the mob against biotech crops. When that aid is refused by a president who would rather let his people die than believe the sweeping evidence that biotech grains are safe for the vast majority of people—well, the ignorance and callousness are just staggering.

The United States can only offer. It should continue to do so. Sad as all of this is, the innocent victims of famine and ignorance are not on America's conscience.

AFRICAN FAMINE, MADE IN EUROPE

(By Robert L. Paarlberg)

Southern Africa is suffering its worst drought in a decade. The U.N. World Food Program estimates some 13 million people in six countries will need 1.2 million tons of food aid till March 2003 to avoid famine. Yet two countries, Zimbabwe and Zambia, have spent most of the summer rejecting food aid shipments of corn from the U.S. because some varieties of U.S. corn are ''genetically modified'' (GM). Incredibly, African leaders facing famine are rejecting perfectly safe food. What is going on here?

REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

Farmers in the U.S. have been planting (and Americans have been consuming) genetically engineered corn, soybeans and cotton since 1995. Regulatory authorities in the EU and Japan have also approved such GM crops, but in Europe food safety regulators have been mistrusted by consumers ever since the unrelated but traumatizing mad cow disease crisis of 1996. EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs David Byrne repeatedly states there is no scientific evidence of added risk to human health or the environment from any of the GM products approved for the market so far, and he can point to 81 separate scientific studies, all EU-funded, that bolster this conclusion.

But greens and GM critics in Europe say this absence of expected or known risks is no longer a sufficient regulatory standard. Touting the ''precautionary principle,'' they argue that powerful new technologies should be kept under wraps until tested for unexpected or unknown risks as well. Never mind that testing for something unknown is logically impossible (the only way to avoid a completely unknown risk is never to do anything for the first time).

Europeans can perhaps afford hyper-caution regarding new crop technologies. Even without planting any GM seeds, European farmers will continue to prosper—thanks to lavish subsidies—and consumers will remain well fed. The same is not true in the developing world, especially in Africa, where hunger is worsening in part because farmers are not yet productive.

Two-thirds of all Africans are farmers, most are women, and they are poor and hungry in part because they lack improved crop technologies to battle against drought, poor soil fertility, crop disease, weeds and endemic insect problems. The productivity of African agriculture, per farm worker, has actually declined by 9% over the past two decades, which helps explain why one-third of all Africans are malnourished.

This ought to change the calculus of precaution. If GM-improved crops are kept out of the hands of African farmers, pending tests for the ''nth'' hypothetical risk, or the ''nth'' year of exposure to that risk, the misery of millions will be needlessly prolonged.

But now we are seeing an even less justified application of regulatory caution toward GM foods. Governments in Africa that are facing an actual famine have been rejecting some food aid shipments because they contain GM seeds. In May 2002, the government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe rejected 10,000 tons of corn shipped from the U.S. because it was not certified as GM-free. This at a time when four to six million Zimbabweans approached a risk of starvation

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Precautionary European policies toward the environment are also keeping Africans from growing their own food. The EU has been insisting that governments in Africa treat GM crops as a potentially serious threat to rural ''biological safety.'' This helps explain why there are no GM crops yet being planted commercially anywhere on the continent, except in the nation of South Africa. Instead of helping Africa's hungry to grow more food, European donors are helping them grow more regulations.

African governments also must worry that accepting GM food aid will cost them commercial export sales to Europe. The EU has not been importing any U.S. corn since 1988, because U.S. shipments can contain one GM varieties not yet approved in Europe. African governments now worry that any illicit planting of U.S. corn by farmers could jeopardize their own exports to Europe. Trying to remain GM-free for commercial export reasons is a policy that does not help poor subsistence farmers, but it may soon become the norm in Africa, once the EU moves next year toward much tighter labeling and traceability regulations on all imported GM foods and animal feeds.

DOCUMENTARY RECORDS

Even while professing that GM foods are safe, EU officials will soon require that they be traced individually through the marketing chain, with legal documentary records to be saved by all producers and handlers for five years. African countries won't have the institutional capacity to implement this traceability regulation, so they will have to remain GM-free to retain their access to the EU market. Meat products raised with GM feed are not yet covered by this new EU regulation, but Zambia's initial rejection of GM corn in food aid shipments was partly based on a fear that if the country lost its GM-free animal feed status, poultry and diary exports to the UK would slump.

By inducing African governments to embrace excessively cautious biosafety, regulations and by requiring stigmatizing labels and costly traceability certificates for all imported GM foods and feeds, wealthy and comfortable officials in Europe have made it harder for drought-stricken societies in Africa to accept food aid from the U.S. European critics of GM foods did not foresee this potentially deadly misapplication of their precautionary principle. Yet here it is.

[From the Los Angeles Times, Sept. 3, 2002]

THE ''PURE'' AND STARVING POOR

ENVIRONMENTALISTS STIFLE MODERN AGRICULTURE IN THE THIRD WORLD

(By James P. Pinkerton)

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa.—The apartheid system is gone, but many here at the World Summit on Sustainable Development seem to want to bring back a form of ''separate and unequal''—for South Africa and for the rest of the Third World—in the form of environmental regulation that would stifle economic development.

Politically correct greens, of course, recoil at the thought of any kind of racism, but actions speak louder than words. So if ecological activists from the developed countries of the north push policies that would retard agriculture in the developing south, consigning billions to permanent poverty, maybe they deserve to be labeled ''neo-apartheidists.''

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Today, greens still seem intent on keeping Third Worlders innocent of advanced civilization—even if that means keeping them poor. One flashpoint issue is genetically engineered food. In the last two decades, this food has become a part of our lives. Indeed, genetically engineered-derived vaccines and medicines—targeted on diabetes, meningitis, hepatitis, cancer—are lifesaving. Maybe that's why I never hear about American environmentalists protesting the advance of genetically engineered techniques; the greens of the U.S. don't dare block American health therapies, which they themselves may depend on.

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The greens of the north want pure food, and they also want the people of the south to stay pure. For their part, poor southerners want more food, period, and if they think genetic engineering will help them, they will fight for it.

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

## PREVENTING FOREST FIRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, once again, millions of acres out west have burned, causing billions of dollars in damage. We were warned in the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health in early 1998 and early 2000 that this was going to happen; and then a few months later in 2000, 7 million acres burned, causing $10 billion worth of damage.

If I went out and burned down one tree in a national forest, I would be arrested; and yet, because of the policies of the past administration and following these extremist environmental groups, these policies have caused millions and millions of acres out west to burn and caused billions of dollars' worth of damage.

This year, 20 firefighters have lost their lives because of the fires out there. Also one of my constituents, a young woman firefighter in an accident fighting one of the fires, has been paralyzed from the waist down.

Extremist groups, Mr. Speaker, protest any time anyone wants to cut any trees, even though we have many millions more acres in forest land now than 50 or 100 years ago. I will repeat that. We have many millions more acres in forest land now than 50 or 100 or 150 years ago. These groups have driven many small logging companies out of business. Most of these fires have been caused by groups which have stopped even the thinning of forests or the removal of dead and dying trees, resulting in a tremendous buildup of fuel on the floors of our national forests.

The Washington Times had a front page story a few days ago which said, ''There are simply too many trees.'' It