat AG = indispensable for nutrition and energy supply. Simple but somewhat weird. After all, KWS develops their GMOs in cooperation with Monsanto and sells MON810 (under the YieldGard brand) to central and east Europe. For Sigmar Gabriel, bad things suddenly became beneficial if they happened to come from a German company...

Gabriel's colleague in the ministry of agriculture, Ilse Aigner, clearly shares this view. On 14th April 2009 she banned MON810 to the cheers of many environmental NGOs. German GMO trial



Figure 1.1: Sigmar Gabriel



Figure 1.2: Ilse Aigner

<sup>3</sup>Letter of the minister to the action group Gentechnik-Alarm, 2009-03-02, [http://www.keine-gentechnik.de/fileadmin/files/Infodienst/Dokumente/09\\_03\\_02\\_bmu\\_antwort\\_stopthecrop.pdf](http://www.keine-gentechnik.de/fileadmin/files/Infodienst/Dokumente/09_03_02_bmu_antwort_stopthecrop.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Report in Göttinger Tageblatt, 2009-03-12

fields, which are in her area of responsibility as well, remained in operation. In late June, the very same minister initiated a programme to develop energy crops – using, at least in part, genetic engineering.<sup>5</sup>

The third minister with an evidently split tongue and a soft spot for home-grown genetic engineering is the social democratic minister of agriculture in the Bundesland (state)<sup>6</sup> of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania: Till Backhaus.



**Figure 1.3:** Till Backhaus

On 29th April 2009 he demanded a ban on the release of the Amflora potato in Bütow because the area of 20 hectares [50 acres] was too large.<sup>7</sup> A few days later he praised the GE experiments in his Land Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania – ironically exactly those at the seedy Agrobiotechnikum: “We decidedly support the research location Gross Luesewitz.”<sup>8</sup> He staunchly affirmed his promise to allow planting GMOs on the entire area of 260 hectares [640 acres].

A glance at North America may be useful here. There is a steady stream of shocking news from there – at least in the European media. GM canola has irreversibly interbred. In Mexico, DNA from some GM maize turned up even though it is banned there. Clearly, much is already out of control. Farmers from the countries affected recommend European governments to abandon genetic engineering immediately to avert similar disasters.

At least 80% of the molecular biologists in the USA have investments in commercial biotech companies.<sup>9</sup> This sounds horrible. It is. But a movie like ‘The World according to Monsanto’<sup>10</sup> could have been set in Europe

and Germany just as well. Regrettably, we are still waiting for such a movie that would deface the myth of safe’ genetic research in Germany. Just as between Monsanto, the FDA and others, there are rope teams’ pervading German genetic engineering.

None of the oversight bodies are independent. Mutual influence and interdependence is rife between corporations, lobby groups and authority officials. Millions are at stake: careers, patents and of course the central goal of the genetic engineers, which is to place their technology everywhere until there are no alternatives any more. The “worst case” of comprehensive interbreeding of GMOs would amount to a victory of the perpetrators – the “accidental” GMO maize fields in the spring of 2009 at various places in Germany mark the direction.

The first victims are in as well: beekeepers who must destroy their honey, farmers who do not know if their crop is GMO free. As long as the rope teams’ are in control, no help can be expected from either the authorities or from safety research. Both are in collusion with those they are supposed to control: “Today scientists are politicians, they are stock brokers, they have companies of their own and no longer just hang around in their labs ... These scientists are massively involved in the social and political proliferation of their work”.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 1.4:** The agro GM rope teams celebrate – the case of the foundation of Agrobiotechnikums. When does self-enrichment stop?

<sup>5</sup>See <http://www.fnr.de>

<sup>6</sup>Translators have used the concept “state” to refer to the German concept Bundesland (plural: Bundesländer). Sometimes we also used the shorter “Land” to refer to this legal entity. For a map of German Bundesländer see section 7

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten\\_region/sn/205310.html](http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten_region/sn/205310.html), [http://www.charivari.de/nachrichten/nachrichten\\_detail.php?nachrichten\\_id=128659](http://www.charivari.de/nachrichten/nachrichten_detail.php?nachrichten_id=128659).

<sup>8</sup>MVregio 2009-05-08, [http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten\\_region/mittleres\\_mecklenburg/35556.html](http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten_region/mittleres_mecklenburg/35556.html).

An enthusiastic article on the expectations for the BioOK compound containing statements of the agricultural minister was also produced by the German press agency called dpa and – of all media – distributed by <http://www.greenpeace-magazin.de> on 13th May 2009.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with US science historian Lily E. Kay, taz 2000-09-04

<sup>10</sup><http://www.arte.tv/monsanto>

<sup>11</sup>Kay, taz 2000-09-04, loc. cit.

## Protection of the corporations: German federal and EU authorities



Figure 2.1: BVL at Mauerstraße 39–42, Berlin

Roughly 80% of the people in Germany reject genetic engineering (GE) in agriculture. It is hard to imagine a more striking contrast to this than the nomination of the German members to the European control group for GM products in 2009: all four of them were outspoken advocates of GMOs.

This contrast is routine. In both the control authorities and the funding agencies, GE factionists occupy all the executive positions. Skeptics and critics are absent. This fatal outcome is the result of years of the rope teams' scheming.

### Consumer Protection Office: Protection of the Corporations from the Consumers

Laws protect the Consumers. They limit pollutants and mandate certain freedom of information rights. It may be reassuring that there are agencies entrusted with the

enforcement of such rights. In Germany, it is the Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (BVL, "federal agency for consumer protection and food safety").

Its web site promises: "The BVL enforces the consumer protection laws based on EC norms ... Our mission is to better assert consumer rights in case of violations within the EU ... The BVL has a duplicate function: it is both the central liaison office in Germany and it is itself an authority responsible for the enforcement of consumer rights".

Hearing that some may relax – here is a big agency worrying about consumers and their interests against the state, corporations, and others. Such complacency quite probably is what is intended. The reality, however, is far from such promises. In fact, the opposite is true. So far, the BVL has approved all applications for GMO use.<sup>1</sup>

Of all agencies, it was the BVL that denied access to its files according to German environmental information law. In internal memos, some officials overtly sided with the corporations and research institutes applying for trial licenses, some even performed in promotional videos of the very companies that filed the GMO use applications they rubber-stamped the next day. The most influential decision makers of BVL's GE department are part of a tightly knit network of lobby organisations and corporations. Over the years – control, approval, and funding agencies, research establishments and commercial companies sprawled into a jungle conveying the impression of a monolithic block.

A striking example is the head of the GE department, Dr. Hans-Jörg Buhk. He has never been neutral or even critical. As early as the late nineties he confidently proclaimed the great benefits and non-existing risks of GE: "In this way the organisms that supply

<sup>1</sup>Umweltinstitut München, disciplinary complaint against Dr. Buhk and Bartsch, 24th Nov 2006 (p.3)

the basis of our nutrition can be endowed with specific properties that improve our food's quality. We have reason to expect both economic and ecologic advantages in both production and processing [...] Hardly any new technology has ever been tested for possible risks as extensively as GE, and never has any food been subjected to as comprehensive test procedures as food produced using GE or containing GMOs. I think the fears of many fellow German citizens are gut instincts and are frequently caused by a lack of information"<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 2.2:** Hans-Jörg Buhk

In 1996-1997 Buhk supported the introduction of Monsanto's GM soy on the German market in public speeches and writings. In 2000 he signed the declaration "Scientists in support of agricultural biotechnology". This manifesto glorifies agricultural GE as, among other things, friendly to the environment, safe, and accurate.<sup>3</sup>

After some time even the sluggish government apparatus noticed that something was wrong and sent Buhk a cease-and-desist order in 2002 because of a public appearance as an industry representative. This of course changed nothing with respect to his central role in the approval proceedings. That same year, Buhk appeared in the promotional video "Das streitbare Korn" ("The battlesome grain") praising the economic advantages of GE maize.

He was also in the steering committee of the GE trade show ABIC2004 and signed the "ABIC2004 manifesto" referring to his office at BVL. That manifesto demanded the abolition of "superfluous barriers" in the approval of GMOs. Somewhat absurdly, Buhk was responsible to oversee adherence to those "barriers" in his role as head of the GE department at the same time. Thus, as a lobbyist he worked against the very rules he had to enforce in his day job.

The minister responsible for BVL in 2004, Renate Künast, announced an examination of these matters after public pressure. Nothing happened, though. On the contrary, Buhk promoted GE and fought consumer rights despite being paid as the top consumer protection agent in GE matters. In an advertising brochure of the GE lobby

he suggested the EU could, "at least for all GMOs tested according to the standards of the Cartagena Protocol, establish threshold values below which the requirement to obtain approval would be waived".<sup>4</sup>

At the Gießen GM barley experiment he signed an order for immediate execution, which deprived consumers of any means to stop the experiment with their objections. On the release of GM wheat in Gatersleben, the BVL contended in *Wirtschaftswoche* on 18th September 2006: "The so-called kins of wheat cannot interbreed." That was wrong and was in this form not even claimed by the applicants from IPK.<sup>5</sup>

On 26th April 2007, Buhk criticised the order of minister of agriculture to curtail the permit to sell MON810: "In my function as head of the GE department I cannot regard this order as correct for professional reasons"<sup>6</sup>. The internal mail was later used by Monsanto as ammunition in a lawsuit and contributed to the revocation of the order. It is unclear whether that was the mail's purpose from the beginning.<sup>7</sup>

When it turned out that MON810 did indeed interbreed more strongly than thought in 2009, the BVL again worked as a propaganda machine. In the defence of a lawsuit against a trial field the agency proposed that "a higher pollen count does not necessarily increase the likelihood of interbreeding".<sup>8</sup>

There is a long list of further relationships. Buhk is a supporter of the lobby organisation "Public Research & Regulation Initiative" (PRRI) that is sponsored by Syngenta and several other GE lobby groups. When it publicised some of these relationships in 2005, the German TV magazine "Report" cited the form-filling behaviour of Buhk and other staff at BVL as the most glaring example of outrageous behaviour when performing duties on the EU level. These ask for conflicts of inter-



**Figure 2.3:** Detlev Bartsch

<sup>4</sup>mensch + umwelt spezial 004/2005 (p.75).

<sup>5</sup>Umweltinstitut München, disciplinary complaint against Dr. Buhk and Bartsch, 24th Nov 2006 (p.3)

<sup>6</sup>Antje Lorch (2009): "Kontrolle oder Kollaboration?" in: *umwelt aktuell* 7/2009

<sup>7</sup>A documentary broadcast by Bavarian public television in spring 2009 followed the proceedings and drew a portrait of industry-friendly Dr. Buhk. He refused any statement. You can find the report on youtube when searching for "Monsanto in deutschen Behörden".

<sup>8</sup>Decision of Verwaltungsgericht (administrative court) Braunschweig, 23.04.2009 (Az. 2 A 224/07, p.10f.)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.margarine-institut.de/faq/beiex-pertennachgefragt/exp\\_buhk1.htm](http://www.margarine-institut.de/faq/beiex-pertennachgefragt/exp_buhk1.htm)

<sup>3</sup>ABIC 2004 Manifesto and further declarations available from <http://www.agbioworld.org/declaration/petition/petition.php>.

est, but Buhk and colleagues mentioned none.<sup>9</sup>

Buhk is not the only example of sleaze at BVL. One of his colleagues is Detlev Bartsch, primarily responsible for assessing effects on the environment. For him, the subject of his studies has long been decided. As early as 1995 he declared: “The question has not been whether or not we want GE for a long time now. The question is how we want it.”<sup>10</sup>

In those days, he worked on field trials at RWTH Aachen (a university with a strong focus on engineering). In 2002 he appeared in the same promotional video as his Boss Buhk. In an interview, Bartsch described MON810 as a “safe product”.<sup>11</sup> He is also a member of the project management team of the EU project TRANSCONTAINER that aims to develop terminator GMOs, and of “Gesellschaft für Pflanzenzüchtung” (Society for plant breeding) that in turn is funded by “Bundesverband Deutscher Pflanzenzüchter” (national plant breeders’ association).

On Germany’s federal public radio (Deutschlandfunk) he presented GE as without alternative: “We are left with the choice of entirely stopping growing maize or massively applying insecticides. Or we use a newly developed BT maize variety. There are no other options.”<sup>12</sup> So, while supposedly an agent with the task of “protecting life and health of humans, the environment in its fabric of effects, animals, plants and artifacts from harmful effects of GE techniques and products” (§1 Nr. 1 GE law of 1 Apr. 2008), Bartsch promotes the inevitability of GMOs.

To put the factual weaknesses of his line of thought aside – the corn borer can be controlled using conventional methods like crop rotation and suitable soil conditioning – the question emerges over whose interests Bartsch really serves with arguments like these.

Another employee of BVL, Marianna Schauzu, is suspected to publish propaganda pieces for agro GE under a pseudonym. Today, Schauzu works for the federal agency for research on risks (“Bundesamt für Risikoforschung”, BfR) in the department for communication of risks, where she is the liaison to the European Food Safety Authority EFSA and edits opinions on field trials<sup>13</sup>

On 24th November 2006, members of Umweltinstitut München filed a disciplinary complaint against Buhk and Bartsch on grounds of evident partisanship. Secretary of

state Lindemann of the Ministry of Agriculture (BMELV) rejected it. He did not even try to defend BVL, but instead claimed that partisanship had no consequences because the president of BVL had to check and sign every application for field trial or sale of GMOs in person.<sup>14</sup> Here the secretary was wrong. The approvals of the barley experiments in Gießen 2006 to 2008 bore Buhk’s signature exclusively and the approvals of 2008 only Bartsch’s.<sup>15</sup>

Yet another incredible thing: the top consumer protection agents played their cards very close to their chests. The BVL received a court rebuke in 2009 since it had refused access to its files for years. Two GMO critics had sued the BVL and won. In consequence, everyone can now access files directly at BVL by invoking either the environmental information act or the consumer information act.<sup>16</sup>

In theory, BVL should control the GE industry and research. In fact, the ‘controlled’ do not need to fear the controller. On the contrary: lobby groups and companies wholeheartedly praise the federal control agencies. This is another indication for what BVL, ZKBS, JKI etc. do not like to admit: the agencies work in the interest of the rope teams for GE.

One of those rope teams provided a recommendation to Ilse Aigner, federal minister of agriculture, when she was thinking loudly about prohibiting GE: “A consultation with, for example, scientists who have done research on this for years in federal and state institutions or, maybe, German farmers that have been using authorised products for years could be enlightening”.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, consumers in search of protection or independent review would be ill-advised investing their hope in the federal agencies. No alternatives exist within the formal state institutions. The state sides with a powerful minority employing all its relevant authorities.

## 2.1 Directed Science: Julius Kühn Institute and other organisations resulting from the decomposition of FAL

Northwest of Braunschweig a formerly important institute – the Forschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft (FAL, research institute for agriculture) – is being restructured and in large parts disbanded.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>9</sup>SWR, Report Mainz, 28th Feb 2005.

<sup>10</sup>Antje Lorch (2009): Kontrolle oder Kollaboration? in: umwelt aktuell 7/2009

<sup>11</sup>2006, see <http://www.biosicherheit.de/de/aktuell/509.doku.html>

<sup>12</sup>Broadcast on 8th Dec 2003, given in disciplinary complaint cited above

<sup>13</sup>Antje Lorch/Christoph Then (2008): “Kontrolle oder Kollaboration” (p.12) The study is available in German at <http://www.kurzlink.de/agrogentech.pdf>

<sup>14</sup>Letter dated 31 May 2007, ref. 114-0454-3/3000

<sup>15</sup>Decree to Gießen university dated 3th Apr 2006, (ref. 6786-01-0168) and dated 4th May 2009 (ref. 6786-01-0200)

<sup>16</sup>More on the case at [www.projektwerkstatt.de](http://www.projektwerkstatt.de)

<sup>17</sup>The statement came from “Wissenschaftlerkreis Grüne Gentechnik e.V.” (an association called “circle of scientists on green genetic engineering”), <http://www.gruene-gentechnik-online.de>, not dated.

<sup>18</sup>Most maps show “Bundesforschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft” (federal institute for research in agriculture). Its web



Figure 2.4: Julius-Kühn-Institut

First FAL had been decomposed. Subsequently, new, modernized agencies were formed in new places. Thus, “Forschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft” (FAL) and “Biologische Bundesanstalt” (BBA, federal institute for biology) are terms of the past.

They spawned an institute concerned with livestock (FLI), the Julius Kühn insitute (JKI) as the new federal research agency in crop science, and the Johann Heinrich von Thünen institute (vTI), the latter administering the remaining grounds and installations of the former FAL.

The area located at Braunschweig’s Bundesallee – a weapons production ground during the reign of the nazis – has a long history of GMO field trials and other experiments. In the 1990s, GMOs were already grown in the open. This fact has been largely unknown and mainly ignored in the region so far. Even in the adjacent neighbourhoods only a few people were aware of the GMO fields and the GE rope teams behind them. Presumably the size of the area is one reason here. A fence of several kilometers in length and a surrounding line of trees deny any view of what is going on inside. It was only in 2009 that protest grew in the wake of a spectacular field occupation and a subsequent vigil in front of the institute’s gate.<sup>19</sup>

The area comprises several square kilometers and is controlled by security guards. In addition to fields and stables it harbours important federal agencies. Many of those are pervaded by GE rope teams. While the BVL’s GE department is located in Berlin, its headquarters are here. More defining, however, are agricultural institutions. They were renamed and restructured, taking effect as of 1st January 2008. Area management and administration is henceforth the vTI’s responsibility, while it has retained only few scientific functions. One of those that it has retained is the “Institut für Biodiversität” (institute for biodiversity) at which Prof. Christoph Tebbe organises field trials in cooperation with universities.

More important for agricultural GE is the JKI, newly formed from the crop science parts of the former BBA (“Biologische Bundesanstalt”, federal institute for biology). The federal agency provides consulting for the BVL and conducts experiments of its own. Its main theme is one that is frequently identified as the objective in field trials: the investigation of the safety of GE. For 2009, vTI and JKI had prepared two trials on the area. How-

#### InfoBox 2.1: Access denied: BVL is shy

Scandalous excuses were the hallmark of BVL refusals: “Access to these files is impossible on the premises of BVL” the agency wrote on 8th October 2008 and delayed the response with some inquiries. However, according to governing law, they would have to provide access within 30 days. Yet, only after further letters, a refusal and a formal objection on 30th December 2008, there was a final letter of rejection: “The reason is that because of the cramped premises in Mauerstraße 39-42 [...] no empty rooms are available for exercising the right to access” [the files].

Hence, the refused GE critics filed suit and demanded to “establish that the refusal of access to data relevant to environmental issues is a violation of the governing environmental information act”. The claim that there was no space for a table in the huge agency was absurd: “The environmental information act maintains a clear entitlement and thus a charge to the administration to implement it. It is unacceptable that a refusal of this entitlement is common and permanent practice of the administration over years. This is even more serious in that it is the top federal agency for consumer protection engaging in this blatant disregard of statutory consumer rights.”

The administrative court in Braunschweig estimated the BVL’s chances of winning a lawsuit as very low and advised to grant the access. In a letter of 26th March 2009, the agency gave in to avoid a defeat in court. Thus at least this continued breach of consumer rights by the very agency established to protect them found an end. However, the BVL was not the only agency refusing access to files. The federal office of crop species (“Bundessortenamt”) only showed a couple of pages, while the federal Julius Kühn Institute, as federal institute for plant sciences very much involved in GE experiments, outrightly refused to grant any access to files. Both vTI and the Jülich research center followed this pattern.

Further information (in German): [www.projektwerkstatt.de](http://www.projektwerkstatt.de)

ever, the ban on MON810<sup>20</sup> foiled the JKI’s plans for an experiment on crossbreeding with BT maize. The second release experiment, pursued by the vTI and RWTH Aachen, was not affected by the ban.

The JKI not only conducts research of its own but also takes part in the approval process in GE matters by being required to give an opinion on all experiments, both by commercial entities and by itself. In doing this, it advises the BVL – the federal agency responsible for protecting consumers – while its leading officials star in advertisements for the corporations they ought to control, organise pro GE trade shows and fight for deregulation in GE. Thus, independent consultants would be particularly important. Not a chance.

The bodies of BBA and JKI were and are staffed by industry and pro GE media. For example, the scientific advisory council included the Limburgerhof BASF research center’s boss Jürgen Altbrod, the head of the board of

page used to be at <http://www.fal.de>; now, only links to the new institutions remain there.

<sup>19</sup>reports in German on <http://www.bs-gentechnikfrei.de>

<sup>20</sup>On 14th Apr 2009 MON810 was banned by then-minister of agriculture Ilse Aigner due to possible negative impacts on the environment pending further investigation, see [http://www.agrarheute.com/pflanze/mais\\_und\\_unhbox\voidb{x\bgroup\let\unhbox\voidb{x\setbox\@tempboxa\hbox{o}\global\mathchardef\accent@spacefactor\spacefactor}\accent127o\egroup\spacefactor\accent@spacefactor\saaten/die\\_mon810-entscheidung.html?redid=300922](http://www.agrarheute.com/pflanze/mais_und_unhbox\voidb{x\bgroup\let\unhbox\voidb{x\setbox\@tempboxa\hbox{o}\global\mathchardef\accent@spacefactor\spacefactor}\accent127o\egroup\spacefactor\accent@spacefactor\saaten/die_mon810-entscheidung.html?redid=300922)

directors of KWS Andreas Büchting as well as journalist Caroline Möhring working for Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany's top conservative daily.

This works the other way around, too: Thomas Kühne, head of JKI's institute for epidemiology and diagnostics of pathogens, is part of the lobby group InnoPlanta e.V. (e.V. is the abbreviation for 'registered association'). The JKI directly funded the "Green Lab" for GE experiments on the area of IPK in Gatersleben and was represented by two persons in the GE centre: Thomas Kühne in the scientific advisory council and Prof. Frank Ordon in the advisory council on the gene bank.

The result is hardly surprising: in the opinions they provided as part of the approval processes, BBA/JKI almost always assented – without any qualification. The language used in these opinions demasks the staff as partisan advocates who already know the result of what really is about to be researched. For example, the BBA (when it was still using this designation) wrote, as part of their opinion on the Gießen barley experiment, "The unintentional and uncontrolled dissemination of minor amounts of seeds from field experiments cannot be completely ruled out. The GMOs do not, however, pose a risk for human, animal, or the environment."<sup>21</sup>.



**Figure 2.5:** Joachim Schiemann

A very practical variant of rope teams is the working group "concomital monitoring of GMOs in the agrarian ecosystem", coordinated by Joachim Schiemann since 1999. Their membership roster shows the dense network of sleaze made up of science, agencies and companies. To be more specific, members include: the industry association in agriculture; big corporations (KWS Saat AG, Bayer CropScience, Syngenta Seeds, BASF, Pioneer HiBred, Monsanto and DuPont); important smaller companies in the GE rope teams (BioMath with its manager Kerstin Schmidt, Genius); research institutes; and all the important agencies in GE.<sup>22</sup> With this make-up, the working group has developed a questionnaire for crop monitoring. Hence, the methods of control are shaped by those who conduct the experiments. The deficiencies of the questionnaire led to the BVL ban of MON810 in April 2007.

Quite similar to the BVL, the JKI – no less than a federal agency tasked with the investigation and overseeing of the safety of GMOs – seems to avoid the public's

<sup>21</sup>Letter from BBA dated 20th Mar 2006

<sup>22</sup>Source: List of members of the working group as of December 2002, found on <http://www.jki.bund.de>

### **InfoBox 2.2:** Pole position in accumulation of offices for Joachim Schiemann!

JKI's most glittering figure in German GE rope teams is Joachim Schiemann – the lead scientist of the state for threshold values.<sup>23</sup> Between 1976 and 1991, he was working at the predecessor of today's IPK in Gatersleben. He then joined BBA (now: JKI) in Braunschweig, and moved on to JKI's new headquarters in Quedlinburg. Although he frequently acted as a GE advocate, Schiemann serves as head of the institute for safety in genetically engineered plants there.

This institute's self-portrait declares GE in general an important future business: "The use of genetically engineered plants is gaining ground globally – the scientific, public and political debate on this topic, that constitutes an important future business for research and the economy, therefore remains topical [...] The institute's tasks derive from GE law, plant protection law, additional ordinances and the research goals specified in the research plan of the ministry of food, agriculture and consumer protection (BMELV). In particular, they include questions of risk assessment and monitoring of GMOs as well as the coexistence of agriculture with and without GMOs. The institute participates in the approval process for the release and circulation of GMOs. In the context of biological safety research, research accompanying releases of crop plants as well as monitoring operations, safety aspects and possible effects of GMOs on ecology and sustainable farming are investigated. The institute coordinates research work in biological safety of GMOs in Julius Kühn Institute and the research department of the BMELV."

Schiemann has worked in several control institutions and funding bodies, for example between 2000 and 2004 with the German research ministry and starting in 2003 as "referee for Efsa. His risk assessments are the base for decisions on GE for the EU commission and the EU parliament."<sup>24</sup>

While he is supposed to evaluate and control GE applications, he simultaneously worked as a GE developer himself and conducted experiments. The financing of a project in which Schiemann attempted to develop marker-free GMOs<sup>25</sup> was stopped by the BMELV to avoid conflicts of interest. The research was then carried on by Inge Broer (University of Rostock). Schiemann, however, remained part of the project, as a member in the founding phase of FINAB e.V., the association organising the experiments. When these dealings became public in 2005 and caused political disturbances, his name was purged from FINAB's web pages. Schiemann was also a co-author of papers with Kerstin Schmidt and Jörg Schmidke of Agrobiotechnikum. He is a trustee of Fraunhofer institute for molecular biology and applied ecology (IME) which focuses on the development of GE plants for pharmaceutical purposes. Schiemann furthermore has lectureships at the universities in Braunschweig und Lüneburg. He is active in several lobby groups of agricultural GE, such as the "Wissenschaftlerkreis grüne Gentechnik" (WGG, circle of scientists in green GE), he spoke at ABIC2004, sits on the advisory committee of "GMO Kompass" and was in the management board and the executive committee of the EU project CO-EXTRA between 2005 and 2009. Since 2006, he is coordinator of BIOSAFENET and heads a work package in the EUPRRI project Science4BioReg. On 6th June 2009, Schiemann was a keynote speaker at the open house of the biotech campus at IPK Gatersleben.<sup>26</sup>

This collection of official functions renders Schiemann another striking case of the connections between lobbyism, the development of GMOs, research and control within a single person. To top it off, in 1996 Schiemann filed a patent on GE plants with fluorescent proteins. The objective of that particular technique was to ease identification of GE plants in the field. At this time, Schiemann had been working for BBA for five years. The patent application is regarded as withdrawn since 2000. Does this mean that he is trying to avoid the impression that the control person has commercial interests in the proliferation of GE?

(i) [www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/filz-behoerden.htm](http://www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/filz-behoerden.htm)

eye. According to the environmental information act, the institute has to grant access to its files on request. In February 2009, two citizens from the Braunschweig region filed such a request concerning the planned and ongoing release experiments of RWTH Aachen and the JKI.

While RWTH Aachen granted the request as a matter of course, the federal institution JKI denied it. The grotesque justification: "The experiments in question are performed in the context of a project commissioned and financed by the BMELV. It is a research endeavour and not a governmental undertaking."<sup>27</sup>

After the applicants filed an objection, the JKI repeated this position in a formal rejection on 7th April 2009: "The objection is to be refused. The access to files of the project 'federal research program on securing coexistence' should not pertain to environmental information in the sense of 2, third paragraph, environment information act. Rather, as already communicated in our notice of 27.02.2009, it is a research project." This opinion of the agency was erroneous<sup>28</sup> The environmental information act does not separate official proceedings and research projects. Many universities must open their research and do that. It is remarkable that it is a federal agency that obviously fears public scrutiny.

On the other hand, it matches the thick network of rope teams in German GE. JKI, BVL, ZKBS and the self-proclaimed safety researchers are stooges for the interests of corporations and lobby groups but at the same time themselves perpetrators and collaborators in the tangle of risky applications, large sums of money and shady corporate structures. They prefer to remain hidden and even abuse those that try to exercise their rights, i.e. accessing public files. The argument being "You wouldn't understand [the files] anyway!"

The JKI's focus on agricultural (agro) GE might even increase more in the coming years. The new headquarters in Quedlinburg is only 50km south of the new centre of the biotech rope teams in Üplingen called Bio "Tech "Farm (see below).

Schiemann, Kühne and the JKI institutes concerned with GE are located there. The grounds at Bio "Tech "Farm could be used for experiments. They belong to the rope teams around InnoPlanta head Uwe Schrader and multi-manager Kerstin Schmidt<sup>29</sup>. The first contact is already established in that JKI is part of the GE trade association BioOK.<sup>30</sup> Managing director here: Kerstin Schmidt again.

<sup>27</sup>Letter from JKI dated 27th February 2009; sender was Joachim Schiemann

<sup>28</sup>Legal proceedings are still pending. See also <http://www.julius-kunzel-institut.de.vu>

<sup>29</sup>We refer to Kerstin Schmidt as a multi-manager, because she is officially managing multiple organisations.

<sup>30</sup><http://www.bio-ok.com>

The JKI's participation shows that this very institution, consulting in the approval process of GE experiments, has joined those who file most applications for GMO release. The important role which this public institution plays within BioOK and the corporate network is documented by their intense participation at the EIGMO conference (14-16 May 2009) in Rostock. Five employees of JKI met with Pioneer, BASF, Syngenta, the spider-web around the AgroBioTechnikum and the RWTH Aachen. Of course, BVL and EFSA were not missing either.

## 2.2 Consultants, Referees: Sleaze Reigns Supreme

The agencies just discussed are surrounded by a sprawling thicket of confusing clusters of consulting bodies and external referees. Some of those play a central role in decisions around GE. For example, the "Zentrale Kommission für die Biologische Sicherheit" (ZKBS, central commission for biological safety) prepares an opinion on all field trials that is usually adopted by the approving agency BVL. Looking at the recent years, the ZKBS has the shocking record of having approved of all applications and just like the approving agency and the courts, judging GM field trials safe whenever they dealt with concrete cases. Their court's judgements were based in particular on expert opinion of the ZKBS which, as the "independent body according to §4, 5a, and 16 par. 5 GE law, has a substantial function in the communication of the expertise necessary for risk assessment."<sup>31</sup>

The reality is even worse. The opinion of ZKBS on the Gießen barley trial was written by the BVL employee Leggewie and just rubberstamped by ZKBS. Obviously, the Leggewie draft has not even been read. We know this because the draft consistently uses the wrong year in its dates<sup>32</sup>

All of this can hardly be seen as surprising in the view of the people serving in ZKBS. Its composition was not left to chance. Hans-Jörg Buhk, now head of the department for GE at BVL, got it going in its time at the German ministry of education and research (BMBF). The commission was transferred to the BVL in 2004 together with Buhk and Bartsch.<sup>33</sup> All four GE experts on the commission are outspoken proponents of this technology and themselves conduct field trials. Their goodwill as experts, thus, secures their own jobs.

<sup>31</sup>Deutschlandfunk broadcast on 8th December 2003, given in disciplinary complaint cited above

<sup>32</sup>Files at BVL (ref. 6786-01-0168) in three copies of the apparent ZBKS opinion of 14th December 2005 (author: Leggewie, BVL) up to the signed version (with wrong date)

<sup>33</sup>Lorch/Then, p.43 und 48 as well as motions on field trial 6786-01-0168 in penal proceedings ref. 501 Js 15915/06 Landgericht Gießen.



**Figure 2.6:** Website of BioOK ([www.bio-ok.com](http://www.bio-ok.com)) with logos of member corporations of the association

Even the post for the environmental expert is occupied by an unreserved advocate of GE who has professional dependencies. This is Prof. Thomas Eikmann, who also serves in a committee of the German standards board DIN to develop control practices in GE. He displayed his pro-GE attitude during a panel on 16th July 2006 in Gießen. Eikmann himself is not a GE expert: he is in a central position in similarly sleazy circles in environmental medicine. His statements on the negligible dangers of power stations, poisons and electric smog closely resemble those of the GE rope teams. Not surprisingly Eikmann is part of the rope teams surrounding the biology department of RWTH Aachen and the "Interdisziplinäres Forschungszentrum der Universität Gießen" (IFZ, interdisciplinary research center at Gießen university). It was headed by Prof. Kogel when the barley trial began. ZKBS approved.

The case "ZKBS" represents the rule rather than the exception. In many German expert committees researchers, corporations and authorities meet. The most recent example is the Bio"ökonomierat (council on bio-economy) of the federal government that is supposed to come up with recommendations for a national "innovation strategy". The council's composition almost speaks for itself: only those who advocate GE, and mostly from the top echelons of corporations and research. For example, Prof. Achim Bachern (Jülich research centre), Dr. Helmut Born (farmer's association), Dr. Andreas Büchting (KWS Saat AG), Prof. Thomas Hirth (Fraunhofer institute), Dr. Andreas Kreimeyer (BASF), Prof. Dr. Bernd Müller-Röber (Max Planck institute), Prof. Dr. Manfred



**Figure 2.7:** EFSA

Schwerin (institute for research in livestock biology), Prof. Dr. Carsten Thoro (vTI), Prof. Dr. Wiltrud Treffenfeldt (Dow Chemical), Prof. Dr. Fritz Vahrenholt (RWE), Prof. Dr. Joachim von Braun (International Food Policy Research Institute), Prof. emer. Dr. Alexander Zehnder (ETH Zürich), and Dr. Christian Patemann (cluster biotechnology Nordrhein-Westfalen). This Council is designated by the ruling parties in their coalition agreement as a body for "future planning". Thus, we see: independent appraisal and control is completely missing.

### 2.3 EFSA – more of the same in EU colours

A look at the European level does not promise a more positive perspective. The expert committee taking the relevant decisions in agricultural GE is called the EFSA: European Food Safety Authority. While the political bodies (EU commission, council) can overrule the EFSA, the expertise of the ostensibly independent expert agency exerts considerable influence on the events. Also, corporations can use EFSA findings in court – this has already happened. The main task of the EFSA in GE is approving GMOs for use as seeds or food for humans or animals. If approved, a plant may be grown and circulated without further legal hurdles.

Unfortunately, the EFSA is anything but independent: it is heavily entangled in GE interests, much like the German BVL or the US FDA. Some members of the German rope teams are or were members of EFSA bodies. Between 2003 and 2006 Buhk, was member of the GMO Panel and in 2006 he joined the EFSA expert group "GMO Applications (Molecular Characterisation)". Bartsch was on the GMO panel 2003-2009, Schiemann starting 2003, both were members of various expert groups starting in 2006<sup>34</sup>. Kerstin Schmidt, Prof. Inge Broer (both Agrobiotechnikum, cf. below) and other players from the GE rope teams occupied further positions or acted as consultants to EFSA.

<sup>34</sup>Lorch/Then, p.40 ff. und 49

In June 2009, four new members from Germany were appointed. Their selection showed how well the rope teams work. Although the overwhelming majority of Germans are opposed to GE, all the German representatives in EFSA's GE group are GE advocates:

**Christoph Tebbe** , vTI and head of the Braunschweig GE maize trial.

**Detlev Bartsch** , vice chair of BVL's GE department

**Gerhard Flachowsky** , head of the GE apple trial in Dresden-Pillnitz

**Annette Pötting** of BfR, part of the rubberstamping of field trials there

In addition, the GE company Genius (see below) produced various publications for EFSA, among others the content for the annual report 2006<sup>35</sup>. It is hard to tell European and German rope teams apart. This is reflected in their practices, such as the handling of MON810.

When the maize was briefly banned in Germany in 2007, it was the top consumer protection agent in the field, Buhk, of all people, who demanded the ban's revocation – successfully. When, in the following year, the French government banned the plant, the French consumer protection agency tried to avert the ban. Finally, the EFSA followed that pattern.

This phalanx of GE advocates was also a reality in terms of potatoes. While the European pharmaceutical oversight agency EMEA took a critical stance towards the use of an antibiotics marker in BASF's GE potato Amflora and possible developments of resistant bacteria strains, EFSA affirmed as usual: no risks.

When German federal environment minister Gabriel talked about organised irresponsibility, it was this EFSA in particular he was addressing. French film maker Marie-Monique Robin found clear words when answering the question "What about Europe? Monsanto doesn't have any people in the agencies here, do they?": "Yes they do. In the central body in Europe, the European Food Safety Authority, similar conflicts of interest exist. Eighty percent of the scientists in the EFSA work for Monsanto or other seed producers like Syngenta or Bayer Crop Science. I talked to two French members of parliament who had vented their discontent in the Le Monde newspaper. They said the political pressure to approve GMOs was unbearable. This is not only about standard lobby work but also about bribery and such things."<sup>36</sup>

Precisely those who exert substantial influence on EFSA's GMO panel are those who like to applaud it for its work as well: "The GMO panel brings together highly

qualified experts from the field of risk assessment coming from various European countries and contributing in-depth knowledge in various fields of expertise. Appointment is done on the basis of proven scientific excellence employing both tender and a strict selection process. The body regularly establishes working groups that coopt external scientists with pertinent skills for a safety assessment. All experts working for EFSA undertake to protect EFSA's independence by signing a statement of interests."<sup>37</sup>

Those who are praised so effusively by the profiteers of the partisan approval practice for German and European GMOs, probably, have sufficiently adapted their practices to profiteers' interests. This is supported by the observation that in autumn 2009 an EFSA officer directly moved over and took on a job at Syngenta – while Syngenta is part of the industry allegedly controlled by EFSA.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 2.8:** The most recent field liberation at IPK took place in 2008. The activists need support. [www.freiwilligefeldbefreiungen.de](http://www.freiwilligefeldbefreiungen.de)

<sup>35</sup>Lorch/Then, p.13ff

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Marie-Monique Robin in natur&kosmos, 21st Feb 2009

<sup>37</sup>From a brochure on green genetic engineering published by KWS Saat AG

<sup>38</sup>\*45a

## The Networks' Strongholds



Figure 3.1: The area

This section explores and describes the rope teams by visiting their centres of activities as “entanglements”.

### 3.1 IPK: The entanglement started in Gatersleben

Maybe there is no connection between today’s entanglements and the fact that it was the National Socialists (the Nazi Party) who started researching the genetics of cultivated crops. In 1943 they built the Institute of Kaiser Wilhelm for the research of cultivated crops in Gatersleben, a town in the German federal state of Saxony-Anhalt. One year after it was rebuilt in 1945, the University of Halle took over. As a result of the Unification Treaty between GDR (East Germany) and FRG (West Germany) in 1991, it was renamed in 1992 as Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) and, subsequently,

has been transformed into a foundation. By this means the history of the Institute was obscured. At the end of November 1993, the 50 year jubilee of the founding by the National Socialists was celebrated.

The entanglement with genetic engineering started around the millennium. Genetic engineering, as well as the seed bank which had previously been in Braunschweig, became the main activities. In 1998, the biotechnology professor Uwe Sonnewald came into office as head of the department of Molecular Cell Biology. In the same year, the first firm to overtly pursue GM technology was founded: SunGene, a subsidiary of BASF. Two years later, Novoplant, a similar enterprise, emerged. Then, two areas which would normally exclude each other were expanded simultaneously: on the one hand, the seed bank which aimed at preserving varieties of seeds and through breeding and storing them; and on the other hand, GM technology, which endangers seed varieties through the release of GM plants. In the IPK Gatersleben the two enterprises emerged side-by-side. This caused protest.

IPK used to be the only highly controversial and obvious location of German crop genetic engineering. Apart from that, critique was mostly focused and reduced to the case of Monsanto and its GM maize MON810 – insofar as critique was able to free itself from the urban bourgeois class.

Nevertheless, even a collection of 30,000 signatures and objections could not prevent genetic engineering in Gatersleben: Germany’s Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection ordered the closure of the old seed bank so that GM engineering could be carried out without disturbance<sup>1</sup>.

Not only the old boys networks within corporations, lobbyists and state authorities participated in the construction of so-called science parks, the Catholic Church was also involved through the church’s own firm GERO – subsidised with 35 million EUR from

<sup>1</sup><http://www.keine-gentechnik.de/dossier/gentech-weizen.html>

the state of Saxony-Anhalt – through which they were co-constituting a life science park. The Church ran two additional firms, Futura and BGI Biopark<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure 3.2:** A priest providing a blessing for the GM lab of IPK

After that, there was no GM farming for a long time. However, behind closed doors there were further experiments. Additionally, BASF announced an open field potato experiment for 2009. It used several fields to breed the GM Amflora potato for commercial purposes under the description of research<sup>4</sup>.

A remarkable entanglement of pressure groups, foundations of GM firms as well as activities of large corporations developed in and around the IPK. It was the first big enmeshment of applied GM technology. It was financed by millions of Euros in research funds from the Federal Ministries and the state of Saxony-Anhalt, where Horst Rehberger, a member of the FDP, the German liberal, pro-business party, was the economy minister and where the later head lobbyist Uwe Schrader was his advisor. An article in *Der Spiegel* reported: "Horst Rehberger (FDP), longstanding economy minister of Saxony-Anhalt, generously employed incentives around the IPK: in 2003, he forked out approximately EUR 150 million for the Biotech Offensive in order to attract firms into the area"<sup>5</sup>.

The IPK received non-competitive institutional funding annually. For instance, in 2005 it received EUR 23.5 million from the Land (regional state) and EUR 3.4 million from the EU. At the same time, projects have been supported with EUR 3.6 million of funding from the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research), with EUR 0.6 million from the German Communion for Research,

From April 2008 onwards, GM farming at Gatersleben was stopped after the valiant

actions of voluntary field liberators<sup>3</sup>.

with EUR 262,000 from the state and EUR 305,000 from the EU<sup>6</sup>.

GM projects did not live up to claims that they would boost the economy, or that they would create or save jobs. Biotechnology projects that had been sponsored to the tune of EUR 13 million, as well as the entire Biopark Gatersleben (BGI), rather, turned out to be a flop, resulting in debts of EUR 5 million: "For years and several million Euros, the state-owned investment bank IBG kept a firm alive which had developed a pea that produces antibodies against a swine diarrhoea that nobody wanted to buy. Sarcastically, Haselhoff said, "we earn our money with Q-cells" – it is now a world-famous firm for solar power which was co-founded by the state<sup>7</sup>."

The "Grüne Labor" ('green lab') enjoys similar support. Its function is primarily PR activities. Genius approved of its feasibility; and Deutsche Bank, InnoPlanta, KWS, Syngenta and JKI have stakes in it as well<sup>8</sup>.

Uwe Schrader, Rehberger's advisor in the economics ministry, was the main person who promoted the "green" GM technology. After 2006, he stayed in the project as a member of the regional assembly – aligned to FDP (the German (neo)liberal party), with Rehberger as his lawyer. They succeeded in integrating several corporations as well as representatives of public authorities. Thomas Kuehne of the JKI is a member of the academic advisory council. His JKI fellow professor Frank Ordon is a member of the advisory council for the GM seed bank. Moreover, Kuehne is part of the executive committee of InnoPlanta which is a lobby organisation within IPK.



**Figure 3.3:** Uwe Schrader

The German government ministries are represented in the IPK foundation committee directly: Joachim Welz, Thomas Reitmann (ministry of education and cultural affairs), Martin Koehler and Juergen Roemer-Maehler (both BMELV). Despite the entanglements, visible activities of external corporations have been rare. Only BASF planted potatoes at the IPK several times. One of its employees, Ralf-Michael Schmidt, is part of the academic advisory service of the IPK, too.

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.bioparkgatersleben.de/seiten/aktuell/presse/index.php?set\\_lang=en](http://www.bioparkgatersleben.de/seiten/aktuell/presse/index.php?set_lang=en)

<sup>3</sup>[www.gendreck-weg.de](http://www.gendreck-weg.de), 04/10/2009; [freiwilligefeldbefreiung.de](http://www.freiwilligefeldbefreiung.de)

<sup>4</sup><http://www.standortregister.de>, file reference 6786-01-0183, 04/10/09

<sup>5</sup>*Spiegel Magazine* 141/2008, p. 94: <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-60883164.html>

<sup>6</sup>Bauer, Andreas 2007: "GM bank Gatersleben: GM technology or genetic resources?", p.4

<sup>7</sup>*Spiegel* 141/2008, p.94: <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-60883164.html>

<sup>8</sup>\*52a



**Figure 3.4:** Uwe Sonnewald

Professor Uwe Sonnewald played a special role<sup>9</sup>. He has been a member of the IPK since 1992. Since 1998 he has been head of the department of molecular cell biology. He recommended GM technology unreservedly, making extravagant claims for its potential to solve many problems: “‘Green’ GM technology will soon contribute to the optimisation of agricultural consumption of resources. Consumers will profit from it because GM technology helps improve the food quality by optimising its ingredients. It enables the elimination of allergens as well as it permits the production of valuable molecules for pharmaceutical usage. Furthermore, we expect an improved production of herbal resources. After all, plants are going to provide us with industrial enzymes and fine chemicals in the future. Cultivators could envisage further earning increases because improvements of resistance and metabolism would be possible”<sup>10</sup>.

At the same time that Sonnewald took over as head of department at IPK, he joined with BASF to found the firm SunGene – thus connecting research and corporations. Since 1996, he worked in the ZKBS (the German government’s Central Commission for Biological Safety). This means that he controlled his own projects as well as his colleagues’ projects of the GM technology network. He continued his entanglements in 2004, when he took up a post at the University of Erlangen. Here, he promoted research on transgenic barley in co-operation with professor Karl-Heinz Kogel of the University of Giessen.

trials had already started before the AgroBioTechnikum was completely built. Still, there was less protest than in Gatersleben. The striking parallel was that for the second time, trials on GM plants were done where a seed bank was also present. As well as Gatersleben and Gross Luesewitz, there are two further cases of this special logic in Malchow (close to Mueritz in Mecklenburg, Western Pomerania) as well as in Pillnitz near Dresden. In Malchow there are trials of GM oilseed rape next to the seed bank of rape seeds. In Dresden, Pillnitz, there are trials on GM apple trees next to the seed bank for fruits. These facts aroused suspicion that the cross-breeding of GM and non-GM plants was happening on purpose. Still, there are many differences between both research centres. What is happening in the greenhouses or fields has little to do with the alleged research. The goals are rather propaganda for the GM technology and the deflection of subsidies into non-transparent entanglement of firms and service providers.

Both research centres have the same manager, Kerstin Schmidt. In addition to that, she was treasurer of the registered organisation FINAB, which operates in the background. It was also very useful that Joachim Schiemann, who was co-founder of the network in Luesewitz, was one of the people whose job it was to permit or forbid the trials (source: German Parliament, printed matter 16/6208: 15). Furthermore, his JKI (Julius Kuehn Institute or Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants) contributed to the trials and was part of the BioOK, a network of firms, when Schiemann worked for the EFSA, the European Food Safety Authority.

The first suspicion of critics, that the GM releases were for political rather than scientific reasons, was even admitted by the founders. The website of the coordinating organisation FINAB (manager: prof. Inge Broer; former treasurer till 2008: Kerstin Schmidt) refers to a requested trial on oilseed rape in their first years 2004-2006:

“On the one hand, this release serves the establishment of necessary know-how for the request and the implementation of releases in Gross Luesewitz. On the other hand, it serves as a political signal and representation of the range of services in the AgroBioTechnikum. Together with the University of Rostock we work on the establishment of analysis methods for the identification and quantification of GM crops. These methods are meant to be offered as standard services of the centre.”

Straight talk: there is no scientific aim. Although the advertising purposes had been admitted clearly, the Economic Ministry of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania supported the trial to the tune of 80 percent of the whole cost (EUR 628,198). The government-supported founda-

### 3.2 AgroBioTechnikum: Risky Sandbox of Genetic Engineering

A second high-tech centre of GM crop technology was built 20km east of Rostock, in Luesewitz, in 2004/2005. Like in Gatersleben, plant breeding here is a deep-seated tradition. Potatoes are considered to be a special feature of this region. That is why there are not only commercial seed firms of potatoes like Norika but also a branch of the federal agency of crop breeding research, as well as potato seed banks. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) used to organise its potato plant breeding here. GM field

<sup>9</sup>biographic information: <http://www.biologie.uni-erlangen.de/bc/biocus.html>, 04/10/09

<sup>10</sup>[www.transgen.de](http://www.transgen.de), 04/10/09

tion carried out an intensive PR campaign because rape is very prone to crossbreed and produces new generations of rape containing genes from many rape crops that have been used in the past.

The second suspicion, regarding intransparent channelling of money, of critics has been voiced by Lorch/Then (page 27):

“In 2003, the firm biovativ was founded as a branch of FINAB in order to supervise the greenhouses and fields of FINAB’s AgroBioTechnikum. As already noted, Kerstin Schmidt is the manager of biovativ. According to the commercial register, biovativ Inc. has only one employee. Here is a reason for suspicion. First, Schmidt is at the same time the manager of BioMath and BioOK and a board member of FINAB (e.V., registered organisation). In addition to that, all those entities as well as the organisation FINAB have the same address and even the same phone number. Consequently, one can suspect that organisationally they are actually not separate units but, rather, a conglomeration of firms which aims to shape FINAB’s commercial interests in a non-transparent way.”



Figure 3.5: Briefkastenfirmen

is the education of Kerstin Schmidt, who is most involved. She is a mathematician, which means that she is not qualified for the central position at the most important location for the release of German GM technology. The second piece of evidence is a project that had been planned in 2007 and emerged in summer 2008: the BioTech-farm in Ueplingen (www.biotechfarm.de and

www.biogeldfarm.de.vu). Since 2007 the internet address is registered to Kerstin Schmidt and since April 2008 she has been the manager. Her cooperation partner, the FDP politician and manager of InnoPlanta, Uwe Schrader, has been active and influential in Saxony-Anhalt for several years. Through their activities, millions of Euros in taxes could be transferred to Gatersleben. Now, a new place was needed in order to transfer tax money to a central office of GM technology propaganda and non-transparent web of firms.

Enormous amounts of government subsidies had been used to establish the AgroBioTechnikum, rather than actual commercial income. Selected grants of the [funding] programme of the Länder (regional states) and the programme of the Federal State for the development of the centre (altogether: EUR 9.1 million)<sup>11</sup> include:

[List of names of funding schemes/programs/sources and how the subsidies have been used.]

“**Future for the Adolescents** in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” used for the research greenhouse and the multi-purpose hall: EUR 2,103,458

“**Improvement** of the regional economical structure” for “Planning, business incubator for biogenic resources Great Luesewitz”: EUR 21,533; EUR 5,189,299 for the “The Centre of Business Incubation and Competence”

**Federal Ministry of Education and Research** : EUR 983,498.01 for FINAB e.V. (the association for innovative and sustainable agrobiotechnology) for procurement of devices (Landtag of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, 11/08/08)

Within and around the AgroBioTechnikum, various companies have emerged, many of them with the same staff. Biovativ offers the service of GM technological operations to others. The association FINAB served as applicant and political representative for a long time. The merging of the most important organisations is named BioOK; Kerstin Schmidt was the chief executive here too. In order to develop “new, effective and affordable procedures of analysis and assessment”, the new research cluster BioOK has been sponsored by the BMBF to the tune of EUR 4.383 million. Taxes have been invested in firms and institutes of the BioOK cluster to enable certain projects, such as release and lab trials. Most of the money was invested in dubious small firms around Broer and Schmmidt<sup>12,13</sup>

<sup>11</sup>[http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten\\_region/mittleres\\_mecklenburg/35556.html](http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten_region/mittleres_mecklenburg/35556.html)

<sup>12</sup>Lorch, Then: 42

<sup>13</sup>Note that German abbreviation GmbH for a form of corporation has been translated as Ltd.

There is further evidence which indicates that the Agro-BioTechnikum supports propaganda and the embezzlement of huge amounts of taxes. The first piece of evidence

- Development of standardised schemes of analysis, dossiers for admission of GM modifies plants: bio-vativ Ltd.: EUR 130,152
- Plant specific schemes of analysis and dossiers for admission: BioMath: EUR 158,619 ([www.biomath.de](http://www.biomath.de))
- Optimisation of cultivation procedures for GM crops for the production of plant material with coherent content with avoidance of measurable pollination: bio-vativ Ltd.: EUR 207,204
- Analytical proof of sum parameters and singular components, sub-project 1: Uni of Rostock: EUR 677,768; BIOSERV Ltd.: EUR 261,347 (<http://www.bioserv.de>)
- Development of a quick in vivo procedure for the detection of slight influences of transgenically coded proteins on microorganisms and of the flow of matter in the soil, sub-project 1: Uni Rostock: EUR 207,838; sub-project 2: Steinbeis Transferzentrum: EUR 245,461
- Development of standardised lab trials for dung beetles in order to test the environmental compatibility of transgenic crops used as feed, BTL Ltd.: EUR 155,009 (<http://www.biotestlab.de>)
- Development of a method to detect influences of transgenic crops on the ecosystem on the basis of changes within the genome of responsive viruses within plants as well as in their vectors, sub-project 1: BTL Ltd.: EUR 247,102; sub-project 2: BAz Quedlinburg (currently JKI): EUR 238,058
- Development of an in vitro method to the simulation of digestion and absorption: Broer/Uni Rostock: EUR 927,887 – Development of enrichment methods and test system for the quantitative proof of substances in transgenic crops: BIOSERV Ltd. : EUR 224,600
- Development of analysis methods of the toxicity of GM crops: Primacyt Ltd., EUR 77,110.
- Development of systems of analysis and assessment for the investigation of the potential likeliness of allergenic reactions of GM crops: BIOSERV Ltd., EUR 414m 218.
- Development and implementation of models supporting the compilation of applications for release and monitoring plans for the monitoring of the cultivation of GM crops: BioMath Ltd., EUR 150,237.
- Production of polymers in transgenic potato bulbs (2007-08). Subproject 1: Broer/ Uni of Rostock

(EUR 263,853, Subproject 2: bio-vativ ( 94,369), further partners: Uni Bielefeld, Eberhard Karls Uni Tübingen, Norika Nordring – Company for the cultivation and breeding of potatoes. In total: EUR 693,783<sup>14</sup>

In addition to tax money, Great Luesewitz is also financially supported by the GM corporations. BASF has become involved directly by instructing a company to protect the trial fields. Its employees referred to BASF and handed out its propaganda.

Money is the main reason for the activities at the Agro-BioTechnikum: "At the moment, it is about research in GM technology because this is financially supported", Inge Broer 2006. Minister Backhaus mentions further reasons: "Good results in this area are for the state government and for me as Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection the best arguments concerning the nation as well as within the state in order to campaign for the maintenance of agronomy at the University of Rostock as well as the maintenance of at least one part of the state research institute here in Great Luesewitz."<sup>15</sup>

Since 2007, Broer, Schmidt, even Minister Backhaus have dreamed of a big European agency for biotechnology to dignify the region around Rostock as an important research location: "The core of the growth of BioOK shall be established in the coast area Rostock-Schwerin – especially around the AgroBioTechnikum Great Luesewitz – as a European competence centre for the analysis, assessment and monitoring of agro-biotechnological products and procedures" (Backhaus, Till, 13/10/2007<sup>16</sup>). The well-being of the local people does not play a role in the adventurous and expensive fantasies of the location poker-players. In 2009, Annette Schavan, the Minister of research for the state, got involved in the megalomania at Rostock Uni and the AgroBioTechnikum, saying: "In Great Luesewitz nearby Rostock a team of scientists and regional enterprises works in the association BioOK for the standardisation of procedures of admission of GM crops. It could thereby become the world market leader in the area of research of safety [...]" Both, Schavan and Broer, contribute decisively to the change of the structurally weak Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania into a research location with new perspectives (MVregio, 20/05/2009<sup>17</sup>). During the first years, BioOk has been 75 percent supported by the state ministry for education and research. In later years, further investment has amounted to 50 percent of the costs.

<sup>14</sup>source: Bundestagdrucksache 16/2008, 08/08/2007; Lorch/Then page 50, 58

<sup>15</sup>[http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten\\_region/mittleres\\_mecklenburg/3556.html](http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten_region/mittleres_mecklenburg/3556.html)

<sup>16</sup><http://agrarheute.com/index.php?redid=189050>

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten\\_region/209298.html](http://www.mvregio.de/nachrichten_region/209298.html)

The huge investment in networks of companies has not been of much use to the AgroBioTechnikum. In 2008 it faced economic problems. Most of the labs and offices were empty<sup>18</sup>. One funder, BioConValley, withdrew from Great Lusewitz. As a consequence, the state association, which is financed by the Land Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, bailed it out – again the state assisted greedy, but mostly unpopular, GM industry. Whereas for the region no positive effects, such as long term investment or employment, have developed, GM technology and the network of companies have benefited from it.

Simultaneously, the pressure of campaigners, environmental groups, inhabitants and of political councils in the neighbouring municipality Thulendorf has risen. Some of the trial fields are on its ground. The local council unanimously voted against the trial fields and for the dismissal of the charter with the corporations. In 2009 residents took part in protests against the GM releases in trial fields, which extend to the gardens of the town Sagerheide. Still, the SPD Minister of agriculture Backhaus and, since 2009, the national minister of research, Annette Schavan, campaign for the extension of the GM technological research at the AgroBioTechnikum<sup>19</sup>.

Despite the taxes, EUR 74,144.46 in agricultural area subsidy and policing, there are huge economical and political problems. The money vanishes in dubious company networks and the location can hardly survive. Broer and Schmidt claim to be innocent: Both dismiss the accusation of colliding interests. Schmidt says that they had only an advisory function at the EFSA and admitted to benefiting from the financial support but say they have created 20 new workplaces at the same time. Inge Broer commented that the developed networks have been necessary but says there is no entanglement, no old boys network. The ministry of research would only sponsor it if industry was involved<sup>20</sup>. The entanglement is successful on the small scale too: the community of Thulendorf – trying to restrict GM – has been stopped by the superior county Council. The head of the Council, Dr. Ernst Schmidt, advocates GM technology in his role as Social Democratic Party (SPD) whip of the county council. After the IPK in Gatersleben could not be used for field trials and after the political pressure at the AgroBioTechnikum had risen too, the joint venture BioOk has become the new centre for German GM technology. Furthermore, in 2008 the



Figure 3.6: The BioTechFarm

entanglements found a new place for their risky releases. In 2009, the region of Üplingen in the Magdeburg Boerde had the highest number of GM releases.

### 3.3 Brainwash: The BioTechFarm

The third and the newest BioPark emerged in the west part of Saxony-Anhalt, 39 kilometres eastwards of Magdeburg. It had been organised collectively by the states Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, opened in July 2008. According to the states, the BioTechFarm in Ueplingen serves to influence public opinion on GM technology. Moreover, this place had quickly become an important factor within the interwoven threads of firms which already existed at the AgroBioTechnikum and the IPK. Many operators of government-funded research fields registered second fields. These were, then, located at main fields at the AgroBioTechnikum or at their company's land. More and more trials are being added. On the one hand, their links to the institutes of research and with some firms were helpful, but on the other hand, research institutes and firms are having to move to Üplingen as the protest in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is increasing. On 7th September 2009, IPK companies and the founders of BioTechFarm signed a contract about the shift from Gatersleben to Üplingen. By this means the BioTechFarm may well turn into the most important location for multiple field trials of Germany. It might soon be the only location if the pressure at the AgroBioTechnikum rises.

In 2009, field trials have been announced to be located within the "Schaugarten Üplingen" (Display Garden: the label under which it is marketed by PR strategists of TransGen). Among them were Pioneer (corn), BASF (potatoes), Monsanto (corn), the University of Rostock (potatoes and wheat) as well as KWS (Roundup-Ready beets). The newspaper "Welt" reported a MON810 field; that would be illegal!<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Spiegel magazine 41/2008, p.94; Institute of the Environment Munich 2008: "GM technology networks in Saxony-Anhalt": <http://umweltinstitut.org/gentechnik/allgemeines-gentechnik/genfilz-609.html>

<sup>19</sup>Agrar heute 13/10/2007, <http://www.argrarheute.com/index.php?redid=189050>

<sup>20</sup>Spiegel magazine 41/2008, p.94; Germany's Federal Environment Ministry in Munich 2008: "GM technology networks in Saxony-Anhalt": <http://umweltinstitut.org/gentechnik/allgemeines-gentechnik/genfilz-609.html>

<sup>21</sup>\*72

The story of BioTechFarm sheds a bizzare light onto the cold-bloodedness of the rope teams and onto the weakness of hegemonic environmental protection strategies. Indeed, the vantage point was a PR campaign for sustainability: the village of Üplingen turned into a global project for the world's sustainable development. The title of the UN decade project was "The village of Üplingen as an Agenda 21 settlement and driver for sustainable development of rural regions – Üplingen 2049".<sup>22</sup> As one of the projects involved, Üplingen's country estate has been renovated and extended. In sum, this was supposed to act as a leading project for so-called "integrated rural development" within the county.<sup>23</sup> Earlier on in the process, even Wuppertal Institute (a well accepted player on sustainability issues) was partnering with this project.

Two years later, the sustainability project was still not moving, staying in its original form. Its actual focus was the renovation of the country estate, owned by the foundation "Braunschweiger Kulturbesitz" (literally: Cultural Property of Braunschweig). Leases were organised by the lower saxonian state administration (GLL).<sup>24</sup> However, it has been financed by Karl-Heinz Lichtschläger and his seed production company S.G.L. (based at Erfstadt, near Cologne). He was the one leasing the county estate, acting as the rich patron from Western Germany and, subsequently, dominated the processes of the village Üplingen (population: 75) and of that organisation which was founded to handle these activities, called ARGE Üplingen.<sup>25</sup> Positioned as head of the national union of seed producers (Bundesverband der Vermehrungsorganisationen mit Saatgut (BVO)) he was well linked with Germany, e.g. to the GM lobby group "Bundesverband Deutscher Pflanzenzüchter (BDP)" (federal organisation of German plant breeders).

In the middle of 2007, a document detailing four aims of the sustainability and UN decade project was produced. An already planned biogas plant was included as a new sub-project. At that point, its excess heat was to be serving environmental protection. Here are the titles of the four measures presented in the paper:

- Utilising excess heat of the Üplingen biogas plant
- Setting up an office for researching, developing and maintaining regenerative energy systems
- Conference and Education centre on renewable energy
- transnational co-operation<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>\*75

<sup>26</sup>\*76

However, in the course of 2007 (starting in a concealed manner<sup>27</sup>) and 2008 the GM rope teams started taking hold: Uwe Schrader (head of InnoPlant), manager of the Gatersleben's IPK based sleaze and FDP politician, organised financial resources and pulled the strings via Lichtenschläger (the former patron of the "sustainability" project). This was when the idea of a display garden and a centre for genetic plant seeding cropped up. Schrader was its first director. In April 2008, he transferred this position to Kerstin Schmidt – the director and manager of about everything. Schrader himself stayed in the council.

The strongholds of Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania needed new ground. Over there, the AgroBio-Technikum was turning weak, was underused and locally quite contested. At IPK, activists destroyed the last existing GM trial field;<sup>28</sup> the project at Gatersleben had been increasingly criticised over the years. Internal pressure on the functionaries of the Church provided a reason for the GM lobbyists to search for new grounds. Was Üplingen disposed to act as the new El Dorado for GM and money laundering? They were able to take over the infrastructure – dedicated to the sustainability project – easily. Within a year, the formal targets were transformed – canny and nearly not noticeable. The turning point was the 2008 Symposium on Sustainability. In that event, Schrader was presenting himself publically for the first time. He is no GM expert, but, rather, he organises infrastructure and millions of grants and subsidies for researchers and corporations. As a former officer of the Ministry of Commerce he gained the necessary contacts. His entry onto the stage was documented on the symposium's website<sup>29</sup>.

This deal was also set up in cooperation with eager public authorities. On 15th January 2008 Schrader met with representatives of Monsanto and the regulator authorities. The plan of 2007 was being rewritten. The fourth bullet point (transnational cooperation) mutated to "centre for plant breeding". The biogas plant received a new dedication to power genetically engineered plants. Suddenly the fourth bullet point was this:

#### 4. Centre for Plant Breeding—A modulised

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**Figure 3.7:** Kerstin Schmidt

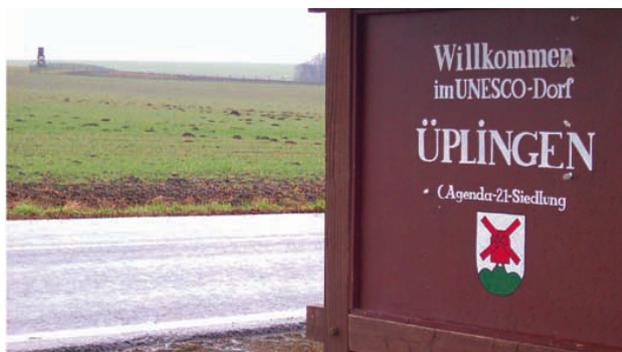


Figure 3.8: Agenda 21 village

centre for plant breeding is to be founded. The first step will be the linking of plant breeding and public relations. On a field next to the county estate, GM plants will be field-grown as part of a scientific breeding project [...]. Located elsewhere a display garden shall be set up to present innovative plants usable for energy production. This garden may be visited during the growing season. Within the garden, both conventional as well genetically modified plants will be grown. For the latter a permit issued by the respective federal authority exists.

An unimpressive, yet decisive change. Added to a circular, the authors dared to claim: "Effectually the prior aims for development have been affirmed..."<sup>30</sup>. By that, the take-over of the sustainability project by German GM was mostly camouflaged. A politically weak sustainability project transformed into probably the most significant, and definitely the most aggressive, GM project within Germany – and that without any noise.

Now, proponents of profit-seeking GM, who neither care for the local council nor neighbours, rule the place. The result is a wolf in sheep's clothing, i.e. a location for brain washing to support GM under the umbrella of sustainability. Visitors of sustainability education events of the council estate are being guided through GM plantations. The well-meant (and yet always badly implemented) engagement for sustainability has been sacrificed for GM. This absurd link is clearly shown in the prospectus of the display garden: "The village Üplingen has been priced in 2005 by UNESCO and the German National Committee for the UN Decade on 'Education for Sustainable Development'. This provides a number of points of contact for the development of dynamic education projects at the display farm." In September 2008 the result was visible. Here are the key phrases:

The 6th Symposium "Education for Sustainable Development" on the 27th September 2008 [taking place] at the county estate of Üplingen, as a contribution to the "day of the regions" and to the "action days Education and Sustainable Development" of the German UNESCO Commission and the National Committee ... .. Scheduled Programme: ... .. Presentation of the "Display Garden Üplingen" and its "Plants for Future"<sup>31</sup>

The operator is Biotech Farm Ltd (GmbH & Co KG) now based at Üplingen (before at Gatersleben); its director is Kerstin Schmidt – she has been referred to as part of the rope teams revolving around the AgroBioTechnikum. This legal construction of the company does not suggest that these actors trust their own actions. That seems to be the case because they limited their company's liability. Also at AgroBioTechnikum, dubious firms like biovativ and BioOK pocketed large amounts of corporate and public finance. The same is true for Saxony-Anhaltian firms and lobbyists<sup>32</sup>. If any problems occur at Üplingen there will only be one firm that enjoys limited liability – maybe not liable at all. GM is carried out like gambling – at the risks of people and nature. By now, biovativ has taken the leading position at Üplingen.

On 12th March 2009, activists occupied the display garden. This conflict brought light to the fact that Kerstin Schmidt was claiming domestic authority for her and her firm over the total property and half of the village<sup>33</sup>. This shows clearly how power has been taken over by the GM entanglements. This situation may worsen if and when the IPK or corporations, as well as the nearby JKI (at Quedlinsburg), want to use the Üplingen properties. In 2009 nine GM crop field trials have been applied for – a German record<sup>34</sup>.

The significance of Üplingen as a future base has been unfolded at an event organised by the lobby organisation InnoPlanta on 7th September 2009. About 160 participants, from all rope teams as well as the regulatory authorities, were present. A contract concerning the transfer of IPK trial fields to Üplingen was signed<sup>35</sup>.

Find more information at: [www.biogeldfarm.de.vu](http://www.biogeldfarm.de.vu)

<sup>30</sup>\*80

<sup>31</sup>\*83

<sup>32</sup>\*84

<sup>33</sup>\*85

<sup>34</sup>\*85

<sup>35</sup>\*86

## Lobby groups and informal networks

As well as providing a base for GM trials and swallowing millions of euros of tax money, the corporations, German government, and research centres have created various lobby organisations and non-transparent meeting points. Trials are implemented, financed and controlled by the same bodies.

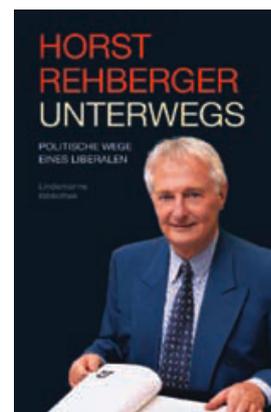
### 4.1 Lobbyist InnoPlanta: Administration, parties and corporations in one boat

In the most important pro-GM lobby organisations, you can find representatives of GM-promoting parties, organisations harmoniously sitting next to central and regional government officials, subsidies distributors, as well as the big corporations and small newcomers in GMOs. InnoPlanta e.V. is one of those barking loudest with the least arguments for the unlimited use of GM crops and animals. It calls itself a “platform to support farmers who want to benefit from modern plant biotechnology”<sup>1</sup>. That the management of such a platform consists of BASF, Bayer and many more small businesses which have – stuffed with subsidies – tried their luck with GMOs, might not be surprising. But what are directors of regional economic development agencies, vice-presidents of farmers’ associations, employees of the state-run JKI, and local politicians doing there? Why does the advisory board consist of a retired Minister for Economic Affairs, [Horst Rehberger], and important officials of the Federal Research Centre for Food and Agriculture [such as Klaus-Dieter Jany]?

Overall InnoPlanta brings together 60 partners from research institutes, industry, finance and politics. The advisory board consists of Klaus-Dieter Jany (BfEL) and Jens Katzek (BIO Mitteldeutschland). The GM company Genius is a member and is in charge of PR work. Other members are KWS, NovoPlant, SunGene and TraitGenetics (Gatersleben), BIO Mitteldeutschland, the farmers’ association of Saxony-Anhalt, the Federal Re-

search Institute for Agricultural Crops and the state-based Institute for Plant Genetics and Crop Research<sup>2</sup>.

It’s a bit surprising that InnoPlanta does not only act as a lobbyist, but also coordinates and initiates various GM trials, during which they cash a whole lot of research subsidies. At the InnoRegio competition organised by the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the network, founded in 2000, was granted 20 million euros in subsidies. With these grants, the InnoPlanta-Network works, and worked on, 38 projects with a financial value of about 31 million euros. What is alarming is that all the aforementioned actors are involved in these – the research institutes, the federal authorities, as well as the corporations. In this case, a powerful actor in the GM jungle is actively created with state funds. The following projects were granted subsidies by the BMBF<sup>3</sup>:



**Figure 4.1:** Book cover of Rehberger’s biography

- University of Halle for a corn trial: 112,456 EUR
- IPK for 5 trials on wheat, barley and beets: 1,518,164 EUR
- SunGene for rape and wheat trials: 381,968 EUR
- Stube Saatzucht (seed breeder) for beet trials: 248,198 EUR

<sup>1</sup>\*86

<sup>2</sup>\*87

<sup>3</sup>\*88

- Humboldt University Berlin for experiments on oilseed crops: 346,548 EUR

In 2004 InnoPlanta coordinated the trials of GM corn nationwide. Besides GM corporations like Monsanto and Pioneer, which supported InnoPlanta with seeds and financial aid, the association that initiated AgroBiotechnikum – FINAB – was involved. Further corporations were also involved: “For communication measures and their funding, Bayer CropScience, BASF Plant Science, Syngenta and the Deutsche Industrievereinigung Biotechnologie (DIB) (German Industrial Association for Biotechnology) were actively involved”.<sup>4</sup>

InnoPlanta is a patron-client network par excellence. The webpage of InnoPlanta and the Green-Gate-Internetportal are both managed by the same person<sup>5</sup>. And InnoPlanta president Uwe Schrader is initiator and functionary of the BioTechFarm in Üplingen. In 2006, the InnoPlanta working group AGIL was collecting sponsorships for the fields and plants endangered by anti-GMO activists. Those sponsorships not only came from Christel Happach-Kasan (FDP-MdB, Member of Parliament, Liberal Party) and Katherina Reiche (CDU-MdB, Member of Parliament, Conservative Party), but also from members of the federal controlling body such as Jany and Christian Gienapp of the Federal Research Institute for Agriculture and Fisheries of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. On the 17th and 19th of April 2009, InnoPlanta was staging a protest pro-GMOs in Üplingen. Various “protesters” were paid for their participation, which they then told anti-GM activists who spoke to them. They were given uniform placards with aggressive but meaningless slogans. InnoPlanta chief Schrader was on-site and tried to prevent direct chats between his “protesters”, worth 45 to 75 Euros, and the anti-GMO activists.

## 4.2 Research Group Grüne Gentechnik (Green Genetic Engineering) (WGG)

The WGG works a lot less publicly. Hence there is no up-to-date members list. But this is for sure: Klaus Dieter Jany (BfEL / MRI) is the first chairman. In 1998 the following were members: Buhk (BVL), Schiemann (BBA, now JKI), Sinemus (TU Darmstadt, now Genius) and lobby magazine author<sup>6</sup> and later ZKBS-expert Gerhard Wenzel. Additionally 20 further individuals from universities, research centers and the MPI Köln could be found in the organisation. The mixture always shows the central figures of the GMO patron-client networks around Buhk, Schiemann and others.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>\*89  
<sup>5</sup>\*90  
<sup>6</sup>\*91  
<sup>7</sup>\*92

Surprisingly, on 4th March 2009, the WGG was intervening in the debate around banning GMOs with an open letter to the minister of agriculture, Aigner. In it the organisation was applauding the work of researchers on GMOs and the federal institutes; and the minister was recommended to inform herself at these very institutions. In doing that they were merely praising themselves. Additionally, they were admitting publicly that the federal controlling authority was giving out a one-sided pro-GMO position: “According to the present status-quo in science and technology, the permitted and safety-rated GMO plants are presenting no more threat than conventionally bred plants. The authorities subordinated to you are verifying this.”<sup>8</sup>

For a couple of years, the WGG has created a detailed collection of pro-GMO texts on the internet.<sup>9</sup> Especially Jany is issuing statements which he is propagating through the WGG. What he is writing therein has been repeatedly falsified. One example of many is: “In their natural habitat, bees are collecting nectar and pollen, which serve as food for themselves and their offspring. Cornfields are, as long as alternatives are present, less attractive food sources.”<sup>10</sup> In reality however, in its flowering phase corn is the favourite pollen of bees.

## 4.3 Gesprächskreis Grüne Gentechnik (GGG) (Discussion Group Green Genetic Engineering)<sup>11</sup>

For the GGG there is neither a website nor a members list. It was founded in 1997 through the initiative of the pharma corporation Novartis, which at the time still had a big seed branch in business, which was later split under the name of Syngenta. Kristina Sinemus (Genius) acts as a contact person and also organises the GGG. On the the website of Genius one can find the few available pieces of information on GGG. One of the other few sources are interviews which have been given in 1998 during a research project conducted by Marion Dreyer and Bernhard Gill. According to these interviews, the prede-



Figure 4.2: Klaus-Dieter Jany

<sup>8</sup>\*93  
<sup>9</sup>\*94  
<sup>10</sup>\*95  
<sup>11</sup>\*96

cessor of the BVL (the Robert-Koch-Institute, RKI, and the Federal Institute for Consumer Protection and Veterinary Medicine, BgVV) were members of the GGG. As contact address, Kristina Sinemus was mentioned. The GGG was arguing for “an approval system that should be based on strict scientific criteria”, and was publically visible in 2004 through a press release against the liberation of GMO plots. At that time, the organisation was represented by Anton F. Böner, president of the Federal Association for the German Wholesalers and Foreign Trade (BGA). In 2005 the GGG with Kristina Sinemus was mentioned as one of the organisers of an InnoPlanta-forum in the county of Sachsen-Anhalt.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.4 International: PRRI

Very similar to the WGG, the PRRI acts as a lobby organisation internationally. The “Public Research & Regulation Initiative” was founded in 2004 and is self-proclaimingly uniting researchers, who want to organise an independent politics consulting operation. But their composition is not random at all – they are exactly the same GMO advocats who, in public institutions, force through GMOs with authorisations and expertise and belittle their dangers: Joachim Schiemann (BBA / JKI) and Hans-Jörg Buhk (BVL). Also the name Marc van Montagu as president of the European bio-technology association EFB is hardly promising any neutral or independent efforts. As their aim the lobby organisation states: “PRRI will continuously inform governments, organisations and other affected institutions and individuals about the present public research in modern bio-technology as well as about PRRI’s worries concerning the legal frameworks on these. If necessary, PRRI will continue to put misunderstandings and disinformation on science onto the agenda.”<sup>13</sup> The extensive patron-client networks as well as the anchoring of these lobbyists in state authorities bring about the effect of pro-GMO policy advice being financed by those who receive the advice – the state authorities. PRRI is supported financially within the EU project “Global involvement of public research scientists in regulations of biosafety and agricultural biotechnology” (called Science4BioReg). Between 2006 and 2009 the bottom line base funding encompassed 600,000 euros. In addition, they received funding by the governments of USA and Canada, industry-associated organisation like ISAAA<sup>14</sup> as well as from CropLife International and the US Grain Council. Both of the latter have significant economic interest in liberalising the biosafety protocol. According to Lorch/Then<sup>15</sup>, the PRRI is a typical exam-

ple of the coherent exercise of the “disguising strategy”, with the support of German government experts.

#### 4.5 Plants for the Future

Is working on the preparation and drafting of a vision statement since 2003. Starting in 2006, it carries out the EU Technology Platform “Plants for the Future” as a stakeholder forum. It includes:

- Authorities: Schiemann (JKI) as a member of the steering committee, co-author of the vision statement (2003) and Konstantin Freiherr von Teuffel (of the Forestry Experimentation and Research Institute Baden-Württemberg) is co-chair man of the working group “horizontal issues”.
- Corporate groups: Ralf-Michael Schmidt (BASF Plant Science), Markwart Kunz (Südzucker), Reinhard Nehls (Planta, part of KWS).
- Lobby associations: Katzek (BIO Mitteldeutschland), Ferdinand Schmitz (BDP).
- Funding institutions: Ulrich Schurr (Research centre Jülich), Frank-Peter Wolter (Patent and licensing agency for GABI).

#### 4.6 Propaganda on the Internet: GMO Compass, Genius & TransGen

Not only do the GMO patron-client networks take care of application, control and funding, but as well they are engaged with propaganda. Paralleled by normal PR activities, including press releases, publishing and presenting themselves as ecologically-minded groups, they created important internet information platforms.

As can be expected, known patron-clients work in and on these platforms.

Directly aimed at the public is GMO Compass which has been funded in 2005 to 2007 as a EU project, followed by funding in 2007 by EuropaBio and 2007-2008 by BMELV. The main responsible for this project is the Darmstadt-based GMO-PR agency Genius. According to Genius’s own list of references it has been working for a variety of ministries, authorities, lobby associations and



Figure 4.3: Kristina Sinemus

corporations like BASF, Bayer and Syngenta, as well as

<sup>12</sup>\*97

<sup>13</sup>\*98

<sup>14</sup>\*99

<sup>15</sup>\*100

for the GM industrial associations DIB and EuropaBio<sup>16</sup>. Additionally responsible are the organisers of the website *transgen.de*. The latter has been originally started by the Consumer Initiative. However, meanwhile, it is primarily financed by GM firms. The original and alleged continued closeness to the consumers' organisation provides an impression of neutrality harnessed by GMO Compass. The editorial team is identical to the one of *biosicherheit.de*: Kristina Sinemus and Klaus Minol (Genius) as well as Gerd Spelsberg (TransGen, before: Consumer Initiative). They describe themselves as "independent science journalists". Part of the agglomerate are, as always, authorities and corporate groups: Joachim Schiemann is part of the council as well as the industrial association EuropaBio<sup>17</sup>. Through the service of the BioSicherheitsprogramm (BioSafetyProgramme), Genius receives 1,23 million euros of the bottom line costs of 1,86 million euros. The Federal Government reasons "that an independent news coverage on the results of the research on biological safety ensures that people within Germany can inform themselves impartially about the chances and risks of genetic engineering"<sup>18</sup>. Thus, the very authorities which did not allow for the legally binding access to records act up as guarantor of independent information dissemination...

The chief participant in the project is the Darmstadt-based GMO agency Genius. We find its employees in nearly all relevant groups and committees through which industry and authorities meet up. Genius has become the common hinge of politicians and industry. Genius receives funding from both sides and carries out communication tasks for industry and government. The most significant representatives of the firm Genius are Sinemus and Minol. In corporation with professor Hans Günter Gassen they also publish books. Another company in the context of the technical university of Darmstadt and professors Gassen's Chair is BioAlliance headed by Gabriele Sachse. She was contributing to the introduction of Monsanto's genetically modified soy bean – at that time (as well as at other times) she cooperated with a representative of the authorities: Klaus-Dieter Jany. The latter was based at Darmstadt from 1986 to 1989 and published together with Gassen academic texts. Afterwards, he moved on to the Federal Research Institutions (BfEL) at Karlsruhe.<sup>19</sup>

The internet project TransGen has not been conceptualised as pro-GM propaganda. Rather, it provides an example for the bribability and adaptability of environmental as well as consumer associations. At some point, the Consumer Initiative had the idea to set up an internet platform in co-operation with GM companies. The platform was supposed to be neutral. However, it transformed

into a disguised propaganda platform. A significant reason for this transformation from critical voice to propaganda instrument of the agriculture industry was money. In the context of genetic engineering (not to mention pro-GM research funding) one can find hardly ever financial sources which are not commercial or lobbyist driven.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, thankfully GM elites praise the project TransGen. An internet website shows under the heading "I use *transgen.de* because..." they express themselves. The list can be easily read as a who-is-who of the patron-client networks in Germany. It includes, among others, the trial heads Broer, Karl-Heinz Kogel, Schmidt, Ingolf Schuphan, Bartsch (BVL/EFSA) and Schiemann (JKI, EFSA), and from the federal authorities and lobbyists Schrader (InnoPlanta), Schmitz (BDP) as well as Jens Katzek (BIO). Katzek once started as a critic of GM<sup>21</sup>. Schrader, i.e. InnoPlanta's lobbyist, IPK-key character and BioTechFarmer, formulates unambiguously: "I recommend *transgen.de* – especially to the critics of green genetic engineering".<sup>22</sup> It seems hardly possible to formulate more precisely whom TransGen is committed to in what it tells to the public. TransGen people composed the GM brochure of the BMELV-funded information agency AID.



Figure 4.4: Ferdinand Schmitz

#### 4.7 And more and more...

The network is spreading constantly. Often it uses well-sounding assumed names, e.g. Supportive Association for Sustainable Agriculture (in original: Fördergemeinschaft Nachhaltige Landwirtschaft e.V. (FNL)). Within FNL federal and regional agricultural trials institutes meet agricultural industry, including GM corporations.

#### 4.8 Umbrella Organisations

A specific problem exists through umbrella organisations. Often, their members cover all of the possible agricultural activities. However, in the top of the organisations GM proponents and, in general, proponents of industrialised agriculture dominate. An example for this is the German

<sup>16</sup>\*101

<sup>17</sup>\*102

<sup>18</sup>\*103

<sup>19</sup>\*104

<sup>20</sup>\*105

<sup>21</sup>\*106

<sup>22</sup>\*107

Agriculture Association (DLG: Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft). Organic farming associations belong to this umbrella organisation. On its website, DLG presents itself as a “neutral, open forum”. Nevertheless, practices differ. DLG’s top functionary belongs to the pro-GM clique. On Leipzig’s trading day 3rd Sept 2008, DLG’s president Calr-Albrecht Bartmer approved of “the utilisation of all mobilisable potentials for fertile arable land”. Read on in the press release covering his speech: “[According to Bartmer,] Green genetic engineering will probably be a key technology of the 21st century. It would enable fast breeding progress and, therefore, it would allow to adapt the harvesting potential to the dynamically growing demand even, and because, if climate changes”<sup>23</sup>. The impression of the Association for Food Law and Food Studies (BLL, Bund für Lebensmittelrecht und Lebensmittelkunde e.V.) is very similar. It unites companies of the food processing industry, including the organic chain Basic and Milupa (the latter guaranteeing being GMO free). Thus, many member companies<sup>24</sup> and member associations oppose GM. However, the umbrella organisation advocates “reliable general conditions which protect the rights to the freedom of research in plant breeding, enable a responsible development and application of green GM, safeguarding the provision of resources for the German and European processing and food industry and assuring complete consumer information”. This text can be found in a position paper dated 18th May 2009 including demands on the Round Table on GM of the Federal Research Ministry. Thus, this paper has also been signed by the DLG – nothing left of neutrality. Rather, we find a pattern through the whole society: 80 percent refuse GM. However, the residual 20 percent occupy all-important positions in research, politics, authorities, lobby groups and media.

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<sup>23</sup>\*108

<sup>24</sup>\*109

# Genetic Engineering: Controlling oneself and the public discourse

The grasp of the rope team stretches to the farthest end of the republic. This can be shown more clearly nowhere else than in the domain which is supposed to carry out independent control and verify the safety of GM plants for humanity and the environment. The inspection authorities BVL, ZKBS and JKI are interspersed with and are part of the trusts' and lobbyists' networks. The same counts for the safety research: those who want to press ahead with biotechnology take care of it. In addition to this: safety research is used as a cloak for the development of new genetically manipulated cultivars and for the trial of new biotechnical methods. The label "safety research" is very popular because a big amount of public funds is currently granted: the tax money of those people who are predominantly against this technology.

## 5.1 Biosafety Program

Biological safety research is the focus of the BMBF funding programme for GE in agriculture. Many field trials sought shelter here because, during the reign of a social democratic-green government and under the social democratic-conservative coalition, most of the funding was granted for this.<sup>2</sup> The green former minister of agriculture and consumer protection Künast gave her consent to this programme (which had a name which concealed its real purpose) and was part of the coalition agreement in 2002: [The aim is] "... to utilise the potential of biotechnology and to secure and to expand the competitive capacity of the biotechnological place Germany." Research for the development of new products and methodology was labeled as safety research to create acceptance for GE and to receive funding. It is very difficult to know the exact amount of the funding because in many projects the line between safety research, on the one hand, and development of products and methods, on the other hand, is

### InfoBox 5.1: Example GM Barley

352,000 EUR were given to University of Gießen for a three year field experiment. According to their own information, the aim was to "clarify whether genetically modified plants negatively effect fungus roots called mycorrhiza"<sup>1</sup> This is strange: Life in the soil is not actually of interest to the researchers. Much rather, critics were able to show, the head of the experiment, Professor Kogel, was working on something else: "The results promise new possibilities to increase the yield and to improve the [GM] plants' resistance." Thus, the label biological safety research was merely pretended in order to cash in the grants dedicated to biosafety. Anyway: The researchers did not worry much about safety. They did not protect against mice; and in both growth years barley was growing outside of the secured field – out of control. However, nothing of this stopped the trial. From 2009 on it has been supported again and officially authorised – even in the face of the negative experiences from before. Legal cases against those responsible for the trial regarding misusing grants and breaking the GM law (GentG) have not been pursued by authorities and public prosecutors. Seeding took place mid May at the new location. This is scientifically completely useless as it took place 2-3 month after the normal date for barley seeding. 1,400 objections have been handed in – including extensive studies. BVL did not bother about any of those. Legal action was not possible because the seeding took place before potential claimants received the approval letter for the trial. Nevertheless, the year was a drama. Two times the field installations have been destroyed – the University of Gießen and their subcontractor, the firm bioaktiv (whose director is Kerstin Schmidt), secretly seeded two trial fields. This constitutes a legal offense which may result in up to three years imprisonment. Since then, the Rostock department for public prosecution looks into this under the legal file "476 Js 1 5017/09". However, the responsible authorities covered-up. Kogel and his colleagues avoid the public. Even though they are legally obliged to allow a study of their files, the head of the experiment only provided a manipulated file. In a legal hearing against two field liberators in 2008, he managed to avoid being heard as a witness with the support of the court. Instead, the judge excluded the accused who exercised a critical inquiry and sentenced him to several months. Even the revision against this in 2009 affirmed this ([www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/prozess.htm](http://www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/prozess.htm)).

(i) [www.gendreck-giessen.de.vu](http://www.gendreck-giessen.de.vu)

<sup>2</sup>This addresses a couple of years from 1998 on

blurry. According to government information, 24 research projects with genetically modified plants were funded with 25.2 million EUR from 2005 to 2008<sup>3</sup>. Some more dates:

- Within this period 8 projects of biological safety research were funded with 14,792,000 EUR (7 of them by the BMBF, 1 by BMELV)
- Yet, no federal funds were spent for an all-encompassing monitoring of cross pollination or for the research of the effect of genetically modified plants on bees or for the distribution of GMOs by bees. This shows that certain questions were omitted in safety research – obviously because it would be impossible for researchers to generate applicable boundary values e.g. for distances between GMO and non-GMO fields.
- “communication management for biological safety research” was financed with an amount of 1,858,000 EUR of the fund for “biological safety research” as well. Of this amount, 1,230,000 EUR were allocated to the GE promoting company Genius (including all subcontracts to TransGen e.V. and TÜV NORD)

Already the funding shows that propaganda is the main focus. Parts of the funding go directly to the corresponding internet portals. “biosicherheit.de”<sup>4</sup>, the web site featuring the research programme, exists since 2001 and was funded with 1.8 million EUR by the BMBF as a communication project from 2005 to 2008<sup>5</sup>. “biosicherheit.de” mainly presents results of BMBF-projects in biotechnological research and results of the EU project BIOSAFENET (Schiemann), as well as latest news and background reports. The editorial staff consists of Sinemus, Minol and other employees of the company Genius, Gerd Spelsberg and other co-workers of TransGen as well as two attendants of TÜV NORD. All three companies or organisations promote GE more or less overtly and make money with the implementation of GE: Genius and TÜV NORD are members of the marketing board BIO Germany<sup>6</sup>. TÜV NORD offers service for the maintenance of GE facilities and trial fields, as well as support for the planning, forwarding and implementation of safety research in field trials and of monitoring. Here you find the implementation of GE, the forwarding of safety research results and

the propaganda about the products’ safety dealt all in one hand.

In addition, the instruction written for the superintendents of the field trials and for the commissioners of biosafety of the concerned institutions are created by companies and organisations totally biased in favour of GE. One of them is DECHEMA. Its chairman said in a speech: “If politicians avow themselves to renewable resources and blockade the green biotechnology at the same time, it’s either stupidity or irresponsibility. Both of which we cannot tolerate. Countries like China and India, which represent half of the world’s population [that needs sustaining], can’t and won’t afford to go without the opportunity of green biotechnology. Taking responsibility for us then means, to play a pioneering role in the development and the implementation of a safe green biotechnology and to make it available for other countries.”<sup>7</sup>

The field trials declared as safety research support product development. Thus they serve the companies. E.g. Monsanto filed an application to sow the self-same maize hybrid MON 89034 × MON 8817 2009-2012 in Üplingen as was grown 2008-2010 by the RWTH Aachen in Brunswick as safety research. Monsanto aimed to acquire “facts and implementation advice prerequisite for the authorisation of GMOs in the application of pesticides” in field trials. This goal was pursued by RWTH Aachen and vTI as well. While this profits the corporation, it also constitutes a hazard for humanity and the environment, because with respect to the RWTH field trial “cross pollination of genetic modifications in conventional ‘cultivated organisms’ is an accepted and authorised consequence of the authorisation of field trials”.<sup>8</sup> Superintendents of the field trials were Christoph Tebbe (vTI and EFSA) and Stefan Rauschen (RWTH). He founded the “Forum Gen- und Biotechnology” in 2009, which then featured the propaganda website [www.transgen.de](http://www.transgen.de). Interestingly enough, the same material can be found here as in [www.biosicherheit.de](http://www.biosicherheit.de) ([www.gmo-safety.eu](http://www.gmo-safety.eu)) and at AID. A small rope team on its own.<sup>9</sup>

Like all other federal authorities and distributors of federal research grants, Forschungszentrum Jülich (The Research Centre at Jülich) is also responsible for the grants on biosafety research. However this research centre refused the inspection of their GM files, even though this is regulated and allowed for by the Federal Law on Environmental Information (Umweltinformationsgesetz).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Bundestagsdrucksache 16/6208, s. Lorch/Then, p.56 f.

<sup>4</sup>English version: [gmo-safety.eu](http://gmo-safety.eu)

<sup>5</sup>Bundestagsdrucksache 16/6208 (p.22)

<sup>6</sup>Members are mostly smaller or medium-sized companies (not the market leaders BASF, Bayer or KWS), institutes, laboratories and regional technology initiatives as well as associations of professionals and lobbyists and leading banks. The following members are of the GE rope teams mentioned in this reader: BIO Mitteldeutschland (Middle-Germany), biosaxony, BioTOP, Genius and MPI. Source: <http://www.biodeutschland.de>

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.dechema.de/Presse/Archiv+2005-p-110835/November/65\\_2005.html](http://www.dechema.de/Presse/Archiv+2005-p-110835/November/65_2005.html)

<sup>8</sup>here you find a comparison of the two field trials <http://www.bs-gentechfrei.de>, quoted from “mensch+umwelt spezial” 2004/2005 (p.74)

<sup>9</sup>\*105

<sup>10</sup>\*117

## 5.2 Research in Cross Pollination

Since the start of releases, cross pollination turned into a significant topic in the 'debate' of the risks of GM. The question raised is whether and how (much) genetic modifications are able to spread within a plant species, or into environment and ultimately food, or across the boundary to other species. However, it was notably late that this question was addressed in research. The timing of this question suggests that even proponents of GM knew right from the start that cross pollination does take place and cannot be controlled. Any research would only have affirmed this. Therefore, it seems, GM proponents preferred to not address the issue at all. Nobody, not even the corporations and lobbyists, disputed that it would be just a matter of time until GM would spread everywhere. What they do is fighting people's fear – the fear that GM spreads.

### InfoBox 5.2: Deception: Research in Biological Safety

Biological Safety is the best funded public research programme for green GM in Germany.<sup>11</sup> The result is simply: trials which are not concerned with safety research are declared as safety research anyway. Actually, however, they research into new products and methods. This constitutes nothing but deception and is a case for public prosecution. However, the [well equipped and privileged] public servants at the departments for public prosecution are not paid by the nation-state to reveal such scandals. Until now, no legal claim on that topic has been scrutinised.

Also, in terms of the grant regulations<sup>12</sup>, trials on "biological safety" which are actually taking place are not permitted. Why? According to the letters of the reading of the biological safety programme, only in specifically reasoned and extraordinary cases is it allowed to provide grants for researching GM plants which are not yet ready for introduction into wider markets. The trials of the AgroBioTechnikum show that the exception actually is the normal case. It follows an extract of the site of the company which carried out the trial:

"For 2009 several release trials are planned. The GM plants are prototypes which are subject to several research questions. All cases constitute safety research and monitoring. Except for the case of one GM potato, none of the plant-types is positioned to be introduced within the next few years into the market. A couple of the trials are supported by a grant through the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) programme on 'Biological Safety Research'."<sup>13</sup>

Researchers who know the result before the trial, i.e. that the plant in question is safe, carry out all the trials. This is even true for the single trial in which environmental effects have been studied: The maize trial by RWTH Aachen in the west of Braunschweig. Head of the trial, Stefan Rauschen, declared beforehand:

"MON810 has been repeatedly evaluated in terms of safety. According to this, MON810 pollen within honey is as harmless as pollen of any other authorised maize breed. In that context it seems to me not proper to suggest that this pollen might put consumers at danger. This is on the wrong track."<sup>14</sup>

However, the current status of GM law requires clarification of the issue of coexistence. §1 of the GM law

prescribed that GM free agriculture must be provided for – both, for organic as well as for conventional agriculture. Yet, science could not provide any suggestions of how this might be possible. On the contrary, experiences with longterm GM farming at North and South America, as well as in India, show quite clearly that it is not possible to restrict the spreading of GM plants over medium to longer time horizons. By now, German scientists also accept overtly that GM is not and cannot be under control. Hence, the order of the events in Germany was extraordinarily irritating. First, they released GM into agricultural reality, then a law regulating this was issued suggesting that GM is not allowed to spread anywhere. Only at that point in time, science started to study whether this was possible at all. And all of this research has six fundamental weaknesses:

**1 Cross pollination cannot be stopped.** Therefore investigations only study at what speed and at what range cross pollination takes place. The aim is to provide boundary values which can be used to classify certain products as GM free. All those who are part of the discourse recognise that complete freedom from GM will not be possible anymore in agriculture once GM plants are released into the environment. Hence, this reading proposes that it is not any more the aim (even if it's legally required) to work towards the possibility of coexistence of GM plants and GM free agriculture. Rather, the aim is to define boundary values and to increase those in order to label products as GM free, even though they are not. Currently the boundary value for conventional GM free agriculture is fixed at 0.9 per cent. The tendency of the value is to increase. [The higher the boundary value the easier it is to pretend to publics that GM free agriculture still is possible. To illustrate: if you buy a kilogram of a GM-free wheat, it is legally acceptable to have a 0.9% load of GM wheat.] Joachim Schiemann (of JKI) allegedly researches into these values. However, he is already postulating their increase, just like other researchers, corporations and authorities. Schiemann admits publicly that coexistence is only possible if a boundary value lie is embedded into the concept:

"GM free production will not be practically possible at zero-tolerance. [Even if Germany abandons GM,] a boundary value would be necessary for unintended fractions within imports. If suitable boundary values are agreed upon, then coexistence will be possible. This would result in a boundary value of 1 per cent for the sector producing seeds with respect to unintended GM fractions."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>\*118



**Figure 5.1:** Trial fields for cross pollination research and safety research near Braunschweig

**2 Research is restricting itself to cross pollination by wind, i.e. passive spreading of GM plants.** However, at least two pathways of active spreading are known. On the one hand, insects – especially bees – use their own power to fly from plant to plant. They do so right from the first bloom of a new breeding and they carry GM via long distances (6 to 10 kilometres). In the long term, insects may transport GM sequences at borderless distances – when the insects themselves move on to new territories. In parallel, by now it is known that horizontal transfer of genes is possible – crossing the boundaries of species. In cases this takes place, scientists cannot trace the genes: they do not have a model of where a specific transfer of genes takes place.

**3 In addition, the normal failure due to humans and machines causes scattering.** Lots of corn and rape-seed plants at the roadside originated from grains dropped from transports. Think of ruptured grain bags. Or the means of production: it is also not possible to prevent mixing in the context of using the same trailers, machines, filling and cleaning devices. Containers may be confounded or wrongly declared. The short history of green GM is full of such examples. There is no hope for improvement. In analogy, think of nuclear substances or weapons of mass destruction. They are better secured

and yet, bits and pieces go missing and are confounded.

**4 All the research of cross pollination using trial fields is carried out by those rope teams discussed in this reader.** As owners of patents, service providers for trials or actors in corporations, they have a professional, political and propagandistic interest in results not being an obstacle to future research. Thus, this is predisposed science at work. As usual, it follows certain interests and is not independent.

**5 Recognising that cross pollination cannot be ruled out, GM proponents created a new argument:** Ruling out cross pollination is not an aim in itself. It was the BVL which clarified on 23/4/2009 at a court that the legal guarantee for coexistence (§1 GM law (GentG), 2nd clause) does not apply.

“The possibility of cross pollination cannot be ruled out; even if the distance ordered to secure isolation is enlarged, cross pollination may occur. This possibility does not work against providing a planning permission [for a field trial]. Cross pollination is only to be considered as causing a negative impact according to §1 Nr 1GentG if they modify the affected plants negatively, e.g., by causing the development of damaging characteristics, which, however, is not expected by the transgenic maize plants under discussion according to ZKBS.”

Also, if actual disadvantages occur, “which are only protected against by the GM law”, only compensation may be claimed for damage caused, rather than the ending of the field trial.<sup>16</sup> The court followed this interpretation, effectively getting rid of the guarantee for coexistence and the costs-by-cause principle.

**6 Each cross pollination experiment results in cross pollination (as part of the experiment’s design).** Thus, this practice in itself causes the danger which it claims to objectify. As just one field trial is enough for global cross pollination, this raises the question over what the actual motives of the researchers are.

Researching cross pollination serves product development because it neither studies open questions of GE nor scrutinises potential threats in cases of permissions of GM releases. Rather it provides the foundation for permitting GM releases, for example it produces legal boundary values (below which food and animal feed may be labelled GM free even though they will not be free). In line with this, the top administrator of German GM, BVL GM unit

<sup>16</sup>\*119

head Buhk, warned against “boundary values, which when crossed will bring into action the guideline 2001/18/EG respectively of the EU decree”. Too low boundary values would have results which would “imply extensive temporal, administrative and financial work”.<sup>17</sup>

To compare this situation, imagine such a research design: nuclear research studies designed to result in boundary values of the distance between reactor and a private house beyond which the house may be labelled as low radiating – because it ‘only’ has been subject to a specific amount of nuclear radioactivity. Only a few of us would think of this as safety research, but, rather, as a contribution to make nuclear power usable. This would be a kind of research in support of nuclear power. The GM case is similar: it serves to push through GM products onto the market by means of providing rules and regulations to spread GM. Research helps to come up with such regulations which provide enough room for manoeuvre for GM corporations while restricting the potential for others to stop the introduction of GM into markets – by means of legalising everything. Legal boundary values are adapted to the corporations’ needs rather than the other way around.

The first cross pollination trials involving transgenic maize breeds ran between 2005 and 2008. Project partners have been (among others) RWTH Aachen, BBA (Braunschweig/Darmstadt) now transformed into JKI, and the BioTestLabor (BTL GmbH) originating at the Agro-BioTechnikum rope team. The project received grants amounting to 3.27 million EUR.<sup>18</sup>

In 2008, important fields for cross pollination research were located at Rheinstetten-Forchheim (a trial of the Technischen Landeszentrale of Baden-Württemberg), in Braunschweig (RWTH Aachen) and in its neighborhood Sickinge (a trial of JKI). All three heads of the trials were pro-GM. Thus, safety research and technology assessment is carried out by those institutes and actors who already know’ beforehand that disadvantageous effects of GM do not exist. A year later, in 2009, the Sickinge trial was supposed to be moved to a trial field of RWTH Aachen (located at the prior FAL, west of Braunschweig). However, this was not possible because of the ban of MON810. At Aachen University (RWTH) no faculty for agriculture exists. The rope team entangled around Aachen consists of biologists (including among others Ingolf Schuphan, the BVL representative Bartsch and Gathmann as well as Kogel and Gregor Langen (now at the University of Gießen)). They work at a variety of locations, either as geneticists or in planning authorities (issuing the permissions for GM). Bartsch carried out release trials while he was at Aachen (1992-2000), e.g. with GM beets provided by KWS. Bartsch had worked for Schuphan as an assis-

tant researcher. Schuphan acted as head of several BMBF research projects on biological safety – even though he considered these irrelevant:

“Our results indicate that, actually, we do not need any monitoring because no damaging effects of Bt-maize were tracked.”<sup>19</sup> And: “Our research results clearly show that growing Bt maize MON810 does not have any disadvantageous effects on nature’s economy. There is no need for distances to nature protection areas.”<sup>20</sup>

From 2004 on, Bartsch was responsible for coexistence and GM monitoring at the BVL. Thus, the one carrying out releases is now acting as a regulator. Former RWTH member Achim Gathmann also works in that location, employed since 2006.<sup>21</sup> In this way a clique, which was applying GM themselves earlier, and is now considering regulation unnecessary, is exercising control.

### 5.3 Monitoring

This term refers to the observation of results on the ecosystem during growth. A sarcastic take could be this: by means of monitoring it is possible to document that everything fails. Monitoring is not serving to prevent cross pollination or any other damages of health or the environment. Monitoring constitutes a worsening problem because it has been assigned to the same entanglements which develop GM plants, sell and grow them. Thus, they are interested in spreading them.

Monitoring was only once practically relevant. This was the case because it was missing – in the instance of the single commercially used GM plant, MON810. The result was an impressive drama, caused by a ban of all maize types which had integrated the gen construct MON810 dated 27/4/2007. This ban was issued under protest of the head of the GM unit of the Federal office for Consumer Protection, Buhk.<sup>23</sup> Actually, the ban could be considered superfluous because the preliminary permission for MON810 was not valid any more since October of the year before. From that date on, a monitoring plan should have been provided. However, Monsanto and the seed producers who used MON810 (like KWS) gambled and hoped that regulatory authorities would not recognise – or that they approve of their practices – and it worked. The regulatory authority was communicating the end of Bt-maize after all seed had been planted anyway. Hence, for a summer, forbidden maize was grown on hundreds of fields. In parallel, backstage, actors bargained for a new permission.

<sup>17</sup>\*120

<sup>18</sup>\*121

<sup>19</sup>\*122

<sup>20</sup>\*123

<sup>21</sup>\*124

<sup>23</sup>\*16

**InfoBox 5.3: Crashes, Break-downs and Tough Luck – The Reality of Green GM I<sup>22</sup>**

For decades so-called scientists lied, in order to push through their technology. The spreading of GM would be under control, and cross pollination would be restrictable. True was and is the opposite: The most significant growth areas (Northern and Southern America as well as India) are devastated. GM free agriculture is not possible anymore. However, also in countries in which GM is not or rarely spread, the technology increasingly gets out of control. Neighbourish: both global extensions of rice and linseed originated in small trial fields. This was sufficient for a global contamination.

- 2005 GM contaminated maize seed by Pioneer found its way to several German Länder, including Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. Farmers were informed about this only after seeding took place.
- In Mexico, the origin of maize growth, scientists detected GM components in maize samples of 2001 and 2004. The cause was never found.
- In 2006 GM rice LL601 developed by Bayer was found globally. It had only be grown in trial fields. Rice pollinates itself – like barely and wheat. Nevertheless, rice managed to spread globally. In 2009 the same drama happened in the case of linseed.
- Since the middle of 2009, information on non-indicated cross pollination turns increasingly dense (maize, linseed...), which makes it clear that: GM technology cannot be stopped...
- 39% (2007) or 33% (2008) of all soy products show traces of GM soy.

(i) more cases at [www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/koexistenz.htm](http://www.projektwerkstatt.de/gen/koexistenz.htm)

Necessary for that was a monitoring plan. Monsanto had never complied with the task to provide long term observation on environmental consequences. The plan was suddenly produced and resulted in permitting MON810 again on 6/12/2008. A glance backstage indicates how well established the rope teams are in that sphere. The new plan was based, according to Monsanto, on existing surveillance systems, like involving bees (yet the respective institutions were never asked) and a monitoring draft developed in 2004.<sup>24</sup> The authors of the latter constitute a strange mixture: three employees of authorities cooperated with two lobbyists and profiteers of GM (Kerstin Schmidt and Jörg Schmidtke based at the sleaze of AgroBioTechnikums at Groß Lüsewitz). The multinationals were as well part of it. The authors acknowledged the support of Bayer CropScience, KWS, Monsanto, Pioneer and Syngenta. An influential link might have been Joachim Schiemann because he was founding member when the AgroBioTechnikum emerged. Again, regulation and control of an authority are joined within a single person with the activities of carrying out trials, releases and lobbying.<sup>25</sup> Also the final wording of the monitoring plan was kept within their “family”. It was accepted at that time. First, the BVL provided a document to Monsanto listing

30 potential observation systems. Then, Kerstin Schmidt, ordered by Monsanto, provided a written proposal about which networks to select. Monsanto used the proposal, developed by Schmidt’s firm BioMath, to submit it to BVL. The latter affirmed the proposal.<sup>26</sup> Based on this secured social infrastructure, the one-dimensionally pro GM rationality of BVL – unsurprisingly concluded:

“The plan provided by Monsanto for the observation of environmental effects of GM maize MON810 satisfies totally the legal requirements. This was stated by the Federal Office for Consumer Protection and Food Security (BVL) today at Berlin.”<sup>27</sup>

Similar to cross pollination and safety research, the problem starts with impermeable rope teams. In the responsible working group entitled “Monitoring of genetically modified plants in agricultural ecosystems during growth” the same networkers are positioned.<sup>28</sup> *Head is Joachim Schiemann. Members are also: Bartsch/BVL, Broer/Uni Rostock, Gathmann/RWTH Aachen (now BVL), Schmidt/BioMath, as well the representatives of authorities at the regional and federal level like BMELV, RKI/BVL, LLG Sachsen-Anhalt, Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Landwirtschaft, LWK Hannover, LWK Westfalen-Lippe, LWK Rheinland, LWK Weser-Ems, LUFÄ Nord- West, Landespflanzen-schutzamt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Thüringer Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Ökologie, UBA, Bayerisches Landesamt für Bodenkultur und Pflanzenbau, FAL, Thüringer Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, Bundessortenamt und representatives of ZALF, BBA and the universities of Bielefeld, Göttingen and Oldenburg. They share the room with industry: Bayer CropScience, Pioneer Hi-Bred, KWS Saat, Syngenta, Monsanto and the industrial organisation Agrar are part of it; and the lobby are not missing as well, like the Bundesverband Deutscher Pflanzzüchter and Genius.*<sup>29</sup>

Only one single time the entangling did not work out: 2005, the former regional minister of agriculture Renate Künast did not grant the public financial support for research projects of Schiemann (BBA). These projects were supposed to develop GM plants. At that time, Schiemann was also participating at both levels, federal and European Union, to evaluate GM plants in authorisation procedures. The media reacted intensively: Künast was portrayed as an enemy of research, including biological safety research. The Green Party argument in a parliamentary debate on 7/3/2005:

<sup>26</sup>\*127

<sup>27</sup>\*128

<sup>28</sup>\*32

<sup>29</sup>\*130

<sup>24</sup>\*125

<sup>25</sup>\*126

“It should not be the case that those employees who research towards development of products author, afterwards, independent expertise discussing whether these products comply with the general safety standards of consumers and biodiversity.”<sup>30</sup>

## A Finger in every pie – But not overtly: The corporations

It is a specifically “German” feature that the big corporations try to hide a little. It is not to be revealed how closely governments and public authorities are interweaved. But there is no difference between BASF, Bayer, KWS and other arms-, energy- or car-producing corporations, banks or insurance companies. They are all closely entangled personally with control agencies, they steer lobby organisations and sit at the table together with those who forge new laws or distribute subsidies. The only difference being that the biotech corporations know that their business at the countryside is not as popular as the construction of huge carbon dioxide emitters like factories, power plants or cars. That is the underlying reason why they have a different strategy: camouflage. Instead of acting themselves, they accept and push forward the creation of various small-scale businesses and regional bio-tech initiatives. These smaller organisations are then completely backed by the big corporations. Those who observe closely will notice: Syngenta, BASF and Pioneer joined together at Rostock with BVL, JKI, EFSA at the 4th EIGMO-Session. Monsanto was sponsoring the meeting.<sup>1</sup> BASF was providing the security for the testing plots of the AgroBioTechnikum. Hartwig Stiebler, solicitor of Monsanto, was representing biovativ against it’s critics. Researchers such as Broer and Kogel hold patents together with Bayer and BASF. The “small” businesses develop and force through products which, subsequently, are used by the corporations.

Locally it is quiet similar. When in Hannover<sup>2</sup>, young pupils can themselves [experiment with and] modify plants genetically, it is KWS and the Fund of the Chemical Industry that finance such measures. When a costly propaganda vehicle with the tuneful sound of “Science Live Mobile” is roaming the country, it is once again state, corporation and lobby groups acting to-

gether. The tax money-fed regional biotech-initiatives are led by ex-vice-presidents and -managers – may it be ex-KWS-manager Jens Katzek, now working for BIO Mitteldeutschland, or the ex-Bayer-manager Bernward Garthoff, at BIO.NRW.<sup>3</sup> Hand in hand – just as in GMOs – minorities try to force their vision of a designed society into the minds of the majority. This also nearly always means the defamation of GMO-critics, “with the aim of immunising the youth against this strange progaganda”.<sup>4</sup>

In 1997, Bayer, Monsanto and other agro-multinationals consulted about the strategy to launch GMO-soy into the European market. While Monsanto was drawing on the services of the famous PR-corporation Burson-Marsteller, Bayer likes to direct such dodgy and tricky cases to the Genuis Agency or TransGen. Within public authorities, the corporations normally encounter very little resistance. That’s why these authorities were blindly taking on board that approach to the scientific monitoring of outdoor GMO-trails which was, actually, developed by the corporations themselves. Together with the questionnaire for farmers, the authorities openly thanked Bayer CropScience, Monsanto, Pioneed and Syngenta for their support and cooperation. After all, the latter, themselves



**Figure 6.1:** German based global GM actors

<sup>1</sup>\*132

<sup>2</sup>\*133

<sup>3</sup>\*134

<sup>4</sup>\*135

or their subsidiaries, receive uncounted subsidies for their GMO ventures.<sup>5</sup>

Besides Bayer and KWS, BASF is highly engaged in GMO lobby-groups such as the aggressively agitating Bundesverband Deutsche Pflanzenzüchter (Federal Confederation of German Plant Breeders), as well as in commissions and bodies which were originally supposed to monitor the application of GMOs. In the Zukunftsinitiative Rheinland-Pfalz for regional business development, the long-term president of the afore named chemical giant, BASF, was highly involved as chairman from 1992 – 1998.<sup>6</sup> Besides this, he is exercising his influence through the media politics of Bertelsmann enabled by him being a member of Bertelsmann's board of directors, a member of the curatorship of the Bertelsmann Foundation, and chairman of the Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft (describing itself as "Stifterverband is a German industry initiative promoting science and learning") which was also initiated by Bertelsmann.<sup>7</sup> The preparation of extensive plantings of the Amflora potato of BASF was approved by the minister of agriculture, Aigner, just like she approved various single releases of new GMO creations. This was the same minister who enforced the Monsanto corn ban. Hence the question: was this supposed to strengthen the German GMO industry while catching some votes for the weak CSU (Bavarian conservative party "Christian Social Union")? Were there similar reasons to why the book "Monsanto Mit Gift und Genen (The World According to Monsanto: Pollution, Corruption, and the Control of the World's Food Supply)" was published precisely by Bertelsmann Publishing?

The summary of the reader you are currently reading is best summarised by the text "Kontrolle oder Kollaboration?" (titled "control or collaboration") which has been referred to often. That text provides a devastating evaluation of German GM landscape:

"The political arena is entangled by an unpenetrable netting of experts, consultancies, special agencies, working groups, initiatives as well as by the diverse activities of their state servants who collaborate with industry to do both, risk assessment as well as risk communication. By that they turn public into the object of gambling. Within the centre of this network you normally would not find the big players themselves but, rather, special agencies that are well linked to authorities, politicians, media and corporations. These agencies work as invisible strategists of industry sustained by public as well as private funding. They control rope teams and

entanglements, they organise cliques at all levels, they infiltrated EU member states' institutions and have the power to define and redefine everything in their area."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, while 6% of the German people are up for green genetic engineering, they control all relevant positions – directly or indirectly.

This shall be the conclusion of the treatise. You also may find a page with ideas for resisting GM. Of course, this reader only provides a first introduction to the topic. The more you dig into the interdependencies of the players and money laundering, the worse is the result. In the context of the networks introduced in this reader you find even further institutions and entanglements of interests in power and profit. Examples are

- The Patent Office is funded through patent applications. Thus, there exists an existential dependency on issuing patents on life itself.
- Among the GM corporations you will find a variety of co-operations and joint ventures. Again and again, you find they develop plants together or complement each other through their profit-seeking interests in pesticides, seeds and further means of production in agriculture.

The sleaze is thick and effective. Those corporations, lobby groups and public institutions active within it manage to push through GM even though the compelling majority of the population opposes this technology; for that they use the political parties and quite a bit of media. As long as those 80% opposing GM do not start to effectively act, i.e. make their resistance an actual obstacle, they will simply have to observe how the availability of GM free food in supermarkets will diminish: the existence of cross pollination does not allow for co-existence. You can't expect salvation from authorities, associations and the nation-state. These are subject to the pressure of GM rope teams. The only solution is to fight GM at its source, i.e. at the fields, at the gates of corporations and at the docile executors of those authorities (ir)responsible for planning and supervision. If the latter administrate favouring the 6% GM proponents, then the many need to stop them. Sorry, but sending cards, donations and conscious green consumption – even though it might help a bit – is not enough.

<sup>5</sup>\*136

<sup>6</sup>\*137

<sup>7</sup>\*138

<sup>8</sup>\*140

## 6.1 Arguments and parols of GM engineers ... and what we should think of it

**GM aids against hunger** Stupid! Enough food exists. The problem is simply that it is not delivered to people or it is taken away from them. It is war, displacement, environmental destruction, divesture of self-sufficiency and own markets, patriarchal oppression as well as mass feeding for animals and, recently, as well the usage of plants as fuel – all of this causes poverty and hunger. In Germany, of 42.63 million tonnes of wheat harvest only 8.51 million tonnes are directly eaten. More than its tripple is fed to cattle. GM does not protect against stupidity, profit seeking interests and politically wrong decisions. The opposite: patents and controlling seeds will worsen the definciency. GM causes hunger!

**GM protects the environment** Resistant plant breeds are supposed to save pesticides. Actually, in rare cases this happened – yet, only for a couple of years. Afterwards, resistances of insects and competing plants are increasing. The results of this is: farmers need to apply more pesticides. And this is exactly what GM proponents want!<sup>9</sup>

**Freedom of research** GM proponents love demonstrating against field occupiers and liberators by claiming freedom to research. Some of them provide preposterous suggestions, like this: without such research “we would continue to climb within the forest like apes” (Saxonian Minister of the Environmental, Frank Kupfer on 2/6/2009). Not only that this is mistaken about the origin of humans, the statement also indulges to restricting research. The latter can be easily seen: Green GM is not only consuming all other research, it is also pursuing the control of research through money. Under the delusion that Germany should be the global first mover in just about everything, all available money for agricultural research is diverted into the development of GM plants – turning researching organic agriculture into financial trouble. Additionally, many trial fields are lost because of the immense need for trial field areas by GM experiments.

**GM supports farmers** It would be nice if the seed and chemical industry actually aimed at that. However, their goal has always been to make farmers dependent and push through industrial agriculture. They want to file patents on seed, they like to get paid for the farmers’ own local production of seeds and try to dominate all practices and processes at the farm by means of adhesion contracts as well as combining seeds and pesticides.

**Non-scientific** This is the preferred label by GM proponents of their critics. Or they suggest that critics “are not locals” or “don’t get it anyway” (Professor Tebbe 13/5/2009). However, if you observe in detail you will see that these labels primarily obfuscate that the proponents themselves rarely have proper arguments. While critics point to serious arguments, ranging from increasing dependencies to ecological risks, research turns to where the money flows. They cheat and publish – this is useful for their clients. They only provide polemics against critique. And, finally, labelling critics across-the-board “non-scientific” simply rejects a critical analysis and, thus, turns against all scientific principles itself!



Figure 6.2: Hazard!

**Defamation** If trial fields or corporations themselves are seen as being at risk, PR units go one step further. They provide cock-and-bull stories about critics. When, on 1st April 2008, the GM barley field of the University of Gießen was occupied the rope-teams lauched a heartbreaking story of how occupiers killed bee colonies. One year later, head of experiments, Professor Tebbe purported at Braunschweig that occupiers had left damage worth 100,000 EUR. Uwe Schrader called GM critics at an Üplingen picket on 9/4/2009 simply “criminal offenders”. A couple of weeks later the horror story of an attacked security guard at a AgroBio-Technikum trial field received high attention in gossip columns. And Inge Broer called this pamphlet a ‘booklet full of fabrications’.

<sup>9</sup>\*50



Figure 7.1: De-sleaze!

- Take Action
  - <http://www.bangmfood.org/take-action>
  - <http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/>
  - <http://www.rhizome.coop/>
- Groups, Links and Contacts
  - <http://www.bangmfood.org/global-links>
  - <http://www.gmwatch.org>

## Technical Notes

**About this Document** Translated by an autonomous temporary collective of activists with the support of Corporate Watch (<http://www.corporatewatch.org>) and the encouragement of GM Watch (<http://www.gmwatch.org>).

Version 1 (January 2011): This is the first translated version. The document has *not* been literally translated. Translators provided relevant explanations to terms and contexts. Note, this version does also not contain all information boxes provided in the German version.

Typeset with  $\LaTeX$ .

**Map of Germany including its Bundesländer** This map is related to the copyright information provided at <https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Germany>.

