

foodwatch e.v. · brunnenstraße 181 · d-10119 berlin

The Rockefeller Foundation
President
Dr. Judith Rodin
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York
10018-2708
USA

January 6th, 2009

Dear Dr. Rodin,

we are a German consumer rights organisation focusing on consumer interest in safe and quality food. We recently commissioned a report on the Golden Rice project which is supported by your foundation. The report has revealed that several questions remain open and that there is good reason for doubt about this project.

The most worrying fact is that tests involving Chinese schoolchildren were planned in 2008 without the project having obtained the necessary permission from the Chinese government. Other issues concern a lack of transparency and the unavailability of technical data, and major inconsistency in communications from the Humanitarian Board regarding risk assessment.

For your information, we are attaching herewith the dossier "The campaign for genetically modified rice is at the crossroads". This review is based on information found on the Humanitarian Board website (as well as some direct communication with the Board spokesperson), recently published literature, Tufts University statements on tests involving schoolchildren, and some reports in the media.

All in all, there are many signs that a serious industrial campaign is being carried out to support the technology behind Golden Rice; this effort ignores the standards needed for a truly humanitarian project. It is not transparent nor does it enable public participation and the information it releases is biased. It is hard to believe that this project is realistically searching for adequate and sustainable solutions to combat vitamin A deficiency (VAD).

In light of recent developments, we urge you to re-examine this project and its intentions. Considering that VAD can be combated with other increasingly successful methods and

that the prevailing era of postgenomics exhibits new and unpredictable levels of complexity in gene regulation, it might be time to reshape this project and identify more efficient and less controversial ways to combat VAD.

We look forward to receiving your comments at your earliest convenience.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thilo Bode', written in a cursive style.

Thilo Bode
Managing Director

Attachments

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Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
PO Box 23350
Seattle, WA 98102
USA

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