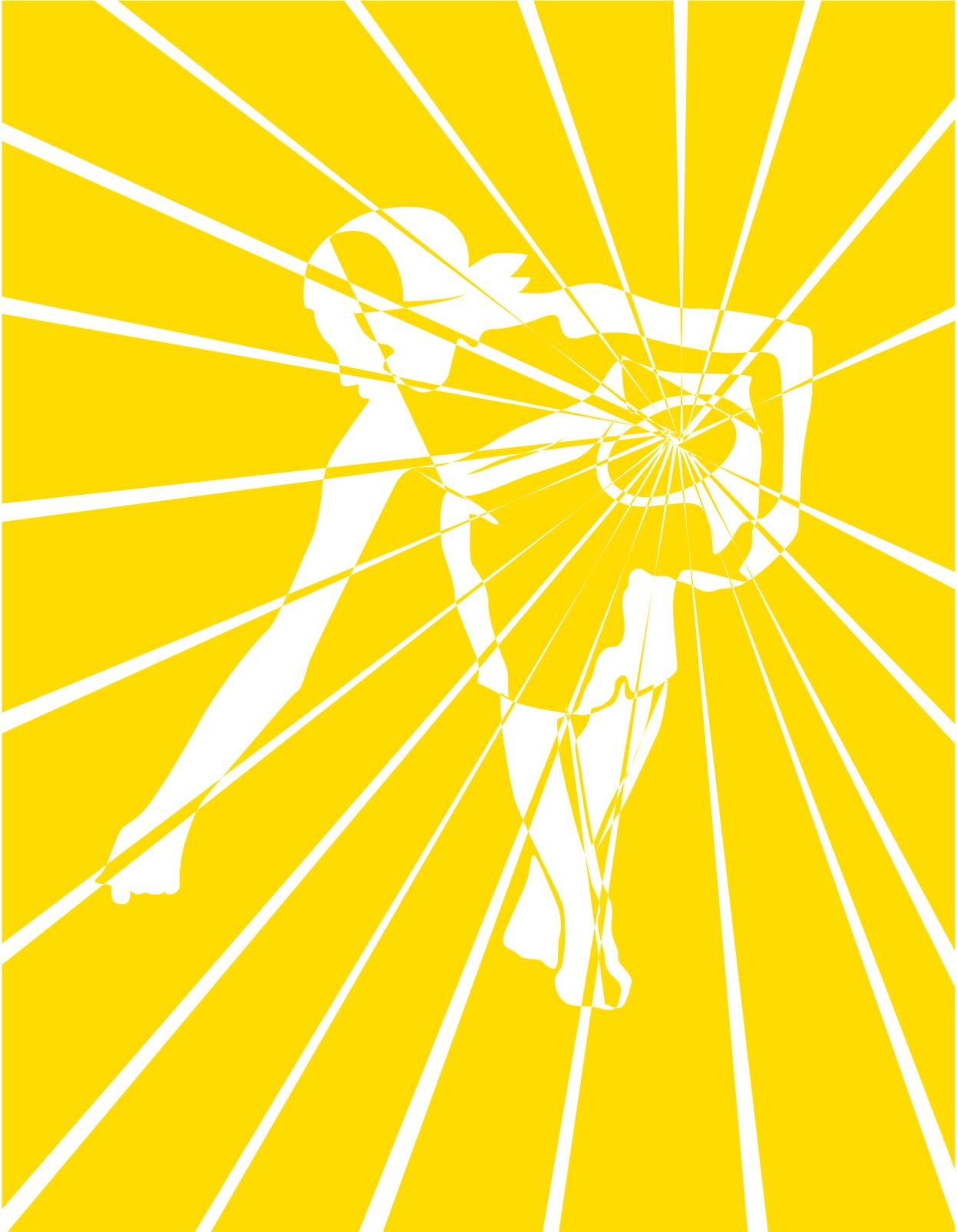


RAF

Rural Advancement Foundation International



Annual Report 1998-99

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President's Message

It has become a pattern in RAFI's Annual Reports to announce that the year just ended has been the busiest and most eventful ever. As tiresome as this is to say, it is an unavoidable description of our fiscal year that closed on August 31st 1999.

If downloads from RAFI's website are any indication, the impact of RAFI's work has quadrupled, and demands on staff time have increased accordingly.

Much of the new interest was provoked by the "Terminator," RAFI's name for more than 30 patents on genetic engineering technologies that render seed sterile at harvest time. Toward the end of 1998, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) agreed that its 16 member institutions would refuse to commercialize the technology. A committed chorus of prominent individuals (including Maurice Strong and M.S. Swaminathan) and governments (from Argentina and Peru to India and Uganda) came out against the Terminator. RAFI launched a round of discussion with 130 governments, in an effort to secure a global ban on the field use of the technology. Responding to the protests of many Civil Society Organizations, two leading biotech companies, AstraZeneca and Monsanto, announced that they are abandoning their research on seed sterility. In the first half of 1999, RAFI expanded its analysis of trait-control technologies, and published a study on "Traitor Tech." The report argues that the ability to control seed germination is, perhaps, less commercially-potent than the ability to switch off other important crop traits, simply by denying farmers access to an enhanced herbicide.

During 1998/99, RAFI also maintained its focus on biopiracy, and successfully forced back new monopoly claims in Australia and elsewhere. Work is now well underway in developing a Biopiracy Primer for CSOs and governments. As part of the primer, RAFI and the Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Network released a unique and colourful map linking the diversity of cultures with the diversity of ecosystems. It has already been widely distributed at intergovernmental negotiations and seminars.

Although the workload increased dramatically during 1998/99, the size of RAFI's staff did not. Mindful of the risks involved in expansion, and concerned to maintain RAFI's

'fighting trim,' the Board agreed to increase the organization's ranks by one person. Following an exciting search for new staff that took much of 1999, I am absolutely delighted to report that we have succeeded in persuading Silvia Ribeiro in Montevideo, Uruguay and Julie Delahanty in Ottawa, Canada to join RAFI's staff. Both bring remarkable international research and writing experience to RAFI, and add considerable breadth to our political work and analysis.

There have also been departures. After four years filled with accomplishment, Edward Hammond left RAFI in mid-1999 to pursue an academic career. Jean Christie, who joined the RAFI staff in 1992 after years on the RAFI Board, has announced that she will gradually pare back her time with RAFI beginning in 2000, to devote time to other interests that work with RAFI makes impossible. Jean is one of the RAFI "originals" and can trace her involvement back to our founding in 1977. We will miss Jean and Edward very much, but intend to keep them involved in any way we can.

At the end of our fiscal year, rounding out a year of changes, RAFI and its sister organization RAFI-USA agreed to streamline our common work. Beginning in January 2000, RAFI-USA staff member Hope Shand, who has always worked closely with RAFI, will formally join RAFI's staff. Our long and close links to RAFI-USA will continue as ever.

As President of RAFI, I want also to thank those individuals who have helped us so much over the year as volunteers. Chief among them are Kevan Bowkett and Diego Martino, who have done much to improve the quality of our research and translations.

There is no danger that the new millennium will find RAFI under-worked. As our fiscal year closed, we had embarked upon new research on such diverse topics as nanotechnology and biological warfare. The year 2000 will also be filled with work related to FAO's International Undertaking, patent monopolies, biopiracy, and the proposed new Round of WTO negotiations. To follow RAFI's work in the coming year, you may consult RAFI's updated website, at www.rafi.org, or sign on to our fast-growing electronic listserver.



Sven Hamrell
President, Board of Trustees

Programme Report

1998/99 was a year of dramatic consolidation in the life industries, and astonishing breakthroughs in the life sciences. The pace of these developments, the ever-widening use of intellectual property to monopolize "life", and a growing awareness of new technologies we had hardly contemplated, required RAFI to follow events closely and to respond more rapidly than ever before - with research, public education, and policy proposals.

For RAFI, it was a year dominated by the spectre of the "Terminator" and "Traitor" technologies, by "Crucible II", and life industry monitoring. It was also a year of organizational consolidation and development, in which we enhanced our research capacity with support from short-term research staff, and deepened our working relationships with civil society organizations and governments worldwide. We increased our use of the internet for global campaigning; nearly tripled the use of RAFI's website; and broadened our base of financial support. Perhaps most importantly, we illustrated like never before that we can maintain our unique identity and integrity, while "engaging" those whose policies and perspectives we disagree with.

ACCOLADES FOR RAFI

During 1998/99, RAFI received welcome public recognition for its work. On December 15th, 1998, RAFI's Executive Director Pat Mooney received the United Nations Association (Canada) Pearson Peace Medal in Ottawa, from Canada's Governor General Romeo LeBlanc. It cited his work in "recognizing the dangers of agricultural technology before the rest of the world." In April 1999, Hope Shand also accepted an award on RAFI's behalf from "Project Censored," at a ceremony in New York. It was conferred for having broken the story on the Terminator technology.

Issue I:

Biodiversity & Food Security

In March 1998 RAFI discovered that a US patent had just been granted to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and seed company Delta and Pine Land, on a genetic engineering technique whose sole purpose is to produce sterile seed.

RAFI soon dubbed it the "Terminator". One could hardly have invented a technology that better illustrates the bankruptcy of corporate agricultural research - either to provide "food security" for the world's hungry, or to enhance sustainable agriculture for the world's farmers. Over the months that followed our discovery of the Terminator, we uncovered another 31 similar patents, which we dubbed "Traitor" technologies. Held by virtually all the giant "life industries", these patents, like the Terminator, cover genetic engineering processes that link the expression of specific genetic traits to the application of chemicals. Putting these pieces together, RAFI soon saw the writing on the wall. If quick action were not taken, farmers around the world would be faced with a whole new generation of high-tech seeds that were sterile, utterly dependent on company-produced chemicals to express their desired characteristics, or both. They would mark the next step on a fast track to worldwide bio-serfdom for farmers, and to genetic erosion for agriculture. RAFI's food security work this year was overwhelmingly dedicated to research on these technologies, and to a campaign to expose them and to block their release into farmers' fields.

Terminator and "Traitor" Technologies:

On discovering the first Terminator patent last year, RAFI launched a global campaign to ban the technology and to have the patent rejected on the grounds of public morality in the 87 patent jurisdictions where it is claimed. This year, as RAFI unearthed and analysed the new "Traitor" patents, we published our findings in a RAFI Communiqué, news releases, and RAFI GenoTypes that were disseminated worldwide. RAFI worked for the first time with the internet social activist network "Global Response", preparing educational materials on the Terminator for their website, to be used internationally by teachers and students in primary and secondary schools. The result was 4,000 faxes from 40 countries to the Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), urging him to take action against the Terminator.

When we learned that USDA was negotiating with Delta and Pine Land to grant them an exclusive license on the Terminator patent, we developed a page on RAFI's website where people were invited to send personalized e-mail messages to the US Secretary of Agriculture, opposing the patent and the proposed licensing arrangement. By the end of August, over 7,600 messages from 72 countries had been sent to USDA.

RAFI staff conducted scores of TV, radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews on Terminator Technology, resulting in high profile coverage by national and international media houses around the world. Reaction to the publicity was swift both in the scientific community and the public. Citizens' groups from Stockholm to San Francisco and from Argentina to Zimbabwe took up the issue of the Terminator and Traitor technology by every conceivable means - from letter writing to lectures, songs to seminars, posters to pie-throwing.

Alerted to the Terminator by RAFI, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) passed a strong resolution in October 1998, prohibiting use of the seed-sterilizing technology in its plant breeding programmes. In May '99, after a RAFI seminar for delegates to the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention (COP IV) in Bratislava, Slovakia, that inter-governmental organization resolved that its scientific and technical body should study the impact of these technologies on agricultural biodiversity. The resulting technical report was hotly debated in June '99, in Montreal, Canada, where RAFI was present in force, conducting seminars and distributing materials to delegates.

Officials in the USA have had to take notice. Hope Shand was invited twice to Washington, in February and June '99, to brief the US Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and officials about the Terminator. Though the US Department of Agriculture continues to support and defend the patent, and is proceeding with plans to license it broadly, the Agency has stated that it has no plans to release the Terminator through its own breeding programmes.

In early 1999, a US State legislator in New Hampshire introduced a bill that would have banned the use of Terminator seed in that State. In May '99, Hope Shand was invited to testify, and to help organize other expert witnesses to appear at a Hearing in the State Senate. Despite widespread support for the bill from an impressive array of farmers', consumers', and business groups, it was narrowly defeated. However, a compromise bill was passed, to set up a two-year Study Commission to examine the potential impact of the Terminator on New Hampshire's agriculture and biodiversity.

AstraZeneca announced publicly that it would not introduce the Terminator into seed varieties it releases into the market place. In June '99, adding his voice to the outcry against the Terminator, Gordon Conway, President of the US-based Rockefeller Foundation (a major funder of biotechnology research) called on Monsanto to offer the public similar assurances that it will not market seeds with the suicide genes. Soon after RAFI's fiscal year end, Monsanto announced that it would not market Terminator seeds.

Soon after the Terminator patent was publicized, India's Minister of Agriculture announced that India would ban the import of Terminator seeds because of their potential harm to Indian agriculture. Other governments are now considering similar action. In June '99, Edward Hammond and Beverly Cross, RAFI's Office Manager, organized a complex initiative that sent 550 personalized letters to government Ministers and senior public servants responsible for Agriculture, the Environment and the Patent Office, in 130 countries. For all recipients, we provided a short pamphlet on the Terminator, and outlined the status of the 31 Traitor patents in their countries. We urged them to ban the Terminator, and to block the patent on the grounds of ordre public, or morality. The Panamanian Government has already agreed to both actions, and other governments are reviewing their options.

In short, the Terminator and related technologies are now firmly on the scientific and political agenda, and will remain a major focus for RAFI's work in the year ahead.

External Review of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR):

For years, RAFI pressed for a comprehensive external review of the research priorities and governance of the CGIAR, the international body that oversees the world's largest agricultural research effort in the South. When a Review was finally conducted in 1998, RAFI's Pat Mooney was one of three civil society representatives to play a formal role in it, attending meetings in Washington, the Hague, Mexico City, and Brasilia. RAFI's participation had several positive results. The Review Panel agreed to consult with civil society organizations at meetings in Kenya (for Africa) and Mexico (for Latin America), ensuring that some voices from the grassroots were heard. RAFI also helped limit what otherwise would have been whole-hearted endorsement for biotechnology research within the CGIAR system, and convinced the Panel to reject a recommendation to support intellectual property claims by CGIAR Centres. As the Review progressed, however, RAFI grew increasingly critical. The "External Review" became an insiders' evaluation, and missed an important chance to propose significant change. RAFI voiced these concerns, both within the Review process and

in RAFI publications. At the end of October '98, when CGIAR unveiled its report, we released a RAFI Translator entitled Frustrated Harvest, providing RAFI's critique of the much-awaited Review. Since then RAFI has worked with donors to the CGIAR, to continue pressing for a more extensive evaluation that would address the outstanding issues of structure and governance that were ignored by the Review.

Revision of FAO's International Undertaking on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture:

The "International Undertaking" is a critical agreement, which establishes the rules for exchange and use of agricultural genetic resources, and the implementation of "Farmers' Rights." It is being re-negotiated among the world's governments, to make it a legally binding protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity. In 1998/99, RAFI monitored these negotiations closely, assessed their progress in a RAFI Occasional Paper, and worked at an April '99 meeting of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to influence their outcome. We pressed for a broad interpretation of "Farmers' Rights", including the right of farmers to save seeds, and for a multilateral system of germplasm exchange, rather than bilateral exchanges where countries can be played off one against another.

Publications - Biodiversity and Food Security:

In 1998/99, RAFI produced the following publications related to biodiversity and food security.

- October 1998: RAFI Translator vol. 2, no. 1: Frustrated Harvest
- October 1998: RAFI Translator vol. 2, no.2: Dead Seed Scroll? The USDA's Terminator Defense
- January/February 1999: RAFI Communiqué: Traitor Technology - The Terminator's Wider Implications
- June 1999: What is Terminator Technology? A brochure for governments and NGOs on the Terminator and Traitor technologies.

Issue II: **Biopolicy**

Virtually all of RAFI's work is aimed at building sound public policy, whether to secure public support for sustainable agriculture, to keep genetic resources in the public domain, or resist the privatization of the human genome via intellectual property claims. Each year some of our work is focused on specific policy issues or targeted at specific negotiations, always from the perspective of justice in North-South negotiations. Often we try to illustrate the relevance of international policy debates to people whose practical, day-to-day concerns may seem very far removed from the glossy conference tables of inter-governmental negotiations.

Crucible II:

Five years ago, RAFI played a key role in the multi-party "Crucible Project", and the production of *People, Plants and Patents*, a book published by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It examined the policy choices facing governments in relation to intellectual property rights in agriculture. During 1998/99, RAFI took part in a major international effort to re-visit these issues, to plan a sequel to the book, and to draft model legislation for governments in the South - on innovation, access to genetic resources, and protection of indigenous and local knowledge. IDRC has developed the model laws, and RAFI's Hope Shand coordinated the drafting of a second Crucible book, with 40 Crucible II participants from South and North, civil society, industry, government, and inter-governmental bodies. It traces developments over the past five years, in the science of biotechnology, the uses of intellectual property rights over living organisms, and relevant international policy negotiations. Crucible II was a major undertaking for RAFI this year, requiring extensive comment on the draft laws, three full months of writing, and attendance at meetings in Nairobi (February '99) and Rome (June '99) to solicit reactions to the draft text. The book and model laws will be published in 2000 for use by governments in drafting legislation, and by inter-governmental negotiators during revisions to the World Trade Organization's "TRIPS" Agreement, on the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):

From the time the CBD text was being negotiated in the early 1990s, RAFI lobbied to ensure a prominent place within it for agricultural biodiversity. This year, as in the past, we brought relevant matters to the attention of delegates to the legally binding Convention, to illustrate policy choices that could be made in its implementation. We managed to place the Terminator and Traitor technologies on the CBD agenda, pointing out their consequences for agricultural biodiversity. The result was a major study by the CBD, which was discussed at the CBD's scientific and technical body in June '99. Although almost every government was harshly critical of the Terminator, the outcome of the extensive debate was that the CBD should monitor the technology closely and that governments should move cautiously before considering the introduction of such a technology within their borders.

Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme (CBDC):

RAFI was among the founders of the CBDC, which set out in 1994 to conserve agricultural biodiversity in selected communities in 14 countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This innovative North-South partnership pioneered new research methodologies, and ran training programmes on three continents. One of its objectives was to forge new forms of cooperation between farmers in the South and scientists in the North, and between farmers' practical efforts to conserve diversity in their fields and policy negotiations in the global arena. RAFI's role was to bring a range of policy concerns to Southern partners, and to facilitate the involvement of colleagues from the South in global negotiations. 1998/99 was also a year of reflection and planning for CBDC, with RAFI's active participation. A major evaluation was planned, a second four-year program was developed, and support for it was sought, while the day-to-day work of the programme continued. In April '99, Beverly Cross and Pat Mooney of RAFI went to Harare, Zimbabwe, where they helped to organize and lead a CBDC training workshop for African partners, on intellectual property and biopiracy.

Other Policy Initiatives:

During the year, RAFI contributed to other initiatives that dealt with national or international policy matters. In December '98, for instance, Hope Shand was a panelist in Vienna at a UNIDO Conference on "Biotechnology in Public: DNA and the Quality of Life", where she spoke about trends in biotechnology, intellectual property and biopiracy. In January '99, Jean Christie took part in a national strategy session in Toronto, organized by the Canadian Environmental Law Association to address life patenting and patent law reform in Canada.

In February, Pat Mooney spoke on TRIPS and the Convention on Biological Diversity, at a conference in Nairobi organized by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), and the UN Environmental Program.

OAPI / UPOV '91:

Also in February '99, almost by chance, RAFI learned that 16 francophone African countries, via the African Organization for Intellectual Property / L'Organisation africaine pour la propriété intellectuelle (OAPI), were about to join "UPOV '91", the more restrictive of two international conventions on Plant Breeder's Rights. This was planned just when the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was calling into question the plant intellectual property requirements of the World Trade Organization's TRIPS agreement. With just days to organize, Jean Christie led a RAFI initiative to contact NGO and government colleagues in the OAPI countries, issue a news release, and send a briefing to all 16 governments. We urged them to delay the OAPI decision until they could consider other information and options. Too late to influence the decision, RAFI encouraged governments not to ratify it. Jean Christie held a seminar in June '99 for francophone delegates to the Biodiversity Convention meeting in Montreal, and RAFI worked with NGO colleagues in Africa to ensure a strong OAU position against life patenting at its meeting in Algiers in July.

Issue III: **Biopiracy & Intellectual Property**

When one's agenda is overtaken by unforeseen events, as RAFI's was in 1998/99 by the Terminator technology, something has to give. This year, the major casualties were two planned, and much-requested resource kits. One was to have been on biopiracy, for use largely by our colleagues in the South; the other a primer on "human genomics", focusing on the patenting of human genetic material. Both are now underway with the help of contract staff, and will be completed in 1999/2000.

"Plant Breeders' Wrongs":

For eight months in 1998, RAFI conducted painstaking research for a fifty-page study entitled Plant Breeders' Wrongs, which was jointly published by RAFI and the Heritage Seed Curators of Australia (HSCA) in September 1998. It charges that Plant Breeder's Rights offices in Australia and other industrialized countries knowingly granted intellectual property protection for plant varieties actually bred by farmers in 43 developing countries. It reveals the systematic abuse of Plant Breeders Rights (PBR), and violations of a series of 1992 trust agreements between CGIAR research centres and the FAO, which were intended to keep the seeds in CGIAR genebanks free from intellectual property control. The RAFI/HSCA study makes 21 recommendations aimed at governments, inter-governmental bodies, and research institutes, calling for sweeping reforms and policy guarantees to ensure that past abuses are identified worldwide, rectified, and never repeated. In September '98, RAFI sent Plant Breeders' Wrongs to all implicated governments and research centres, and made it available on the internet. With evidence in hand, reaction was swift. Six of the offending Australian claims were quickly abandoned, and the Australian Plant Breeders' Rights Office reformed its offending PBR procedures, making future abuses less likely. CGIAR and FAO called for a moratorium on intellectual property claims involving any Trust material until the situation could be addressed. In late October '98 they accepted responsibility for tracking down such abuses, by adopting a procedure that outlines what each party would do if Trust germplasm appears to be the subject of an intellectual property claim. In November '98 RAFI was invited to advise the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) in Rome, about ways to track crop gene flows on the internet, and prevent plant biopiracy in the future.

Though improvements have been made, systematic monitoring continues to be important. In May '99, RAFI unearthed another example of Australian biopiracy. We discovered that a Mexican wheat variety housed at CIMMYT (the Centre for the Improvement of Wheat and Maize, in Mexico) and covered by a CGIAR/FAO Trust Agreement, was the subject of a Plant Breeder's Rights claim by the State government of Queensland, in Australia. We also learned that the Queensland government was negotiating an exclusive license on the pirated variety. We worked closely with CIMMYT to blow the whistle on this new Australian PBR abuse, which was stopped.

Southeast Asia Biopiracy Cooperation:

In 1998 our Manila-based partner SEARICE secured funds from Europe for a substantial new initiative to document cases of biopiracy in Asia, and to provide Southeast Asians researchers with the necessary tools to conduct biopiracy research. RAFI agreed to work with SEARICE in this effort - to gather information in the North about suspected biopirates, to secure and analyse bioprospecting contracts where possible, and to assist with training as requested. In December '99, Edward Hammond met with SE Asian colleagues in the Philippines, to plan the regional program and to carve out a role for RAFI within it.

Opposition to Basmati Rice Patent:

In May 1998 RAFI launched an international, trilingual postcard campaign, directed at the ruling Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein. He is chairman of RiceTec Group, whose Texas-based subsidiary RiceTec Inc holds controversial US patent no. 5,663,484 on Asia's aromatic Basmati rice. The patent covers Basmati grown anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, and effectively claims ownership of traditional Pakistani and Indian Basmati strains when crossed with the company's proprietary lines. When news of this patent reached India (where Basmati exports are valued at US\$ 800 million a year, and over 80% of the Basmati crop is grown for export), 50,000 Indians protested in front of the US Embassy in New Delhi. India and Pakistan have vowed to fight the patent, which is seen as a threat to the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of families in India, Pakistan, and Nepal who grow Basmati for export. RAFI's postcard, reprinted because of its popularity, urges RiceTec to drop the patent. It was sent in the hundreds to Prince Hans-Adam, who agreed to meet with patent opponents to discuss the issue in September '99.

Publications on Biopiracy and Intellectual Property:

- September 1998: Plant Breeders' Wrongs
- Are Patents Out of Control? - update of RAFI's summary of 20 of the world's worst patents.

Issue IV:

Biotechnology & the Life Industries



All of RAFI's research and analysis, and our capacity to react quickly to new events, are dependent on up-to-the-minute information about structural changes in the life industries and trends in corporate research. RAFI spent considerable time during the year building this information base, tracking changes in the corporate sector, and monitoring new research trends.

Life Industry Research and Monitoring:

In 1998 RAFI conducted an extensive review of the "life industries", following a run of unprecedented corporate mergers, buy-outs, and re-alignments that dramatically blurred the boundaries between the once-distinct food and beverage, seed, agrochemical, pharmaceutical, and veterinary medicine industries. RAFI's Communiqué entitled The Gene Giants presents an update on these mammoth life industry mergers, and includes a resume of the top ten companies in each of five life industry sectors.

Contract with UNDP Human Development Report:

In February 1999 Jean Christie prepared briefing notes for the UNDP's Human Development Report, on biotechnology and related issues of intellectual property. These notes and RAFI materials were extensively used in the 1999 edition of the annual United Nations publication.

New Research on Other Technologies and Bio-terrorism:

Following research undertaken by Hope Shand on "precision farming" and the application of military technologies to agriculture, Edward Hammond applied for and eventually received papers under the US Freedom of Information Act, from a Defense Department seminar with academics and industry on the potential military uses of biotechnology. More interesting than the meeting's review of biological warfare issues was the discussion of other related technologies such as nanotechnology (the atomic-level construction of inert and animate materials), neuro-sciences, informatics and robotics. The seminar papers encouraged RAFI to look beyond biotechnology, to investigate parallel developments in other fields. During 1999 Pat Mooney devoted considerable time to understanding these "other" technologies, and to a growing concern that biotechnology might be applied as a form of economic warfare on crops and livestock. RAFI will publish this research early next year as a special report with the working title The ETC Century.

Publications - Biotechnology:

- March/April 1999: RAFI Communiqué: The Gene Giants - Masters of the Universe?

Information Services & Outreach

The production and dissemination of relevant, new information on biodiversity, biotechnology, and intellectual property remains at the heart of RAFI's advocacy and public education. It is often the most important unique contribution that

RAFI makes to our diverse working relationships with civil society organizations, government representatives and inter-governmental bodies worldwide. RAFI Communiqués and Occasional Papers disseminate substantial new research findings on a regular basis. RAFI Translators analyse and demystify official documents, clause by clause. GenoTypes offer timely analysis of events in the news, and news releases make information available to media houses on all continents. All new publications are made available on RAFI's website, within a day or two of completion.

Major Publications:

RAFI's major publication project for 1998/99 was to coordinate the writing of a new book for the Crucible group (above). In April '99, RAFI and the Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Network also produced 5000 copies of a full-colour wall map, entitled *Creators and Conservers of Diversity*. Disseminated widely to indigenous peoples' organizations and to delegates at relevant conferences, the map graphically depicts the link between cultural and biological diversity.

Periodicals - RAFI Communiqués, Occasional Papers and Translators:

By the end of 1999, RAFI was mailing print copies of the Communiqué to just over 800 subscribers in 88 countries, down slightly from the previous year. This drop is because the Communiqué is increasingly accessed electronically. New Communiqués remain among the most frequently used materials on the RAFI website, and the proportion of print copies continues to shift in favour of groups in the South, who receive it free of charge and now account for over 60% of paper subscriptions. In 1998/99 RAFI produced three issues of the Communiqué, one major study and two Translators (listed in the relevant program sections above). Thanks to the generous contribution of voluntary translation services by Diego Martino, an Uruguayan graduate student in Canada, all regular RAFI publications in 1998/99, all GenoTypes and most news releases were made available in Spanish.

Media Outreach:

Publication of Plant Breeders' Wrongs and opposition to the Terminator technology were largely responsible for doubling RAFI's regular press contacts during the year. These issues introduced many new journalists to RAFI's work, as reflected in increased subscriptions to RAFI's electronic "listserver", from just over 800 last year, to 2,300 by year-end. These two high profile "stories" elevated international media coverage for RAFI's work to a new high. We recorded over 150 personal contacts with journalists during the year. RAFI's Impact for 1999 (annex to this Annual Report) summarizes RAFI's media coverage during those calendar years. It includes news stories by most of the large international wire services, and substantial coverage in the national newspapers of several countries, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Times of London, and The Guardian. RAFI's work was also featured in such magazines as Harper's, Nature, New Scientist, Stern, and Time, and by electronic media around the world.

RAFI issued the following fifteen news releases during 1998/99.

1998

- September 16: Plant Breeder's Wrongs - 147 Reasons to Cancel the WTO's Requirement for Intellectual Property on Plant Varieties
- October 21: Frustrated Harvest - The frost has come early for the CGIAR's much-awaited Systemwide Review
- October 23: CGIAR to Avoid Terminator Technology
- November 2: Terminator Seeds Rejected by Global Network of Agricultural Experts
- November 10: Plant Breeders' Wrongs Righted in Australia?
- December 11: Monsanto Terminates Terminator?

1999

- January 27: Terminator Seeds - Genetic Seed Sterilization is "Holy Grail" for Agriculture Biotechnology Firms
- February 16: Legal "Terminator" Threatens Francophone Africa's Farmers / Un "Terminator" juridique menace les cultivateurs franco-africains
- March 7: Monsanto Behind Anti-Farmer Legislation to Regulate Open-Pollinated Seed
- March 9: Monsanto - Handled with CARE?... or, CARE – Handled by Monsanto?
- March 29: Traitor Technology - "Damaged Goods" from the Gene Giants
- May 29: Call for "Seed Sovereignty" ban on Terminator Patents
- June 21: It's "The Real Thing" in Paraguay - the folks that brought you the Terminator are now dumping Originator toxic seeds on farmers' fields
- June 25: Traitor Resolutions?
- June 28: Biodiversity Convention's Terminator Decision Fails Biodiversity and Fails Farmers

RAFI published the following seven GenoTypes in 1998/99.

1998

- October 11: Monsanto's "Spectre" Dims

1999

- February 24: Plant Breeder's Rights Threaten Farmers / Les États de l'Afrique francophone ne sont pas au diapason de l'OUA et des autres pays africains
- April 12: Australia's Unresolved Plant Piracy Problems
- April 14: Ohio Withdraws Monsanto's Anti-Farmer Bill to Regulate Open-Pollinated Seed Cleaners
- May 19: TRIPS Traps for Small Farmers
- July 2: Siege on Genetically Modified Organisms
- August 20: RAFI Contributes to UNDP's Human Development Report 1999

Speaking Engagements:

RAFI staff are often asked to speak at conferences, seminars, and symposiums, and to provide briefings on issues related to RAFI's work. In 1998/99, four RAFI staff spoke at 35 such gatherings, in nine countries, on five continents. In September 1998, for instance, Pat Mooney was one of two people to present a five hour seminar to 20 senior government officials in Stockholm, Sweden, on multilateral policy issues relating to Plant Genetic Resources. Later that month, in Harare, Zimbabwe, he spoke on agricultural biotechnology at a seminar on the Future of Agriculture, and then to a PELUM conference on seed saving, with participants from Southern and East Africa. In December Edward Hammond was an invited resource person and speaker at a South Asian Conference dealing with the "Implications of Genetically Modified Organisms on the Agricultures of the South", in Rishikesh, India. In early March, 1999, Pat Mooney spoke to the annual "Outlook Conference" of the Canadian Wheat Board, while Jean Christie conducted a briefing in New York for 15 UNDP Africa staff on the implications for developing countries of new legal obligations regarding intellectual property. In April Jean Christie spoke about biopiracy to 30 "Indigenous Women of the Americas" at their "Inter-American Workshop on Intellectual Property Rights", near Ottawa, Canada. Days later, Hope Shand delivered a keynote address on biotechnology and the Terminator technology to the 10th Annual "Celebrate the Earth Festival", organized by La Montañita Co-op, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. In June 1999, Jean Christie gave a day-long seminar on RAFI's methodology at Concordia University's Institute in Management and Community Development Summer School, in Montreal, Canada.

RAFI Website and Website Use:

Use of RAFI's website almost tripled in 1998/99. By year-end, it was "serving" about 43,000 HTML pages per month, up from about 16,500 pages per month at the beginning of the year. The current level of website use delivers 516,000 pages of RAFI material per year, to an estimated 72,000 individual internet users from 130 countries and territories, including 68 in the South. Usage continues to grow steadily.

As our report (above) on the Terminator points out, RAFI made good use of our website for international campaigning during 1998/99. Created by Edward Hammond in 1995, RAFI's website has become the mainstay of our information and outreach services. As our fiscal year came to an end, Beverly Cross took over management of the website and directed major renovations, which came into effect in September.

THANK YOU!

RAFI could do none of its work without the support of many friends in civil society organizations, governments, multilateral agencies, and foundations. This year, RAFI extends a sincere thank you to the following generous financial supporters, whose contributions have made our programmes and projects possible.

- Anonymous (USA) *
- Canadian International Development Agency - International NGO Division (Canada)
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- Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature (Sweden) **
- United Church of Canada (Canada)
- United Nations Development Program - Human Development Report (international)
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (international)
- World Council of Churches (international)

* support to RAFI via RAFI-USA, for joint RAFI/RAFI-USA programmes

** in cooperation with SEARICE

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RAFI STAFF

Pat Mooney, Executive Director

Edward Hammond, Programme Officer

Jean Christie, Director of International Liaison

Hope Shand, Director of Research (RAFI-USA)

Beverly Cross, Office Manager

Maurice St. Pierre, Accountant (part time)

There are two annexes to this RAFI Annual Report. One is a summary of RAFI's Impact. The other is RAFI's Financial Report, including audited financial statement. Both are available in print, on request. They are also available on RAFI's website.

RAFI (The Rural Advancement Foundation International) is an international civil society organization headquartered in Winnipeg, Canada, and governed by a Board of Trustees with members from six continents. RAFI is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and to the socially responsible development of technologies useful to rural societies. RAFI is concerned about the loss of agricultural biodiversity, the impact of intellectual property on biotechnology and food security, and the governance of international institutions that affect rural communities.

RAFI has roster status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and consulting status with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). RAFI is a member of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, in compliance with its Code of Ethics for members.

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