

**Show Transcript  
Deconstructing Dinner  
Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY  
Nelson, B.C. Canada**

**March 15, 2007**

**Title: Vandana Shiva – Rice, Patenting of Life and Genocide**

**Producer / Host: Jon Steinman  
Transcriber: Alicia Grudzinskas**

*Jon Steinman:* And welcome to Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly program produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. My name's Jon Steinman.

Each week on this program we explore the history behind our food with the hope that an increased awareness of our food choices will allow us to eat in ways that are healthier for not only ourselves, but for the planet and for our communities.

On today's broadcast of Deconstructing Dinner we will hear segments of a lecture by one of the more recognizable names in the world of food security and food sovereignty, and that is Vandana Shiva, the founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology as well as the founder of the biodiversity conservation program known as Navdanya, both of which are based in New Delhi, India.

The subject of her lecture is biotechnology (otherwise known as genetic modification). This is of course an ongoing subject featured here on Deconstructing Dinner, and rightfully so I would say, given the Canadian food supply has only incorporated genetically modified crops into it since the mid 1990's. As the labels on our food do not require any indication of such use of ingredients, the exploration of this topic is essential to understand the benefits, risks, and agendas that accompany such widespread use of genetically engineered crops. It is said that over 85% of all processed foods in the grocery store contain genetically modified ingredients or in the case of meats, dairy and eggs, are from animals raised on genetically modified foods.

**increase music and fade out**

The segments that we will shortly hear on today's broadcast were recorded by the Necessary Voices Society in July of 2001 in Vancouver. The event was organized by a group known as the Basmati Action Group, who in 1998 was formed to orchestrate a North American wide boycott against the products of a company known as Rice Tec based in Alvin, Texas. The company made a strategic effort to patent Basmati Rice – a name that is certainly familiar to North Americans, but is a staple of the diet and livelihoods of many Indian and Pakistani farmers and eaters.

And while the recording featured on today's broadcast is from an event held in 2001, the content and issues raised have not changed at all, and in many cases, these concerns have only increased. There is also an inherent benefit to look *into* the past and see where it is we are coming from, and in doing so hope to better predict where it is we are going.

For those unfamiliar with the feature lecturer on today's broadcast, Vandana Shiva has been involved in the protection of ecosystems, farmers, and food security for well over two decades.

Shiva studied philosophy at the University of Guelph in the late 70's and moved on to complete her Ph.D in Quantum Theory Physics at the University of Western Ontario. Using her background in physics and her love of nature, she began questioning how science technology has impacted the environment, and this led her in 1982 to found the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology located in New Delhi, India. In 2001 Shiva also founded a program called Navdanya, formed to provide education and training on subjects such as biodiversity, food, biopiracy, sustainable agriculture, water and globalization.

In this first segment that we will take a listen to just shortly, Vandana Shiva describes the efforts by the company Rice Tec to patent basmati rice in the late 1990s. This effort was then later smothered by a mass-resistance of people around the world.

Shiva also shares information on the crisis of farmer suicides in India, that are, as she suggests, at the hands of the multi-national pesticide and seed companies. Shiva refers to it as a genocide, which as of today has claimed well over 40,000 lives.

And here's Vandana Shiva.

*Vandana Shiva:* Let me begin with where the basmati fight is, 1998 you might recall the patent was claimed by Rice Tec to have invented the basmati rice as they said an instant invention of a novel rice line and I joke sometimes and say even the bible gave seven days to God. (laughter)

Rice Tec's instantly. Of course, the data showed very clearly all they had was the rices from Pakistan and India which had been collected by Eric then moved to Fort Collins and they just used those aromatic rices for their breeding programme. But the claim had twenty elements, twenty claims. The first was about rice plants from the height of one foot to three feet tall. Grain of huge variation of length – elongation, quality because the two things that are really special about basmati is it literally doubles in terms of after- you know after cooking the grain is twice the length – the rice grain itself is. The aroma – even the aroma they had created – instantly.

The first thing we did on the basis of that patent was actually go to our courts and say our government had failed to protect the biological heritage of the country and centuries of farmer's breeding. The government was forced literally by a ruling of the Supreme Court to go and do something about it to challenge this patent. And the entire research establishment of India was put to the job of checking out what the local native traditional basmatris that primarily have been a result of women's breeding, how they differed in characteristics from these twenty claims of Rice Tec and it turned out they don't. They're absolutely identical.

And about that much material was sent to the US Patent Office. Rice Tec then agreed to withdraw three claims, and the three claims were related to the grain, not to the seed. You know, when the rice is in the husk, it will seed. When it is de-husked, you can sell it in stores and cook it, but you can't grow a plant out of it. So the seed patents they maintained for themselves. But the grain patent they said four of them we'll give up. And the government also came back and told the Supreme Court now we are happy. Four claims have been given up related to trade and since trade is the only thing that really matters, we are quite happy.

Of course, the fact is, trade matters because exporters can give them election funds and a tiny peasant of half acre doesn't – might give them a vote, but doesn't give them election funds. And we've reached the time, I think your country has and our country has, where people's votes don't count - the reason representative democracy was created was that it was supposed to be a way to beat money-power. That each person having a vote would sort out the clout that capital had in

society. And yet, in the last decade we've seen the money-power come right back as setting the terms of where our representative democracy is going.

The farmer's right to save seed, the government couldn't care about it. At that point I got into a rather horrible long flight and got in touch – there was a lady who'd come for one of my talks once – old woman from Texas – and she said she wanted to do something about this. So I said organize something and I'll come. So I went. And they've created a varium like the Basmati Action Group they created a Basmati Coalition and, basically, the slogan was, 'Hands off Basmati Rice'. And I went and we prepared a whole campaign. We even stood outside the headquarters of Rice Tec's, which was - you know how barren that state is. (laughter)

In the middle of all those oilfields and all, somewhere there's a headquarter of Rice Tec.  
(laughter)

And we literally created a huge, huge campaign to bombard the US Patent Office, saying you're supposed to reward innovation, here you're protecting piracy. And because there was so much data now available through the Indian research, we put it into the campaign documents. Interestingly inbetween I'd even been to Geneva to talk to the negotiators and the US Government had said very, very clearly, well, anything that exists anywhere else doesn't matter to us. Invention in the US is the only invention we really take seriously.

And that's related partly to the fact that the US at one time was a colony. And it grew by saying no to the UK patents, and stealing every one of them. There used to be someone called Slater I think his name was, who became the father of modern manufacture, and basically, he violated every British Patent Law and brought designs of the Ginning Machine and all the textile machinery to the US, set up the industrial plants.

If you look at the history of patents issued in the period, when the US had *just* managed to get independence and it's the only constitution that has the giving of patents as part of the constitution. But it's very interesting because the patents for steam engines two decades after Watt had worked on it. There's inventions of salt-making, centuries after people had been making salt. But anything that was done the first time in the US counted as an invention and that kind of carries on, except that *now*, what we are talking about is living material: plants, seeds, animals.

I think it was literally two days before the other decision in March that is a decision of the Federal Court of Canada on the Percy Schmeiser case, I think, two days before that the US Patent Office wrote to Rice Tec and said we find from the data available to us now that most of your claims are false in terms of inventions. That there is what is called in technical language, 'prior art' this has been done before. Of course it's been done before. The US Patent Office acted only because of the pressure of citizens – only because of that.

So at this point the three claims they've said they won't question – but those are very trivial claims, they're really about accessions. They don't give Rice Tec any part to prevent any farmer from sowing seed, growing out their crop, etc. We're still waiting to see what the reply of Rice Tec will be to the US Patent Office. But congratulations to everyone who's worked towards the getting the Basmati Patent revoked. It's been one big, dispersed movement.

And that's what's wonderful about our times, we don't always have to have one - a leader, a mass line, one book –yah, we can have many books, and just share the same concerns and the same principles about where we want to go and what was it we find totally outrageous about the institutions and laws that are being created to take away the little people half. Because that's all

the World Trade Organization rules are, that's all trade related intellectual property rights agreement of the WTO is, that's all the agreement on agriculture of WTO is. It's nothing but a mechanism to take from ordinary people what they have. And put it in the hands of corporation and miracle, miracle, miracle - it's happened before - you get growth. Of course you get growth.

I looked at figures two years ago of India – the Indian data showed four million tons of increased trade – in wheat in that case. And you look more closely two million tons went out, two million tons came back. There wasn't more wheat available to the people of India, it just that this transaction meant the same wheat was available at a much higher price. And meantime there had been scarcity, and meantime, the control over the food system had moved from the people to the Cargill's – and I'll talk more about that shift a little later.

But the other case that I think is really important and I really hope the Canadians will be as outraged about this as we have been is the case of a farmer in Saskatchewan, Percy Schmeiser. And I'm sure it's been reported, but unfortunately not enough is being done about it. It hasn't been turned into the kind of, illegitimate rights of corporations. In the case of Percy, Monsanto's RoundUp Resistant Canola contaminated his field. The courts accept that he did not buy the seed, they accept he did not take it from his neighbours, they accept that it has come through contamination, either through seeds falling off trucks that went past the farm, or through pollination. And yet, they're saying, a patent means no matter how a gene came to exist in a farmer's field, a farmer is guilty of infringement of a patent, which means theft, and piracy if he continues to grow his crop.

Now, I have worked for two and a half decades on environmental issues and, in Rio a principle that was enshrined into – part, you know, there were two major outcomes of the Rio Conventions – one was the Biodiversity Convention one was Climate Change. But even more important than these treaties, and both of them have been scuttled to some extent, the second one even more vigorously by President Bush - the two principles that came out of Rio are really significant principles and those were the principle of precaution, that if you don't have adequate data, hold it, don't act. We all act that way – we live by the principle of precaution, the precautionary principle. And the other is - the principle that has led to all environmental regulation, that the polluter pays, make the polluter pay. Every case I have fought in India on environmental issue is based on the polluter pays principle.

Now, if that was working in the case of RoundUp Resistant Canola in the Prairies, Monsanto should be paying the farmers whose fields their crop contaminated. What do we get? We get the polluter gets paid principle emerging out of patents. And Monsanto not only has patents on plant material and seeds, through contamination they actually manage to expand their ownership over the crops of farmers, who never bought the seeds from them. And that is one reason they are going overboard to tell us that everything is contaminated so therefore there is nothing we can do about it. Therefore we should just hand over to Monsanto and says our future, our food, our rice is in your hands forever.

Why do I mention Monsanto and rice? Because, Rice Tec was one, basmati. What Monsanto would like to own is the entire genome. They've got patent applications for it. They've Novartis, which merged with – and if you don't know who Novartis was – Novartis was formed by the merger of Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy and Astra and Zeneca merged to form Astrazeneca. Novartis joined with Astrazeneca last year to become Syngenta, and both Syngenta and Monsanto say they have – they are the first to have done a reading of the entire rice genome.

Now, you remember they used to do this in Colonial times. They go to Africa with a piece of paper, and, you know the map of Africa? Chop, chop, chop. Chop, chop, chop. That's how countries were divided. And the Germans said we'll take this, the French said, the Belgians said, the same, they divided it all up. Well, the only difference between those kind of maps created on paper and the genomic maps now is one is written into life forms and the other was written onto territory. But both are about territory in one way or the other, they are about colonies, *and* making the map becomes a way of owning the territory.

The patent on that map is, basically, an ownership title, and that ownership title is what the companies would like to have in their hands. So when they do an entire genome, first of all, they're not really doing any intellectual work, the computers are. I mean, the only reason they've had this huge race is, they're admitting it – they need faster computers. They don't need faster human beings. Because all you do is put in a bit of biological material at one end and you get the DNA map at the other, you get the genome map at the other. Now, you don't know what which gene does, all you know is a bit like a bar code, how it is structured, but you've tuned your computer to tell you that. So if anyone should be having IPR's it should be those huge computers.

But, the companies, the big companies are now rushing in to start owning the staples of the third world, you know. The first early patents were on cotton, they were on soya bean, they were on canola, but the next phase is rice and wheat, because that's what the majority of people in the world eat.

*Jon Steinman:* You're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner, as we listen to segments of a lecture given by India's Vandana Shiva, recorded at an event in July 2001 in Vancouver. Continuing on with Vandana Shiva's lecture, she speaks of the ways in which our own Canadian Government was, at the time of this recording supporting the spread of genetically modified crops around the world. This has been evident over the past year, has not changed.

And here's Vandana Shiva, who also illustrates the ways in which corporate control of food has been at the expense of nutrition and human health.

*Vandana Shiva:* Interestingly, your government is creating huge subsidies for these companies and I heard recently that, CEDA is giving a *huge, huge* grant to Monsanto to try out genetically engineered wheat – in China. Now, the genetically engineered rice, that they'd been going crazy about is what they call golden rice, and what I call jaundice rice. (laughter)

Because, you know, we do seed saving, the movement, for seed conservation we have in India, we have 250 varieties of rice on the farm, where we'll be starting this new college starting October. Our various community seed banks have saved about 2000 – we used to have 200,000 rice varieties, and we have black rices and red rices and we got *all kinds* of rices, but I've never seen a jaundice rice. Why do they want to make a yellow rice?

First they did a lot of PR work to see how nice golden rice would sound. And they actually wrote a paper in 'Nature,' supposed to be a scientific journal to say and finally a good label like golden rice and a good cause like saving 250 million vulnerable kids from blindness by having vitamin A in rice. You know, surely this will get the biotech campaigners off our backs. They didn't get us off their backs - for a number of good reasons. First, it's just a very bad idea.

Because even after, there are very big things – they spent a hundred billion dollars and all they've managed is to get the bacteria of petunia and to get genes from bacteria and petunia into the rice and to make it look yellow. At this point they don't even know whether it will really work. But

the aim is to get thirty micrograms of vitamin A equivalent produced in 100 grams of rice. And this will need another ten years of breeding with actual rices that people cultivate.

Now if you put that kind of money into bio-diversity conservation programmes, I'll just read out, what women of India anyway have, species that were wiped out by the herbicides of the green revolution, by the monocultures of industrial farming, my favorite are Arabian, those of you who are from Asia, Arab? You know, we have the pakor? We make these nice pakoras? Well, that has 10,000 micrograms per 100 grams. The amaranth - in South India particularly they use a lot of, greens from the field - varieties of amaranth, about 10, 20 varieties of amaranth. And our surveys show that in Bengal, in South India, in the Himalayan region, women will use up to 200 kinds of greens, so of them wild, some of them cultivated, all of them highly rich in vitamin A. Well, the amaranth varieties have 14,000 micrograms compared to 30. Now with 30, if you needed to eat your full day's requirement, of 760, you would either have to eat 2kg of rice, which you don't, or you would continue to have deficiency. Now, when they were told this they said yah, but we're not expecting them to eat only rice. We'll if you're not expecting them to eat only rice, why go through all this trouble? (laughter)

Yah? And they're not going to eat only rice and every nutrient doesn't have to be put into rice. Then let the plants that do a better job producing vitamin A do the job. The only thing is they can't patent an amaranth, they can't patent the drumstick tree. They can't patent the crops that women are growing, especially the open pollinated seed varieties that they are growing. And I have few copies of - I think one or two copies - of my series on the vitamin A. I called it, 'The Golden Rice Hoax'. Beginning, I called it, 'The Blind Approach to Blindness Prevention.' (laughter)

Because, every few weeks I get bombarded with this new propaganda. But the one that really entertained me heavily was the 30 - I think it was Michigan State University and the US AIDE was giving, I think it's 30 million dollars, to produce vitamin A in mustard - Golden Mustard they called it. But mustard is golden! (laughter)

And the other thing they forgot is that most of India - most of Northern India - where we eat, where you use mustard oil from the seed, we also eat the leaves. The best food is Sarson Ka Saag in winter. You come anywhere; Punjab, Haryana, UP, Sarson Ka Saag you get. Now that Sarson Ka Saag is very, very rich in vitamin A. Now, but the scientist who works on the oil seed doesn't even know there's a plant that has leaves in it.

And that's part of the crisis. We are putting our future into people who's gaze never went beyond a Petri Dish. They've never seen a field, they've never seen a plant, they've never seen a peasant.

Now, long before Monsanto did its reading of the Golden Rice genome, I remember there was this *huge* full page announcement in Financial Times saying they're giving away rice for free to the third world. I said, yah, it was never theirs to give away in the first place. We've been giving away rice for free and that's the only way to deal with rice. But, I read it very closely and they said they are in the process of reading the genome and when they have read the genome and when they have the patent on it, then they will allow subsistence farmers to have low cost royalty arrangements, and they will allow a few scientists to use it in the third world.

Why do they need the scientists to have royalty-free license fee arrangements? Because they want them to do their work - Monsanto doesn't know anything about rice. They've never worked on rice. 'Till they did biotech they'd only worked with chemicals like Agent Orange. Now they want to jump into rice, they've got to get rice breeders of the third world. And you're not going to get

them if you're going to tell them pay me a royalty each time you work with rice, because it's now mine, my property. But with this article, in the Financial Times, was this amazing illustration. There were women like me planting paddy – and then there were men in ties planting a patent.

And, I really think there is we've reach the – I mean, the stage where people really think there is no difference. You know, I'm actually here for a water conference and part of, you know, my next book is on water wars, and I've been reading everything the water privatizers write. And they say, "People have it wrong, water, like everything else in the world, is a totally substitutable commodity."

And then onwards they have their theory of privatization. So they just decide that paper, with a patent, is substitutable with the seed that actually gives you paddy. And since the paper has higher value, scientists with bigger salaries than the peasant woman who does the transplanting, the paddy that will come out of this will have a higher value. And somehow there'll be more food, and there'll be more, nutrition, and there'll be more magic in the world.

Well, that's exactly how the seed laws of India were changed in that report called, 'Seeds of Suicide'. It's really our monitoring of the new phenomenon of suicides. Indian peasants have never committed suicides. They've been through the toughest circumstances - they can get flooded out one year, have drought the next year, have a crop failure third year, they won't give up. But they're starting to give up now. And why are they giving up? Because part of globalization and trade liberalization meant that the corporations like Cargill, which has now been bought up for the seed sector by Monsanto, who are then – which is then buying up a lot of the Indian private seed companies, that they can go without any kind of regulation into villages and sell their seeds. And I have watched them use Guru Nanak the Sikh Guru as their salesman. I've seen them use Jagannath Puri, Lord Jagannath of Puri as their salesman, they've used Hanuman in south India, whichever god works better in whichever region is their salesman. And they always have a message about how this god is coming with a new seed, which is a miracle seed that is going to make them millionaires. A lot of people say why do farmers go in for it? I said my god, if your god is bringing you a message you jolly well go in for it. That's what gods are for. (laughter)

You don't question your gods and evaluate their message, you just believe it.

*Jon Steinman:* And you're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly program produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson British Columbia. If you miss any of today's broadcast, it will be archived on our website where more information and resources will also be provided. And that website is [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner), and today's show is listed under March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Vandana Shiva is the featured voice heard on today's broadcast, and her lecture was recorded in July 2001 in Vancouver by the Necessary Voices Society.

One of the most recent attempts at introducing genetically modified crops around the world, was following the 150 million dollar initiative announced by the Bill and Melinda Gates and Rockefeller Foundations, to help launch another Green Revolution in Africa. The green revolution refers to the introduction of chemical agriculture that first took place post-world war II, which, surprisingly enough, was too, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

The relationship between the Foundation and Canada has become most apparent this past February, following a well-publicized press conference held by Prime Minister Stephen Harper

and Microsoft founder Bill Gates. The event was held to announce a 111 million dollar pledge by the Canadian government to support the foundation's AIDS program.

And there is one company among many others that is posed to benefit from such injections of cash, and that company is Bayer. Now Bayer is an interesting company to introduce here on today's show because Bayer is involved in one of the greatest global food supply scandals in history. Just last year in 2006, world rice supplies were discovered to be contaminated with a genetically modified form of rice that had never been approved for use. And who was the company behind the creation of this rice, but Bayer. Following the contamination, food stocks were pulled off the shelves in European stores, and widespread global bans on US-produced rice were enacted. But Bayer has used religion to defend the contamination of the global rice supply. In a document submitted by the company, they indicate that the event was an act of god. A detailed report on this incident of rice contamination has been published by Greenpeace, and a link to that report can be found on the Deconstructing Dinner website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner)

### **soundbite**

*Jon Steinman:* But rice aside, and as will be mentioned in the next segment, Bayer was one of the many companies who following an announcement in 1997 launched an attack on the South African government for vowing to provide their citizens with inexpensive AIDS drugs, and of course Bayer's profits were threatened by such a decision. Bayer is also a company that produces many chemical pesticides and crop technologies that would certainly be part of the African green revolution that is also being funded by the Gates and Rockefeller foundations.

But the green revolution is said to be killing tens of thousands of people in places like India. And here's Vandana Shiva speaking on these issues.

*Vandana Shiva:* As a result of the shift in seed supply, in some places like Warangal, from subsistence food crops, guar, bagara, chili, pigeon pea, all the crops that people needed, into cotton for exports - or in Punjab, from non-hybrid cotton to hybrid cotton. What we have seen, first of all, is *total* area under - districts going under a hybrid seed. And hybrid seed can't be saved. You have to go buy it every year. Usually the companies don't even tell the peasants it can't be saved. So they try and save it and they get no crop next year, which is another reason for major distress. But in our monitoring we worked out that, linked to these new seeds is new use of pesticide - huge amount of pesticide use. And over the decade of globalization environmental pesticide use has increased 2000 percent. And in Punjab in the state of Bathinda where the highest suicides have been reported, 6000 percent increase in pesticide use.

Now, the green revolution came with subsidies; globalization doesn't have subsidies. This is all debts, which the farmers take from the same corporations and their agents which supply the seeds and the chemicals. So within two or three years the peasants know they can't pay back this debt. They've got 100,000 - 200,000, very often it's landless peasants taking land on lease thinking this miraculous becoming a millionaire will actually work. Instead they are left with debts they have never imagined. And then they are drinking the same pesticide to commit suicide.

It's totally related to the new seeds. Just going to show you another phenomena that's been happening is, if they're not totally desperate, and they think they might pay back partial debt, there's a new trade coming up. And it's a trade in body parts. We had a public hearing on seeds last year. Those are farmers who've sold their kidneys and they were told - and the same agents fixed the sales of kidneys, too - so don't worry, 30,000 rupees off your debt? You know, we'll



manage to work it out, I'll get someone. You donate your kidney, you'll get 30,000 rupees, and it's fine, it doesn't matter at all, you can keep working. They can never work again. Their wives become the main workers and here's an ill man for life, sitting around imagining this will help get rid of debt.

We actually had, last year - and the count we have now in three years time is 20,000 farmers and this is one tiny organization like ours, with only two people who can actually go out to the field and monitor. Well, I'm sure it's much higher. But 20,000 is our count of how many farmers have committed suicide. We had brought Percy down last year - this was before the ruling came against him - partly because we wanted Indian farmers to know exactly how brutal these patent laws and these new seed corporate monopolies can function like.

I basically call these technologies and property rights that are basically genocidal systems. They don't care how much they kill. But, you know, Monsanto doesn't care how many varieties of species they destroy with their RoundUp resistant crops. They don't care how many farmers die, as long as their profits work.

1984 - I remember 84 was a very, very horrible famine of Ethiopia and I - I just dashed down. I got into a flight. 30,000 rupees it cost me, I didn't know anybody. It was the time of the dictatorship. I thought Ethiopia was going to be like India where you get into the place, find someone to escort you, you can go to a rural area. I didn't realize you can't move out of your hotel. But I was travelling with a pioneer hybrid person and he was going to sell corn seeds, hybrid seeds. I said but they're having a drought. And he said so what? We don't care whether it grows or not. All we care is sales.

And, in fact, the more frequent the crop failure, the better the sales. The more contaminated your crops, the better the sales. So what we have is an ecological catastrophe that is a *tremendous* market opening - and that is why the corporations are thrilled about genetic pollution. Because it gets them the market monopoly they were seeking through patents in any case. And that is one reason why while we deal with patents we also have to deal with this problem of genetic pollution and really create the responsibility structures.

There is a convention on biologic diversity with the bio-safety protocol. It's been weakened like mad, but, it's still there and, I don't think humanity's about finished agendas, you know. It's about pendulum swings. You swing one way and then you swing the other way. And I think the pendulum swing in terms of patents is right now on our side. I give you the example of basmati - we kind of 90 percent won that case. We won the Neem case - the Neem Patent - we had that revoked last year. But the one that I'm really excited about is the AIDS drug case.

On the one hand, you remember the pharmaceutical industry threatened and sued the South African government and then they threatened the Brazilian government for making low cost drugs available. They even threatened India for having a law that allows low cost production of drugs that is supplying Africa. The AIDS drugs are 200 dollars a year's therapy of retro-virals compared to the 15,000 that you have to pay through the patented regime in the United States.

Just as an aside, you know this big tamasha they've just had at the UN, where they said these companies would like to reduce the rate from 15,000, and all of us are being asked to pay our public money? It's a subsidy to the companies, which are otherwise in trouble. Because the reason the drugs are that costly is because of the patents. The place to fix the pricing issue of drugs is get rid of patents in essential medicine. Instead, they want to preserve to patent regime, and say, and Kofi Annan goes out of his way to ask everyone with a begging bowl please give us

money so we can make these rich companies maintain their wealth while drugs reach at a lower cost to the people.

So our public taxes are being used to dismantle the public health care system and yet subsidize – but they're not getting too far, because in the last two weeks we've had a huge campaign, the Trips Council was meeting on the twentieth, and part of what our agenda was, to get the US to back off the case that they started against Brazil because Brazil had a strategy to cure AIDS. And, the US was saying this was violative of the trade related intellectual property rights – let people die, but let the companies prosper. And because of the citizen's campaign the US - for the first time ever - the US has withdrawn a case in WTO – only because of citizens.

So, that's the third victory, and this is big, because this is about the dispute settlement mechanism collapsing. Mike Moore has just said two days ago that if globalization and WTO doesn't enlarge it's going to collapse. Now, that's exactly what these big companies – you know, the reason I got stuck with patents – why, why is a physicist like me working on patents and biotech and stuff like that? Because some of these companies at a meeting in '87 said that, by the turn of the century there are going to be only five of them, that they were living the struggle of the cancer cell – they've got to get bigger and bigger and bigger otherwise they don't survive. Now, WTO is the same logic. It has to grow bigger and bigger and bigger, take water and take health and take education, otherwise it won't survive. Well, it's not doing too well even with its old agenda and I really feel as far as intellectual property rights are concerned, they're not going to be able to continue pushing it further – they're just not. I think people are going to be able to get these monopolies back off. Monopolies in the area of agriculture through patents on seeds, monopolies in the area of health through patents on medicine, and I think these movements will just continue to grow – how many people were involved in patents on seeds issues a decade ago – look how many involved now. Look at the *millions* of people who got involved in the drug patenting issue, because of the AIDS debate.

But there are other areas of WTO which we really need a shrinkage about. When we came to Seattle our call was, 'No New Round, Turn Around', and the call for the Civil Society is, "WTO Shrink or Sink". And we've identified intellectual property rights and agriculture as two major areas, which they need – really need – to get out of. This does not belong to them. Let me just tell you about what happens when agriculture for example is governed by WTO rules. Last year, the WTO ruled on the basis of a dispute – you know how the WTO – they keep saying WTO has teeth – now, I'm waiting for the day it only has dentures. (laughter)

But the teeth are supposed to be these disputes that countries bring against each other and, on the basis of the disputes, the WTO rules, and when the WTO rules, a country has the right to have trade sanctions against other countries. And people are so scared of losing a little bit of trade and exports - they give up everything to adjust to a more liberalized trade regime. You know, the US took India to the WTO Courts on restrictions on imports of a lot of commodities including all of agriculture – we don't have free imported agriculture. And the US said this was illegal and the WTO said yes, it's illegal, and the US can bully us, and in a fascinating arrangement, which was a letter written between the US Deputy Secretary of Commerce and our Deputy Secretary of Commerce during that big hijack of Indian Airlines plane in Afghanistan where everyone was busy watching – will the people come back? will the people come back? – this arrangement was made that we would be forced to remove all restrictions on first of April this year.

Well, in some areas we've had to remove restrictions last year, and, I'll just run through the figures for you - oilseeds is one because, you know, with the Europeans not importing genetically engineered soya they were stuck with so much soya, they had to send it all over. So they literally

arm twisted India to import genetically engineered soya, change our import restriction laws. Within a year, soya imports increased by 300 percent. What does that mean domestically? About a million small, tiny virgin oil mills where we do crude oil extraction at the village level, where we take our oilseed, get it extracted in front of our eyes, the oilcake is fed to the cattle. We have the purest of oil you can imagine – all of them have closed up.

How did they work it out? Not just by dumping all this on, but by also creating a law that said no open oil sale would be allowed for safety reasons, as if that pure oil in front of eyes was killing us. In addition to that, it's always made to look like farmers gain when a country exports, but it's not true. It's not true for Canada, it's not true for the US, it's not true for India when India exports. Last year soya prices dropped from 8 dollars 40 a bushel to 4.2, to half the price, even while there was an increase of 300 percent exports to India. The US farmers were getting *half* the price while the volume of exports was growing. The only reason they justify exports is farmers will do better. Farmer's incomes are falling, somehow if there's more exports, farmer's incomes will rise. Canadian farmers are constantly told this by your government.

The impact in India – US farmers lost half their income – the oilseed farmers in India lost *all* their income. We've had riots, we've had shootings, we've had shootings in Madhya Pradesh, twelve people killed, Sira in Karnataka, three people killed, because when you're losing your livelihood, absolutely, people will protest. Earlier, it used to be the case that, you're in a democracy, you protest, the government says yah, yah, yah, the price is too low, we'll change the price. WTO says you can't manage the price, let the global market manage the price. And so the only thing governments can do is shoot and kill their people. They did it in Guatemala to those young kids. They're going to do it again, now, in Genoa. They're going to shoot more and more people because protest has stopped being a way of getting change in regimes and laws and rules.

WTO was about creating a structure of total insularity - doesn't matter how many people on the streets – that insular system carries on. But of course it can't carry on forever, well everything collapses.

*Jon Steinman:* And you're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner. A reminder that more information on the topics discussed on today's broadcast will be available on our website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner).

We're currently listening to segments from a lecture given by India's Vandana Shiva, recorded in July 2001 in Vancouver.

One quick mention on the topic of the African green revolution mentioned just earlier. There is an event taking place on this subject on Monday March 26<sup>th</sup> in Ottawa. The event is titled, Green Revolution – Whose Revolution, and will feature panelists discussing the question of whether industrial agriculture and genetic engineering will benefit African farmers in light of the 150 million dollar injection by The Gates and Rockefeller foundations. The event is being supported by a number of Canadian organizations, and again, that event is March 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm at the Ottawa Congress Centre, and you can find more information on the event by visiting the website for the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network [www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca).

In this final segment of Vandana Shiva's lecture, she explains the impact trade agreements have had on starvation and famine, and she also speaks on the topic of public money ending up in the hands of the multi-national corporations who are fueling such global crises. Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently announced a one billion dollar injection of money for Canadian farmers as a result of what he calls high costs of production. But as is discussed often on Deconstructing

Dinner, the high costs of production are a result of prices set by the large agriculture and food corporations, who are making record profits. Farmers on the other hand are racking up record losses. So where will the \$1 billion end up eventually, well, back in the pockets of these companies. And that \$1 billion is yes, your taxes.

*Vandana Shiva:* Indian people are paying four times more for wheat and rice today than we were five years ago. And while, for example, the people are paying 7000 a ton for wheat, that same wheat is being made available by the government – and this is allowed and encouraged by the international agencies – for 4000 rupees – half the price. The Cargill's get it for exporting it half the price, and that is legitimate, but people getting food at 4000 rupees a ton is not legitimate. For rice, it's 11,000 is what people are paying per ton, and Cargill's getting it at 5000.

You would not have trade, unless trade was subsidized. You could not have monopolies, unless monopolies were subsidized. And all this is working only because our money, our public money, is being used against our will as a major new corporate subsidy, either for exports or for imports or for patent monopolies. And that's where I really believe we need to move into the next round of mobilization, where we basically say our money will be used on our terms, not for corporations, but for people. And, if it means changing the rules of WTO, they'd better be changed because that's where the errors are. If it means changing patent regimes, they'd better be changed. You can't keep saving the corporations by squeezing society more and more and more. I think it's time for us to say that game is no more on - public money for public welfare, not for corporate subsidy.

And I think, in this country more than any country, because you do have huge public welfare and therefore there's huge public wealth to be redirected, if the biotech industry prospers in the next few years it will be because the Canadian government joins the US government in creating huge subsidies. One other major subsidy that comes into play is - all the time - is food emergencies, like the Orissa cyclone, the Honduras cyclone, all of these are used to sell the GM food that no one's buying – and, your money, again, is used by CETA to dump stuff you don't want. We did the analysis on the Orissa food aide and it was all genetically modified corn and soya in a rice eating area called Orissa. And they said okay, we'll give a little Jagrian spices with it to make it edible. You know, we have the best of foods, we have so much surpluses, we have now 60 million tons of grains rotting in our gau daans because of these crazy systems that are preventing people from having access to the food that farmers have grown.

And right now, the thing we are working on, and any of you want to help on this, you're very welcome, we're starting a farmer's market, not a market, it's going to be mobile. But literally we are going to take tractor on tractor on tractor into the city where people are paying four times more. The farmers are getting one third of what they were, it makes no sense. We're just going to get the grain straight from farmer's field into people's kitchens, and we're creating this alliance between women's groups and the slums and the farmer's groups we work with. And, of course, it will mean that for the next few months we've got to figure out how many laws we must violate to do this, because they've made sure our mobility doesn't work, the mobility for Cargill is absolute. But we took a commitment in 1991 under the Bija Satyagraha, that we're not ever going to follow patents on seeds, we're going to violate them everyday.

The only reason I started Navdanya was to have a system to say we will not cooperate with these immoral, unjust laws. And I think every immoral, unjust law that is in the international system and in our national systems needs to be challenged, needs to be changed, we have to keep our future in our hands, otherwise it won't be. Thank you. (applause)

*Jon Steinman:* And that was Vandana Shiva, the founder of the Research Institute for Science Technology and Ecology and Navdanya, both based in New Delhi, India. More information on Vandana can be found on the Deconstructing Dinner website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner). That recording is courtesy of the Necessary Voices Society who recorded Vandana in July 2001 in Vancouver, and that recording and more can be found on their website at [necessaryvoices.org](http://necessaryvoices.org)

One of the companies mentioned on today's broadcast was Bayer, and so rounding off today's broadcast we will explore some of the promotional material the company uses to market itself to the world. For those just tuning in, Bayer is the company implicated in the recent contamination of the global supply of rice following the illegal introduction of a genetically modified rice variety that the company had been conducting field trials on in the United States. The contamination has had an incredible impact on the financial well-being of farmers around the world. Bayer is also one of a number of companies who, in 2001, attempted to stop the South African government from offering its citizens with inexpensive AIDS drugs. But it's not as though the company has a pretty history anyway. Bayer was part of the large conglomerate IG Farben, the company who during the era of Nazi Germany, manufactured the gases used to exterminate millions of human beings in concentration camps. The company was also the creator of Heroin and Mustard Gas. Bayer's division dealing with agriculture is known as Bayer CropScience, and located on their website is a promotional video for that division, and here are audio segments of that video.

*audio clip for Bayer CropScience:* Agriculture the way it used to be decades ago in many parts of the world. The farmer could only look on helplessly as the fruits of his labour were devastated. It was a hard enough job without such disasters; sixteen hours of weeding was normal then. No wonder many farmers enthusiastically welcomed chemical crop protection. It saved their harvests, relieved them of the arduous job of weeding and reduced their labour costs. Many farmers were only too glad to rely on chemical aides, and for some, it was too much of a good thing.

Today, however, with environmental awareness increasing, more and more farmers are learning from the past and combining these lessons with the latest research findings and modern technology.

(chirping bird starts and continues behind Bayer announces from this point)

Crop protection means mechanical protection, such as attaching adhesive strips to fruit trees, and biological protection, such as using insects or bacteria to combat pests. Or, biotech protection, such as using pheromones which attract male pests into traps like these and break the reproduction cycle, and, of course, chemical crop protection, with constantly improving and more selective products.

In many cases, this is the only way to win the battle against pests, especially when crops are already infested. Crop protection, as part of a system of integrated crop management, is implemented when failure to act would result in financial losses. This means that pest infestation first has to be identified, which in turn means that the farmer needs a good early warning system.

Bayer has therefore developed a diagnostic device to help the farmer spot fungal diseases in cereal crops at an earlier stage. The farmer doesn't use the crop protection agent until damage from pests or weeds is so severe, that the anticipated financial loss would be greater than the cost of treatment. In this way, integrated crop management maintains the balance between ecological and economic necessity.

*Jon Steinman:* And in wrapping up today's broadcast of Deconstructing Dinner, here is one more audio clip from a video also produced by Bayer. And this one is rather frightening in the way the video portrays the company in a very god-like way starting with the introduction itself. In the background is a familiar song with the repeating lyrics, "how wonderful life is that you're in the world." Now, presumably, it's themselves that they're referring to. Take a listen.

*audio clip for Bayer:* (background music, Elton John's 'Your Song', played throughout Bayer clip)

*Bayer Announcer:* Men learned how to use fire.

We invented the wheel.

And he invented machines and computers.

And Bayer invented Aspirin, one of the most versatile drugs of our time.

Bayer researchers have since developed many new products for our daily lives.

Bayer drugs have frequently set therapeutic standards.

They bring new joy to people by improving their sexual health, for example.

Bayer Corp. Protection products help safe guard harvests all over the world.

Bayer plastics inspire creativity - not only furniture designers get carried away.

Bayer invented the hi-tech material Makrolon. CDs are just one of its many applications.

But what problems will we face tomorrow?

What will we know tomorrow?

We have to take paths no one has taken before. We have to extend our research into new dimensions. The genetic code has been deciphered. This will help us find new ways to treat diseases, even cancer. We're developing specific diagnostics so that doctors can prescribe treatments custom tailored for each patient.

We want to strengthen plants bio-technically -

- so that they can defend themselves against pests, for example.

We're working on the cultivation of more nutritious plants.

Our target is to improve plants genetically so that they need less water.

And perhaps, one day, plants will provide raw materials for drugs.

(music fading out)

*Jon Steinman:* And that was a segment of a promotional video produced by the company Bayer. It's interesting to point out the connection between the content of the clip and the lyrics of the music, as that last segment ended with a reference to the company's mission to *improve plants*, as mentioned earlier their efforts to improve rice, ended up in the recent contamination of the global rice supply with their unapproved genetically modified rice. And what was the lyric following the reference to the company's approach to improving plants, it was this and I quote, "but now that it's done, I hope you don't mind."

You can view the video and learn more about the topics covered on today's broadcast by visiting the Deconstructing Dinner website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner)

(music – Elton John's 'Your Song')

### **ending theme**

*Jon Steinman:* That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, produced and recorded at Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman.

I thank my technical assistant Bob Olsen. The theme music for Deconstructing Dinner is courtesy of Nelson-area resident Adham Shaikh.

This radio program is provided free of charge to campus/community radio stations across the country. And should you wish to financially contribute to this program, we invite you to offer your support through our website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner) or by dialing 250-352-9600.

Till next week.