



SIN MAÍZ NO HAY PAÍS

Mexico City, September 29, 2023.

**Mr. Ambassador Kenneth Lee Salazar
Embassy of the United States of America
Present.**

We are writing to you to make some observations regarding the dispute panel requested by your country in relation to the decree of February 13, 2023, which refers to the prohibition of genetically modified corn (GM corn) for the production of masa and tortilla, as well as the gradual substitution of GM corn for animal feed and any other human consumption.

We would be grateful if you could pass on our comments to your government.

1. It is important to understand that Mexico's relationship with corn is very different from that of the United States. Here corn is the main food and is consumed up to three times a day.
2. For the dispute panel, the United States has emphasized its request for scientific evidence showing that genetically modified corn is harmful to health. We understand that during the consultation stage U.S. officials have been presented with an extensive dossier containing numerous scientific articles showing that glyphosate - the agro-toxin inseparable from 90 percent of the GM corn planted in the United States - causes a range of damages to environmental and human health. Apparently, this has not been duly analyzed by your country's representatives.

The evidence of the damage caused by glyphosate, in particular the generation of some types of cancer in those who have contact with this chemical, is shown not only in the scientific literature, but also in the numerous lawsuits filed by U.S. citizens against the Bayer-Monsanto corporation, which have been won by plaintiffs.

It is striking that even with this evidence, the U.S. government rejects Mexico's proposal to carry out joint research to determine the damage that could be

caused by the consumption of transgenic corn in food on a constant and long-term basis, taking into account the way it is consumed in Mexico, where corn is the fundamental food.

3. On the other hand, as you may know, thousands of people have demonstrated in your country against the use of transgenic corn in the food chain and demanded that the presence of these corn products be made explicit through labeling.

The reason for this demand stems from the many cases of allergies, autism and other diseases in children, attributed to the consumption of these corn varieties in the food chain, and to the agrochemicals present during cultivation and harvesting.

Another aspect to highlight is the exponential increase in cases of obesity and diabetes in your country (and ours), which are associated with the consumption of bottled soft drinks sweetened with high fructose syrups that are usually derived from this GM corn, and also with the consumption of high volumes of starches, since these corn varieties were developed to fatten animals. The consequences of the malnutrition problems caused by agribusiness and the ultra-processed food industry, since they go hand in hand, became a crisis in your country (and ours) during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture himself, Mr. Tom Vilsak, has stated, the serious malnutrition problems suffered by the U.S. population became evident during that pandemic.

That is why Mexico's stance has been supported in the United States and Canada, as well as in other countries that are suffering the effects of the consumption of these ultra-processed products. Very soon, health budgets will not be able to cover the cost of the diseases they generate.

4. We would also point out that Mexico's restrictions do not refer to imports per se, but to the quality of the product. We refuse to use, at any stage of the food chain, corn that does not have the quality we have traditionally consumed. That is the point. We know, moreover, that there are U.S. producers willing to sell non-GM corn to Mexico if requested.

For these reasons (and more which we could offer), we ask you to tell your government that the people of Mexico will not tolerate being forced to eat what U.S. citizens themselves reject, all under the pretext of a trade agreement.

5. We remind you that corn is eaten every day in Mexico directly in the form of nixtamalized corn tortillas (more than 300 million tortillas every day), as well as

tamales, pozol, gorditas, tlacoyos, elotes, pozoles, atoles, esquiate, tejuino, bocoles, codzitos and polcanes and hundreds of other preparations.

Mexico is the center of origin and of the continuous diversification of corn.

This diversity of corn is Mexicans' heritage, but it is also something the world depends on for food. The dozens of breeds and thousands of varieties are adapted to the most diverse ecosystems and climates, which is invaluable today when we are suffering the consequences of climate change, caused, in part, by the agroindustrial production model imposed by a handful of companies protected, often, by the U.S. government.

Instead of trying to force Mexico to accept GM corn for use in food products and livestock feed, your government would do well to encourage the production of non-GM corn, which could improve the health of your own population. But that is for you to consider.

It is incumbent upon us as citizens of Mexico to actively defend our right to eat healthy food, and in particular a healthy tortilla, with good quality corn free of agrottoxins, since this is our principal food. But, above all, it is up to us to defend our sovereignty.

Sincerely

National Campaign Without Corn There is No Country

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