SOURCES: *Washington Times*, December 5, 1998; www.citizen.org; www.preamble.org

1998 #2 CENSORED STORY

CHEMICAL CORPORATIONS PROFIT OFF BREAST CANCER

The leaders in cancer treatment and information are the same chemical companies that also produce carcinogenic products.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM), initiated in 1985 by the chemical conglomerate Imperial Chemical Industries and now known as Zeneca Pharmaceuticals, reveals an uncomfortably close connection between the chemical industry and the cancer research establishment. As the controlling sponsor of BCAM, Zeneca is able to approve—or veto—any promotional or informational materials, posters, advertisements, etc. that BCAM uses. The focus is strictly limited to information regarding early detection and treatment, avoiding the topic of prevention. Critics have begun to question why.

While 49 percent of Zeneca Group's 1997 profits came from pesticides and other industrial chemicals, another 49 percent were from pharmaceutical sales, one-third of which were cancer treatment drugs (about $1.4 billion). The remaining 2 percent of Zeneca's profits derived from health care services, which include the 11 cancer treatment centers Zeneca operates across the United States. The herbicide acetochlor, considered a probable human carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), accounted for close to $300 million of Zeneca's 1997 sales; tamoxifen citrate (Nolvadex), the most prevalent breast cancer treatment drug, accounted for $500 million. Zeneca strongly promotes the tamoxifen option for breast cancer as part of their "risk reduction" plan, implementing its use in each of its treatment centers. Actual cancer prevention would clearly conflict with Zeneca's business plan.

Hormones have been at the center of breast cancer research for the past two decades. Five years ago, however, researchers began to consider the possibility that chlorinated chemicals might be a contributing factor in the rising occurrences of breast cancer. In response to what it perceived as a threat, the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the Chlorine Chemistry Council banded together to develop a strategy to discount the research, which included hiring a public relations firm to discredit the scientific investigation and its resulting data.

SOURCES: Peter Montague, "The Truth About Breast Cancer," *Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly*, December 4, 1997; Allison Sloan & Tracy Baxter, "Profiting Off Breast Cancer," *Green Guide*, October 1998.

COVERAGE 1999: The merging of massive chemical corporations with large pharmaceutical companies has led to a conflict of interest in the cancer treatment and chemical production sectors. Zeneca pharmaceuticals merged with Astra chemical corporation on April 6, 1998, effectively forming the world's third largest pharmaceutical and third largest agrochemical company.

In regard to the use of drugs to treat breast cancer, most of the 1999 mainstream press coverage appears to be corporate press releases thinly veiled as news stories. Riding this wave of positive press coverage, AstraZeneca kicked off an ad campaign encouraging healthy women to assess their breast cancer risk, and urging them to then contact the company for further information.

Formerly available only for breast cancer treatment, tamoxifen was approved by the FDA in October 1998 to reduce the incidence of breast cancer in healthy women at high risk. This decision was reached after a four-year trial by the National Cancer Institute of 13,388 "high risk" women, which found that tamoxifen decreased breast cancer incidence by almost one-half. Unfortunately, women in the tamoxifen group also had twice the incidence of uterine cancer, three times the rate of blood clots in the lungs, and 50 percent more cases of blood clots in major veins. Five women in each group died: in the placebo group all five died from breast cancer, while in the tamoxifen group three died from breast cancer and two from drug side effects. Ironically, tamoxifen itself is considered a probable human carcinogen by the World Health Organization.

Tamoxifen has been aggressively marketed to women with no mention of these potentially life-threatening side effects. Television ads for tamoxifen in 1999 first discredited ideas women may have had about why they would not get breast cancer, then urged them to call Zeneca to find out what they could do to reduce their risk. The blatant promotion of this carcinogenic drug is not exclusive to its manufacturer, but is supported by the American Cancer Society of Clinical Oncology which recommends "offering" the drug to healthy women who have an increased risk of breast cancer. Rowan Chelbowski of UCLA said "[they] are not recommending that women take tamoxifen, but rather [they] are recommending it be offered."

A Zeneca spokeswoman told the *New York Times* that 29 million women are at increased risk for breast cancer. If only 10 percent take tamoxifen at its average annual cost of $1,000 for the recommended five years, tamoxifen sales would come to $14.5 billion.

This attitude prompted Ann Pappert of *Ms.* to suggest "this may be just another chapter in the sad history of 'medical miracles' for women, like DES and the Dalkon Shield, that turned into nightmares." Her opinion is supported by a letter sent from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to Zeneca, which warns the company that their advertising brochure for physicians was inaccurate. The original brochures stated that endometrial cancer associated with tamoxifen was "uncommon" and had inadequate information on the side effects of tamoxifen for all women over 60 even if their risk factor is less than 1.67 percent.

In 1999, the Justice Department launched an antitrust investigation into

Zeneca and the company's deal with the generic-drug maker Barr Laboratories, which competitors say may have cost consumers millions of dollars. Government officials are concerned that Zeneca's settlement, which gave Barr Laboratories $21 million dollars and a nonexclusive deal to distribute a generic form of tamoxifen manufactured by Zeneca, is more than just competitive, and has in effect prevented other generic-drug makers from entering the market and kept the drug's price high. Barr now realizes approximately $30 million a year from the deal.

AstraZeneca and Swiss drug giant Novartis have unveiled plans for a merger and spinoff of their agricultural-chemical businesses. The new company will spin off into a new company called Syngenta, becoming the biggest agrochemical business in the world, with sales of $7.9 billion.

Other corporate-cancer profiteers include: Rhone Poulenc Rorer's pharmaceutical division, which churns out the breast cancer treatment drug docetaxel (Taxotere). Similar in nature to Zeneca's situation, this company also manufactures 56 crop protection products that contain ingredients that are probable or suspected carcinogens." Also, Novartis, which at $4.15 billion is the 1998 world leader in agrochemical sales, makes the pamidronate compounds used to treat bone metastases in breast cancer patients. On one web page, this multinational company states that "Novartis intends to lead the fight against cancer by introducing therapies that battle the disease and alleviate the patients' suffering." On another page it declares that "Novartis Crop Protection is the leader in fungicides."

Eli Lilly and Co. sells millions of dollars of raloxifene (Evista) to treat breast cancer. But a huge cash cow for Elanco, Lilly's animal health division, is the cattle hormone Rumentin. It has been suggested that eating hormone-treated meat alters estrogen levels, which in turn may contribute to increased cancer risk.

Other breast cancer profiteers include General Electric and DuPont, who manufacture mammography machines and x-ray film. The two companies are tied for managing the highest number of SuperFund toxic waste sites in the country.

SOURCES: *Sierra*, September/October 1999; *Denver Post*, June 6, 1999; *San Diego Tribune*, July 30, 1999; *Ms.*, October/November 1999; *In These Times*, August 8, 1999; *New York Times*, July 30, 1999 & August 3, 1999; *SFGate*, May 19, 1999; *Pacific Sun*, October 27, 1999; *Extra!*, January/February 1999; *Green Guide*, January 1999.

COVERAGE OF ANTITRUST: Ellence, and STAR Trial: *USA Today*, June 28, 1999 & September 30, 1999; *New York Times*, March 28, 1999; The Associated Press, May 26, 1999 & September 16, 1999.

For more information on health risks, or to find out more about the toxic link, contact: The National Women's Health Network, Tel: (202) 347-1140; Breast Cancer Action, Tel: (877) 2STOPBC, Web site: www.bcaction.org; The Toxic Links Coalition, Tel: (415) 243-8373, Web site: www.igc.org/justice/tlc; The National Women's Health Network, Tel: (202) 347-1140; Mothers & Others, Web site: www.mothers.org, E-mail: greenguide@mothers.org.

1998 #3 CENSORED STORY

MONSANTO'S GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS THREATEN WORLD PRODUCTION

Monsanto Corporation has been working to consolidate the world seed market and is now poised to introduce new genetically engineered seeds that will produce only infertile seeds at the end of the farming cycle. Farmers will no longer be able to save seeds from year to year and will be forced to purchase new seeds from Monsanto each year.

On March 3, 1998, Delta and Pine Land Company, a large American cotton seed company, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that they had been awarded a patent on a technique that genetically disables a seed's ability to germinate when planted a second season. This patent covers not only the cotton and tobacco varieties, but, potentially, all cultivated crops. Scarcely two months after the patent was awarded, Monsanto, the world's largest seed corporation and second largest agrochemical corporation, began the process of acquiring Delta and Pine Land with its rights to this new technology.

If commercialized, the USDA stands to earn 5 percent of the royalties from the net sales of this technology. Historically, the USDA has received government money for research aimed at benefiting farmers, but recently the USDA has been turning more and more often to private companies for funding. As a result, for the first time in history, research is being done for the benefit of corporations, sometimes in direct opposition to farmers' interests.

Dubbed "Terminator Technology" by Hope Shand of the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI), Monsanto's new seeds have diverse implications including the disruption of traditional farming practices around the world, the altering of the Earth's biodiversity, and possible impacts on human health.

Monsanto has euphemistically called the process by which seeds are disabled the "technology protection system." A primary objective of Terminator Technology is to grant and protect corporate rights to charge fees for patents and products that are genetically modified. Terminator Technology offers no advantage by itself, but when coupled with the production of the strongest, highest yielding seeds, farmers may be compelled to buy single-season plants.

SOURCES: Leora Broydo, "A Seedy Business," *Mojo Wire*, http://www.motherjones.com/news_wire/broydo.html, and http://www.motherjones.com/news_wire/usda-inc.html, April 27, 1998; Chakravarthi Raghavan, "New Patent Aims to Prevent Farmers From Saving Seed," *Third World Resurgence* No. 92;

Hope Shand & Pat Mooney, "Terminator Seeds Threaten an End to Farming," *Global Pesticide Campaigner* and *Earth Island Journal*, June 1998 & Fall 1998; Brian Tokar, "Monsanto: A Checkered History" and "Revolving Doors: Monsanto and the Regulators," *The Ecologist*, September/October 1998, Vol. 28, No. 5.

COVERAGE 1999: The debate about the ethics of genetically modified foods finally arrived in America during 1999 after having been a major issue globally for the last several years. Like the coverage of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (1999 #6 *Censored* story), the debate about Terminator Technology and genetically modified organisms (GMO) in food was widely featured throughout the year. The centerstage visibility in mainstream U.S. media accomplished Project Censored's goal—exposure of the pros and cons of genetic engineering and its implications for the world food supply.

In early October 1999, hundreds of media sources reported on Monsanto's formal announcement that it would not "market seeds that produce crop plants that are themselves infertile." Although Monsanto is the world leader in seed sterility technology, another company which Monsanto hoped to purchase developed the specific Terminator Technology. Final approval of this purchase was blocked by antitrust investigators.

While the media coverage about the ethics of genetic modification remained strong, the concern over the domination of transgenic crop and livestock development by a handful of multinational corporations was largely absent. In countless polls, editorials, and letters to the editor in publications worldwide, the public overwhelmingly stated that there was not enough information available about how genetic engineering might affect the food they ate and the world in which they lived. Equally troubling was the notion that the science behind the technology has been largely profit-driven, and funded by a handful of some of the largest global corporations. Mergers and consolidations continue at the highest levels in the biotech and pharmaceutical industries, putting more independent genetic technology into the hands of those whose ulterior goals may not represent the best interests of the consumer.

On December 20, 1999, there was wide press coverage about Monsanto's merger with Pharmacia and Upjohn Inc., which formed one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world worth an estimated $52 billion. Monsanto is the producer of the chemical herbicides Roundup, Harness, and Lasso, the artificial sweetener NutraSweet, the arthritis drug Celebrex, the numerous variety of Ortho lawn and garden products, and POSILAC, the brand of rBGH milk-producing hormone given to cows. Citing intense criticism and pressure, the merging companies announced plans to "spin off" the agricultural division of Monsanto, which would conduct its own stock offering separate from the rest of the company.

The action and protest by opponents of GMOs culminated with the December 15, 1999 announcement of a major class-action lawsuit filed by several prominent antitrust lawyers on behalf of six farmers. The farmers accused Monsanto of rushing genetically engineered seeds to the agricultural marketplace before properly testing them for safety, and of forming an international cartel which conspired to control the world's production of corn and soybean seeds. In addition to discussing how U.S. exports had been severely impacted, especially to Europe and Japan, the farmers noted that Monsanto had spent over $8 billion in acquiring seed companies over the last decade. The actions of the farmers are widely supported and assisted by environmental groups from around the world.

Despite the fact that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) opposes the labeling of any genetically engineered food, and has since 1995, FDA officials are having to rethink their position in the face of foreign market demands. Europeans are forcing American food exporters to segregate and label all genetically engineered food. This firm statement by the Europeans is seriously undermining the FDA's argument that labeling would be an unnecessary and wasteful proposition. Many farmers have benefited from the increased yields of genetically engineered seeds from Monsanto and other biotech firms, but they have been unable to sell their yields abroad since the international community put its foot down in the summer of 1999. In response the U.S. food and biotech industries have shifted into full crisis mode, mounting a massive public relations blitz in an attempt to prevent the backlash from washing up on American shores.

The *Nation* reported several attempts at such publicity including the Alliance for Better Foods run by the public relations firm BSMG. This same firm also represents Philip Morris and Monsanto. In December 1999, Monsanto's main public relations company, Burson-Marsteller, bused 100 members of a Washington, D.C., Baptist church to conduct a pro-GMO rally outside an FDA hearing. Some protesters reported being paid.

The FDA held three public forums in cities around the nation during 1999 to allow private industry, government, and the public to discuss genetic engineering and food. These gatherings drew considerable regional and national coverage. South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, some European nations, and Japan have all passed laws requiring the labeling of genetically modified foods. The two leading manufacturers of baby food in the United States, Gerber and Heinz, announced in July that they will not allow any genetically modified corn or soybeans into their products. The American Corn Growers Association told its members to strongly consider only planting traditional corn for fear that growers may not be able to export GMO corn.

In February 1999, representatives from 170 countries met at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in Cartagena, Colombia. At this meeting, the U.S. interests led an attack that destroyed the world's first international biosafety protocol on genetically

engineered organisms and products. *Third World Resurgence* and the *New York Times* were just two sources that reported on these negotiations leading up to the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings in Seattle. As a means of protecting themselves from developed nations dumping unlabeled GMOs, developing nations wanted the protocol to extend to all genetically modified products. The United States was adamant about excluding agricultural products and worked closely to defeat the agreement with other nations where American multinational corporations have significant vested interests—Canada, Australia, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.

SOURCES: *Time*, February 1, 1999; *New York Times*, August 29, November 4, December 8, 14, & 20, 1999; the *Nation*, March 8 and December 27, 1999; *Wall Street Journal*, July 21, 1999; *Guardian* (London) August 25, 1999; *Financial Times* (London) December 6, 1999; *New Scientist*, November 27, 1999; *Business Week*, December 20, 1999; *Global Pesticide Campaigner*, December 1998; *Third World Resurgence*, August 1999.

1998 #4 CENSORED STORY

RECYCLED RADIOACTIVE METALS MAY BE IN YOUR HOME

Special government permits currently allow some U.S. companies to sell "decontaminated" radioactive metal for the manufacture of everything from knives, forks, and belt buckles to zippers, eyeglasses, dental fillings, and IUDs. The Department of Energy (DOE), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and the radioactive metal processing industry want to eliminate the need for these special permits and are advocating for new, more relaxed radiation standards. Present standards oblige metal companies to scrub contaminated metal until the radiation level is nearly unmeasurable. The new standards will allow a level of radiation whose concentration could result in nearly 100,000 additional cancer fatalities in the United States alone.

The current standards still allow some radiation to remain on recycled metal, exposing consumers to low-dose radiation from some common consumer products. Certain scientists argue that continual exposure to low-level radiation is potentially more harmful than a one-time high-level dose. The greatest threat to consumers may be from seemingly harmless everyday household products such as pots, pans, bed frames, and metal desks. In 1980, a survey of the domestic jewelry market revealed that out of more than 160,000 pieces of jewelry studied, over 170 pieces were found to be radioactive. Although these represented a very small percent of the total jewelry studied, at least 14 people developed finger cancer and several others were forced to endure the amputation of fingers and/or parts of their hands.

While the DOE, NRC, and radioactive metal processing industry endorse lowering the recycled metal standards for U.S. production, they engage in selling high-level contaminated metal to foreign markets. In fact, three major U.S. oil companies shipped 5.5 million pounds of radioactive scrap metal to China in 1993. In June 1996, Chinese officials stopped a U.S. shipment of 78 tons of radioactive scrap which exceeded China's safety limit as much as 30-fold. As of January 1998, 178 Taiwan buildings containing 1,573 residential apartments had been identified as radioactive due to the use of recycled radioactive building materials. Residents suffered from congenital disorders, various cancers, and unusual chromosomal and cytogenetic damage. Tom Gilman, U.S. Ecology accounts manager, centers the issue as an economic debate and dismisses public health concerns by stating that recycling radioactive metal is "turning wastes into assets" and that "there is always going to be some level of radioactivity."

SOURCE: Anne-Marie Cusac, *The Progressive*, "Nuclear Spoons," October 1998.

COVERAGE 1999: In mid-1999, the issue of radioactive metal recycling received some mainstream news coverage when two lawsuits were filed, one against the DOE and the other against a high-profile contract between the DOE and British Nuclear Fuel Limited (BNFL). Prior to the lawsuits, coverage of the potential dangers of recycled scrap metal was virtually nonexistent. In fact, in early 1999 the only issues about scrap metal recycling being explored by the mainstream press were those regarding the acquisition of metal recycling plants by large corporations and the potential financial gains being made in the 'waste-to-energy' industry.

A ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Gladys Kessler on June 29, 1999, concerning a 1997 quarter-billion-dollar contract awarded by the DOE to BNFL received substantial news coverage in select papers. The contract in question permitted a subsidiary of the BNFL to decommission and decontaminate three uranium enrichment plants at the DOE's Oak Ridge, Tennessee, nuclear reservation. The Oak Ridge facilities contain an estimated 100,000 tons of radioactive metal, which the BNFL can cleanse and then sell to the scrap metal market for the manufacture of such intimate everyday items as forks, frying pans, teeth braces, and baby carriages.

Judge Kessler ruled in favor of the DOE because of a loophole in federal law which prevented her from halting the project. However, she stated that it was "quite troubling" that the DOE and BNFL provided no explanation why an amendment in the EPA's Environmental Agreement was finessed to evade "public notice and comment opportunities." Kessler stated that the absence of opportunity for "public scrutiny or input on a matter of such grave importance" was both "startling and worrisome," and that the "potential for environmental harm is great, especially given the unprecedented amount of hazardous materials which the defendants seek to recycle."

In August 1999, Congressional leaders, steel industry officials, and scores of environmental groups called on the Clin-

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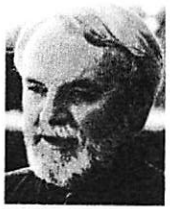

PETER PHILLIPS

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