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Bill Gates Foundation Buys 500,000 Shares of Monsanto

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The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has purchased 500,000 shares of Monsanto stock. Monsanto is the world's largest producer of genetically modified food, which has been tied to numerous health ailments such as sterility and infant mortality.

Monsanto has already negatively impacted agriculture in African countries. For example, in South Africa in 2009, Monsanto's genetically modified maize failed to produce kernels and hundreds of farmers were devastated. According to Mariam Mayet, environmental attorney and director of the Africa Centre for Biosafety in Johannesburg, some farmers suffered up to an 80% crop failure. While Monsanto compensated the large-scale farmers to whom it directly sold the faulty product, it gave nothing to the small-scale farmers to whom it had handed out free sachets of seeds. "When the economic power of Gates is coupled with the irresponsibility of Monsanto, the outlook for African smallholders is not very promising," said Mayet.

Monsanto's aggressive patenting practices have also monopolized control over seed in ways that deny farmers control over their own harvest, going so far as to sue-and bankrupt-farmers for "patent infringement." Monsanto was declared company of the year by Forbes magazine in 2009, despite its history of agricultural abuses. Monsanto has also been accused of dumping toxic waste in residential areas, resulting in a variety of severe health disorders.