

Monsanto Has Brazil in Their Hands

Contributed by Flávio Rocha
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The Brazilian population was surprised last April with the speed that Congress voted to allow soy growers to plant Genetic Modified seeds and scientists to conduct stem cell research.

The President of the Congress, Severino Cavalcanti, a conservative Catholic from the Northeast, made several public speeches against the stem cell research, but he introduced the bill to be voted on a Monday evening. An interesting fact, as most deputies only arrive in Brasília on Tuesday morning.

Unfortunately, the Brazilian media did not publicize details of the bill. For political reasons, the focus was only on the stem cell issue and very little on the Genetic Modified Organisms (GMO) liberalization.

It was a huge victory for Monsanto, the multinational that controls the selling of GMO seeds in many countries, and a big disappointment for the environmentalist groups such as the Green Peace, which proposes to continue researching the consequences of the genetic modified food consumption in humans and on the environment before it is liberated.

Before becoming President, Lula had declared that he was against the use of GMOs. Now that he is in power, his position has changed. Lula signed the bill on Holy Thursday, making it almost impossible for environmentalists and groups to organize protests.

Not satisfied with official approval to sell its seeds, Monsanto managed to have the whole staff from Embrapa, the Brazilian Department for Agricultural Research, fired and replaced with researchers who are pro-agribusiness.

That could happen because the Agriculture Minister, Roberto Rodrigues, is an agribusiness man very connected to some corporations and the Environment Minister, Marina Silva, has not found support in the Brazilian Government.

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