

FALSE SOLUTIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Food, climate and energy problems offer new business opportunities for the agriculture industry. To every problem they have helped to create they offer even more profitable solutions: new GMO's, larger scale farming, agrofuels, greenhouse gas emissions trading, and so on. Presenting these industrial solutions as 'green' is how they hope to gain 'carbon credits'. With those credits they can get escape from their reduction obligations and continue their polluting business as usual. - The agriculture industry makes clever use of the image of wholesome traditional and sustainable farming to greenwash their own industrial solutions, while in fact they are pushing out farms, robbing the rural population of food and livelihood. Unfortunately, the measures that are discussed in UN Conferences give companies emission rights so they can carry on producing CO2 and pay others to start projects that are supposed to capture CO2. The black magic of emission trading and 'clean' investment mechanisms have so far led to one undeniable result: present day CO2 emissions are larger than ever before.

INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE AND SUPERMARKETS DESTROY SMALL FARMS WORLD WIDE

The key factor in the industry are a few very powerful corporations that are trying to monopolise the world's food market by controlling food production and distribution systems worldwide, thanks to trade liberalisation and the globalisation of the world's food economy. Big transnational food processors such as Kraft, Nestle, Altria (formerly Philip

Morris), Unilever, Procter and Gamble and Cargill hold the power in the supply chain. To provide customers with the huge variety of inexpensive food that they promise, supermarkets ruthlessly exploit their effective monopoly as the biggest buyers of food. The supermarkets and big processors are increasing their share of the profit margin by squeezing the whole supply chain. The farmers at the end of the chain are in the weakest position.



SUSTAINABLE FARMING COOLS THE PLANET

The centralised corporate ownership of our food and food production system destroys farm communities around the world, leading to poverty and hunger. We need to transform this exploitative food system and create a pattern of food production based on the needs and rights of local communities.

We already have the solution and we had it all along; small scale sustainable farming remains the best way to combat the food and climate crises. Not GMO's but native seeds provide the diversity that is necessary to adapt to climatic changes. Sustainable farming feeds the soil and stores CO2.



The social and ecological debt that the industrialized countries owe the countries of the Global South is not an issue in the United Nations Panel on Climate Change (UNPCC). Neither does it occur to them to question the economic model of infinite growth on a finite planet.

These problems cannot be solved by simply regulating the use of particular chemicals, or banning GM products in individual countries. The problem is systemic, and as such, requires a solution that dismantles and replaces the entire system - System change not Climate change!

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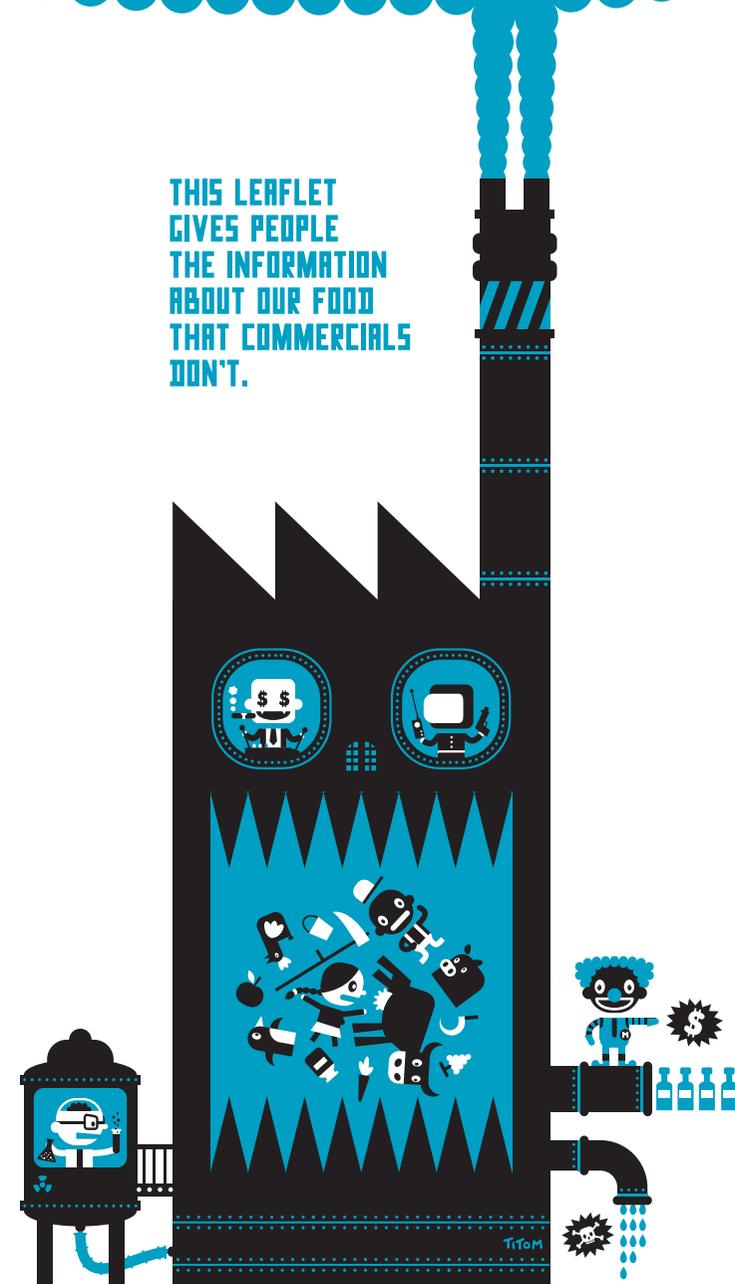
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AGRICULTURE ACTION: RESIST INDUSTRIAL FARMING!

INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE IS HEATING UP THE EARTH

THIS LEAFLET GIVES PEOPLE THE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR FOOD THAT COMMERCIALS DON'T.



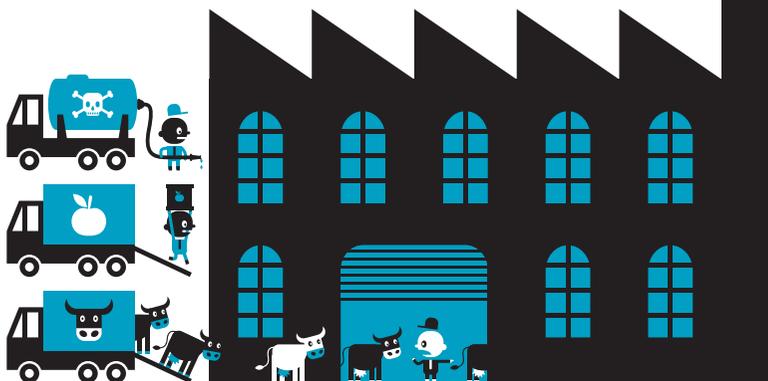
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It exposes the industrial methods of the current food production system that destabilises our climate, destroys forests, our natural diversity and local communities, and ultimately our food supply. Industrial farming involves burning down forests and clearing peasants from the land in the global south to produce soy and maize to feed European livestock. Many more mouths could be fed if the food was used for human consumption, but it is simply more profitable to pump the food into overfed animals that produce harmful gases and lots of waste in overcrowded factory 'farms'. Industrial food production relies on heavy use of transport and energy. The agro-industrial food system is already responsible for at least 32% and possibly - according to recent scientific reports - as much as 51% of global greenhouse gas emissions. But the agriculture industry has even bigger ambitions...



MEAT

It has become widely known that industrial production of livestock like pigs, cows and poultry produces large amounts of CO2 as well as methane and nitrous oxide (N2O) - both far more potent greenhouse gases than CO2. To feed the hundreds of millions of animals in European factory farms, cheap bulk food has to be imported from other parts of the world. In order to meet the ever increasing demand, the exporting countries need more room for large scale production: small farmers are pushed out of the countryside and forests are cut or burnt down to create space for vast monoculture crops. Deforestation releases lots of CO2 into the atmosphere and destroys the earth's capacity to absorb CO2, deforestation also affects the local climate and leads to more drought. At this moment already one third of the world's arable land is used for animal feed production, at the same time climate change is reducing the total amount of land usable for growing food.



MONOCROPS AND GMO'S

Industrial farming involves creating maximum sized fields of monocultures or monocrops; labour costs are minimal as the work is done by machines, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The producer plants specially developed export crops that are sold by big biotech companies. These genetically manipulated (GMO) plants are immune to the chemicals that are part of the deal: herbicides and pesticides that kill all other living organisms in the area. Each season the GM crop needs more chemicals and fertilizers. This system is profitable for a few years, until the farmland is completely exhausted. Because of the chemical pollution nothing can survive on the remaining soil, which is left to erode. The industrial farmland moves on: pushing more small farmers off their land, burning and cutting down more forest.

WILL GMO'S SAVE THE PLANET?

GM crops are being promoted by biotech corporations as a solution to the food insecurity that will result from climate change. We are told that GM technology will create plants that are resistant to droughts and other agricultural problems caused by climate change. What we are not told is that GM crops need pesticides and fertilisers, that GM plants contaminate regular plants, which creates pesticide resistance in insects and loss of crop varieties. Loss of biodiversity reduces an ecosystem's potential to adapt to climate change. GMO's are the problem, not the solution.

LANDGRABS

The push for land for fuel crops is already increasing, making the position of small traditional farmers even more insecure. A UN spokesperson has warned that 60 million people may soon become "agrofuel refugees". Agrofuel legislation is seen as one of the main causes of the 2007/8 food crisis when the prices of rice and corn doubled. To expand industrial agriculture to grow fuel is a dangerous idea.

HOW GREEN ARE BIOFUELS?

Biofuels, or to be more precise 'agrofuels', are presented as a green alternative for fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas). Most people have heard of ethanol from corn, or biodiesel from vegetable oil, which are suggested to help the transport sector cut CO2 emissions. Agrofuels are made from living organisms, trees and plants. They are considered 'renewable' and CO2 neutral, but many of the emissions caused by the production are often left out of the equations. In fact agrofuels cause even greater greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuels because entire ecosystems are destroyed to make space for fuel crops. -Furthermore, monocrops can't do without heavy use of petrochemical fertilizers-. To maximise profit, agrofuels are grown in totally unsustainable large scale monoculture plantations. Certain industries would need huge amounts of land to sustain their need for fuel, the aviation industry alone would use 58 million hectares. To add to this, competition for land between agrofuel crops and food crops have led to rising food and land prices and helped fuel the 2008 global food crises in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

WHO OWNS THE FOOD SEEDS?

Monsanto, Syngenta and Bayer, three agro-chemical giants own the rights of nearly all the GM crops. GMO's perfectly suit the corporate desire to patent seeds. Patented seed can be exclusively sold and are highly profitable. Especially for rural communities, genetic modification and seed patents will reduce access to seeds, causing more poverty, hunger, break-down of communities and environmental refugees. The latest challenge for the biotech-industry is the developing market for agrofuel crops and the processing of agrofuels

