

**CANADIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY  
ACTION NETWORK**



# ANNUAL REPORT 2014



## **CBAN MEMBERS**

**ACT for the Earth (Toronto), Canadian Organic Growers,  
Check Your Head, Council of Canadians, Ecological Farmers of Ontario,  
Ecology Action Centre Nova Scotia, GE Free Yukon, No More GMOs Toronto,  
Greenpeace Canada, Inter Pares, National Farmers Union, GMO Free PEI,  
Saskatchewan Organic Directorate, Society for a G.E. Free B.C.,  
Union Paysanne, USC Canada, Vigilance OGM**

**On the cover:** This cartoon is from CBAN's video about alfalfa – the purple flower that is pollinated by bees, and becomes hay. Over many years, CBAN and partners built a national campaign to stop GM alfalfa. In 2014, GM alfalfa was not put on the market. **No Way! No GM Hay!**



## I. CAMPAIGNING AND RESEARCH AND MONITORING

### Preparing for 20 Years of GMOs

In 2014, CBAN began planning a major research initiative in anticipation of “20 Years of GMOs” see [www.gmo inquiry.ca](http://www.gmo inquiry.ca).

CBAN continued to access cutting-edge research and analysis. For example, CBAN organized expert workshops on New Breeding Technologies and synthetic biology. CBAN's Coordinator, Lucy Sharratt, also attended the Agriculture Industry Biotechnology Conference in Saskatoon, to research corporate public relations and industry priorities for genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

### GM Alfalfa

Public outcry in Canada continued to hold off the introduction of GM herbicide-tolerant alfalfa. This was the outcome of years of campaigning including last year's national Day of Action. It is a concrete reprieve for small farmers — organic farmers in particular — who face the threat of contamination if GM alfalfa is released. In late 2014, the Canadian and US governments approved GM low-lignin alfalfa, which signaled the beginning of a new corporate strategy to introduce GM alfalfa.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario made some important statements about GM alfalfa and regulation in his 2013/2014 Annual Report. This was part of a response to the 2013 request for a provincial environmental assessment of GM alfalfa, made by two Ontario farmers with research support from CBAN. While the Ontario Ministry rejected the farmers' request, the Commissioner agreed with our critique

of federal regulation. He said: “the applicants raised several valid issues that clearly fall outside the scope of the narrow federal safety assessment. Issues related to sustainable and organic agriculture, increased herbicide use, and related social and economic effects play no role in the federal approval process for GE crops.”



The Big Carrot's juice bar shares the news of campaign success with customers! (Toronto)

### GM Apple

CBAN continued to work closely with our Member group the Society for a GE Free BC to implement the GM apple campaign in British Columbia. We also engaged in more public awareness across the country — and distributed at least 10,000 postcards!

CBAN and GE Free BC began a “No GM Apple” retailer pledge campaign along with the Health Action Network Society (HANS). Both CBAN and HANS printed window clings for use by stores that pledge “No GM Apple”. The cling is the initiative and design of volunteer Teresa Lynne at GE Free BC.



The tremendous efforts of GE Free BC were reported by the US government! In their regular report on Canadian agriculture, the US Department of Agriculture reported: *“Arctic apples which possess a non-browning trait through genetic modification continue to face opposition from anti-GMO groups in the province of British Columbia. The lobby organization GE Free BC, whose purpose is to prevent the adoption of biotechnology, issued a press release on May 26, 2014 demanding that the provincial government in BC conduct a review of the apples before they can be approved...”*

Later in the year, CBAN’s Coordinator also presented talks in Edmonton and Calgary, sponsored by Blush Lane Organic Market, with a focus on the GM apple – the owners of Blush Lane are also organic apple producers!



*Robert Horricks, BC orchardist and CEO of Blush Lane Organic Markets and CBAN Coordinator Lucy Sharratt next to the store sign advertising the lecture at Ambrose University, Calgary.*

## GM Sweet Corn

In 2014, CBAN partnered with our Member Vigilance OGM to test fresh sweet corn samples from across Canada again. CBAN Members across Canada helped secure samples.



Our testing was extensive — we tested 137 samples from 9 provinces, from roadside stands, farmers markets and grocery stores. The results were surprising: we found only one GM sweet corn

sample, from a Metro store in Quebec. This result allowed us to communicate to the public that their actions are working. For three years, CBAN and Vigilance OGM have encouraged Canadians to write to their grocery stores to ask them to remove GM sweet corn.

Each year the testing helps to determine the market penetration of GM sweet corn, provides info to consumers, and pressures grocery stores to remove unlabeled GM sweet corn. CBAN communicates the test results to the public and directly to grocery chains.

Our testing in 2014 prompted a major grocery chain to commit on the public record. Metro grocery store said, “We are writing a letter to all our suppliers, asking for a formal commitment to not sell us GM corn.”

In early December, at the time when new 2015 vegetable seed catalogues are out, CBAN published a guide for farmers to identify and avoid GM sweet corn seed. This guide is unique and unprecedented. We produced the guide in English and French and know it has already been useful to some vegetable producers.



## GM Salmon

After the Canadian government approved the production of GM salmon in November 2013, (it is not yet approved for human consumption and is therefore not in production yet) CBAN provided research to support our Member group Ecology Action Centre (NS) as they took the issue to court with BC environmental group Living Oceans Society.

CBAN shared info at the amazing “Spring Thaw” event organized by the Canadian Chefs’ Congress, where Chef Micheal Stadtlander spoke against the GM salmon.

CBAN continued to monitor and research. For example, we shared the results of a government investigation in Panama that found the GM fish company AquaBounty, which also operates in PEI, violated national environmental regulations.



Clockwise from top left: Chef Michael Stadtlander speaks out against GM fish at the Chefs’ Congress “Spring Thaw” event in Toronto. • CBAN Coordinator Lucy Sharratt speaks to chefs at the Canadian Chefs’ Congress national meeting at Haisai Restaurant in Singhamton Ontario. • It’s “No GMO Salmon” ice sculpture! At the Spring Thaw event with organic food creations from 20 chefs!

## GM Trees

CBAN re-joined the International Steering Committee for the Campaign to STOP GE Trees. We also sent updated information to the World Rainforest Movement, about GM tree field trials in Canada.

## GM Wheat

CBAN closely monitored the issue of GM wheat in 2014 in partnership with Greenpeace International and we continue to communicate with farm organizations in Canada and the US.

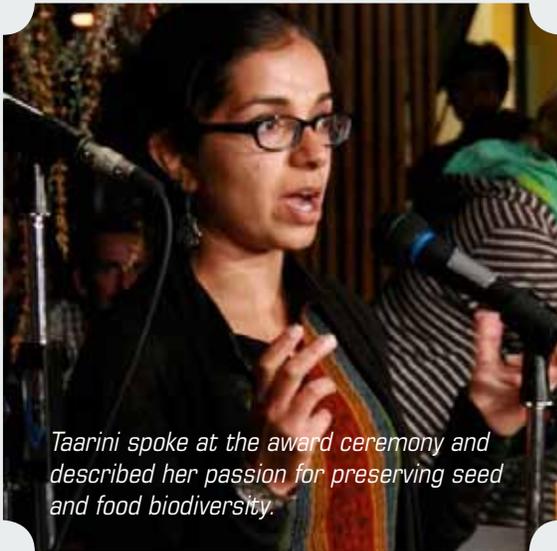
## GM Food Safety

The controversial animal feeding study on GM corn from the French team led by Gilles-Éric Séralini was republished in 2014. The study exposed the lack of long-term testing behind Canada’s approvals of GM food. The re-entry of this study into the scientific literature prompted CBAN to call for a moratorium on approving new genetically modified (GM) foods, a re-evaluation of the safety of GM foods already on the market, and a complete overhaul of the regulatory system.

In 2014, CBAN also closely monitored Canada’s push for a global agreement to adopt “Low Level Presence” (LLP) policies. LLP would allow a percent of GM contamination in food imports that have not been approved by domestic regulatory agencies. It is a step towards the industry’s goal of removing safety regulations and would open the global market to GM contamination.

In April, CBAN’s Coordinator participated in a UN Technical Consultation on LLP in Rome. The meeting was partly funded by the Canadian government and its goal was to try to convince other governments to adopt LLP policies and accept GM contamination from Canada. The meeting was an excellent chance to gather important information and analysis about LLP, and to witness the global debate. Thank you to the Canadian Organic Trade Association for providing financial support for CBAN’s travel.

CBAN was invited to present our views on transparency to a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) meeting that included industry leaders and a few other stakeholders. CBAN described the multiple layers of unacceptable secrecy in the regulation of GMOs and said “CFIA does not need to consult CBAN, CFIA needs to consult Canadians.”



*Taarini spoke at the award ceremony and described her passion for preserving seed and food biodiversity.*

CBAN researcher **Taarini Chopra** was the 2014 recipient of the **Patrick Conner Award!** The award honours long-time collaborator Patrick Conner and “seeks to carve a space for us to acknowledge the costs of integrity, honesty, generosity and belief”. Congratulations Taarini for being one of two “extraordinary individuals” to win this award this year. CBAN is proud to have award-winning staff!

[www.patrickconneraward.com](http://www.patrickconneraward.com)

## II. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- In 2014, we distributed thousands more GM food chart postcards and GM apple postcards.
- CBAN has a strong online presence through our website and facebook, with some action on Twitter.
- GE Free BC worked hard to organize a successful Twitter Party on the GM apple, and a Facebook Party, with the help of Suzanne Bertani of the blog Mommy Footprint.
- CBAN members staffed tables at events across the country and CBAN staffed info tables at the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network and Food Secure Canada meetings.
- **CBAN presented 15 workshops and talks in 2014.**

GE Free BC volunteer Teresa Lynne was invited to speak at the City of Vancouver’s Proclamation of “GE Awareness Week” October 20-26. Events included a dinner organized by the group at Graze Restaurant in Vancouver.

### Other Key Presentations

- **January:** On GM alfalfa to a meeting of organic dairy producers in Quebec.
- **February:** On a multi-faith panel of religious leaders on the issue of GMOs the Shoresh Food Conference in Toronto.
- **April:** Concordia University “GMOs: Is there a future for genetically modified food?” sponsored by the Concordia Student Union and the Geography Students Society.
- **May:** CBAN took the stage to greet marchers from the May March Against Monsanto as they arrived at the outdoor *GMO-Free Festival and Farmers Market* in Toronto organized by the Toronto Non-GMO Coalition.
- **August:** Three workshops at the Peoples’ Social Forum in Ottawa: a workshop on GMOs with Vigilance OGM as well as a workshop with Food Secure Canada and another with the Polaris Institute!
- **September:** On a panel at the Canadian Health Food Association conference in Toronto.

- **September & October:** CBAN presented to the national meeting of Development and Peace as well as to local D&P groups in Edmonton and Ottawa. The new D&P campaign is focused on the importance of seeds.
- **November:** CBAN and Vigilance OGM ran the standing-room only workshop “The ABCs of GMOs” at the Food Secure Canada Assembly in Halifax.

## Publications

- *Golden Rice – Vitamin A Rice*, CBAN Factsheet, January.
- *Consumers’ Guide: GM Sweet corn in Canada – Information for Action*, July.
- *Growers’ Guide: Guide to Identifying and Avoiding GM sweet corn for farmers*, December.
- *Will GM Crops Feed the World?* Report, October.
- Articles: Numerous articles for *Common Ground* as well as for the Certified Organic Associations of BC.



## III. MEDIA

CBAN’s Coordinator appeared on a panel on TV Ontario’s *The Agenda* with Steve Pakin and was quoted in media stories throughout the year.

## Press Releases 2014

**February 26:** Consumer Concern Over GM Sweet Corn Mounts.

**March 10:** GM Fish Company Seeks Food Safety Approval in Canada.

**April 9:** Genetically Engineering Poplars for Paper and Biofuels Condemned: Industry Hype & Misdirected Science Undercuts Real Energy/Climate Solutions.

**June 24:** GM Food Safety Study Reignites Call to Overhaul Canada’s Regulations.

**September 4:** Groups unite to call on Brazil to deny application to legalize genetically engineered eucalyptus trees.

**October 9:** Groups Welcome Ontario Environmental Commissioner’s Call for Action on Genetically Engineered Alfalfa.

**October 28:** Panama Fines GM Fish Company with Canadian Operation for Violating Environmental Regulations.

**December 3:** Groups Provide New Tool to Encourage Farmers to Choose Non-GM Sweet Corn Seed.

## Media Backgrounders

**October 16:** 2,4-D and 2,4-D tolerant crops.

**October 24:** GM Fish in Canada

## IV. THANK YOU

### Thank you to all the 161 people who donated to CBAN in 2014!

### Thank you to our funders in 2014!

The Bernard and Edith Ennis Foundation  
 The Big Carrot Natural Market, Toronto  
 Canadian Health Food Association  
 Community Natural Foods Calgary  
 Inter Pares  
 Julie Daniluk Consulting  
 LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics  
 Nature's Path  
 New Roots Herbal  
 Ontario Natural Food Co-op  
 Patagonia Inc.



*LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics supported CBAN through their Charity Pot program. Here is CBAN's hand and body lotion!*

**Thank you** to CBAN's Steering Committee: Tom Rudge, GE Free Yukon; Tony Beck, volunteer, Society for a GE Free BC; Terry Boehm, Past-President, National Farmers Union, Saskatchewan; Abra Brynne, food systems activist, BC; Eric Chaurrette, Program Manager, Inter Pares; Devlin Kuyek, Researcher, GRAIN; Colleen Ross, Farmer, BC.



**Thanks to everyone** who shares CBAN materials at events. Here is Terran Giacomini of No More GMOs Toronto at the GMO Free Festival.

**Thank you** to CBAN staff Lucy Sharratt (Coordinator) and Taarini Chopra (Researcher)

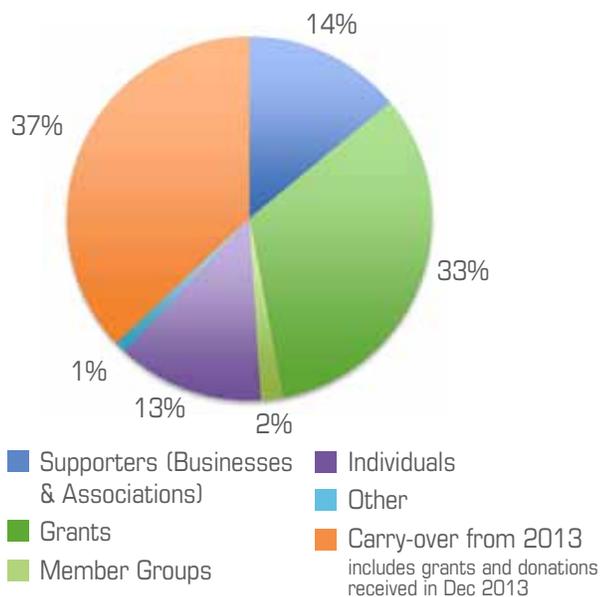


We honor the incredible life and work of **June Griswold** who passed away in December 2013 at the age of 87. Each year, June took CBAN education materials to the local Seed Savers event in Salmon Arm BC. She was a strong community organizer and a lovely person.

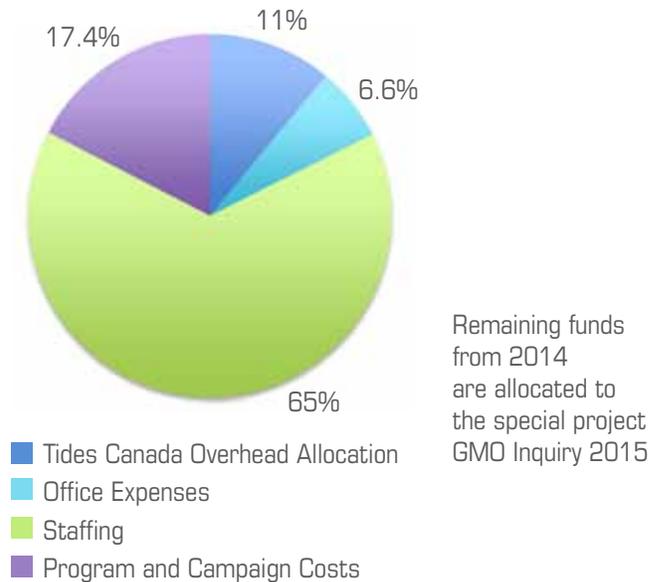
**Thanks for everything June!**

## V. FINANCES

### 2014 CBAN Revenue \$236,041



### 2014 CBAN Expenses \$143,811



CBAN is a project on Tides Canada's shared platform which provides governance, human resources, financial, and grant management for leading environmental and social projects across Canada, allowing projects to more effectively achieve their missions. 10% of revenue received in 2014 was allocated to overhead to support these costs. Tides Canada has full fiduciary and governance responsibility for CBAN.

## Some feedback from the public in 2014

“ Thank you for the info and for the great job you guys are doing to improve our World ... :). ”

“ I am amazed at how you stay on top of all GM actions... and grateful... ;) ”

“ I just wanted to tell you we all really appreciate you taking the time and emailing us back. You and the CBAN have been a great resource and have really helped us in our research. (from a high school student) ”

“ Thanks for keeping this issue on the front burner! ”

“ I felt compelled to email you to say THANK YOU, for providing the public with a concise place to keep up on the fight against the GMO industry. I make an effort to write to the various leaders and make the small dent that I can as one individual but also recognize that I would not do that as easily as I do, without your help. Thanks and please keep up the great work! ”

“ That report is so awesome! I'm giving a talk this Saturday and I intend to use it heavily to help me referenced facts. (from a farmer, about the report Will GM Crops Feed the World?) ”



### Collaborative Campaigning for Food Sovereignty and Environmental Justice

For more details, please contact: Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)

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