

**A DECLARATION OF SEED SOVEREIGNTY: A
LIVING DOCUMENT FOR NEW MEXICO
MARCH 11, 2006**

1. Whereas, our ability to grow food is the culmination of countless generations of sowing and harvesting seeds and those seeds are the continuation of an unbroken line from our ancestors to us and to our children and grandchildren.
2. Whereas, our ancestors developed a relationship with plants that allowed their cultivation for food and medicine and this has been a central element of our culture and our survival for millennia in regions throughout the world.
3. Whereas, the concurrent development of cultures of Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas resulted in a plethora of food and crop types including grains such as maize and wheat; legumes such as beans and lentils; fruits such as squash and chile; vegetables such as spinach and those of the cabbage family; and roots such as potatoes and turnips.
4. Whereas these foods and crops, though developed independently of each other, came together in New Mexico with the meeting of Spanish, Mexican, and Native American cultures to create a unique and diverse indigenous agricultural system and land-based culture.
5. Whereas, just as our families are attached to our homes, our seeds learn to thrive in their place of cultivation by developing a relationship with the soil, water, agricultural practices, ceremonies, and prayers; thereby giving seeds a sacred place in our families and communities.
6. Whereas, the way in which seeds become attached to a place makes them native seeds, also known as landraces, also makes them an important element of the generational memory of our communities.
7. Whereas the continued nurturing of native seeds or landraces has provided the basis for the community coming together for communal work such as cleaning acequias and preparing fields as well as in ceremony, prayers, and blessings; thereby binding our communities, traditions, and cultures together.
8. Whereas the practices embodied in working the land and water and caring for seeds provides the basis for our respectful connection to the Earth and with each other.

9. Whereas, our practices in caring for native seeds (landraces) and growing crops provide for much of our traditional diet and results in our ability to feed ourselves with healthy food that is culturally and spiritually significant.
10. Whereas clean air, soil, water, and landscapes have been essential elements in the development and nurturing of seeds as well as the harvesting of wild plants; and that these elements of air, land, and water have been contaminated to certain degrees.
11. Whereas corporate seed industries have created a technology that takes the genetic material from a foreign species and inserts it into a landrace and is known as Genetically Engineered (GE) or transgenic crops.
12. Whereas seed corporations patent the seeds, genetics, and/or the processes used in the manipulation of landraces, and have gone so far as to patent other wild plants or the properties contained in the plants.
13. Whereas GE crops have escaped into the environment with maize in Oaxaca, Mexico and canola in Canada and crossed into native seeds and wild plants.
14. Whereas organic farmers have been sued by seed corporations when these patented genetic strains have been identified in the farmers' crops, even though the farmers were unable to see or stop pollen from genetically engineered crops from blowing over the landscape and into their fields, thus contaminating the farmers' crops.
15. Whereas the effect of this technology on the environment or human health when consumed is not fully understood.
16. Whereas the seed industry refuses to label GE seeds and food products containing GE ingredients.
17. Whereas the pervasiveness of GE crops in our area cannot then be fully known due to the lack of labeling and therefore carries the potential for genetic pollution on our landraces.
18. Whereas countries such as Japan, England, and countries in Africa have refused genetically modified foods and prohibit the introduction of GE crops on their lands because of their unknown health effects.

19. Whereas indigenous cultures around the world are the originators, developers, and owners of the original genetic material used in the genetic engineering of crops by corporations today.
20. Whereas this declaration must be a living, adaptable document that can be amended as needed in response to rapidly changing GE technology that brings about other potential assaults to seeds and our culture.
21. Be it resolved by the traditional farmers of Indo-Hispano and Native American ancestry of current-day northern New Mexico collectively and intentionally seek to continue the seed-saving traditions of our ancestors and maintain the landraces that are indigenous to the region of northern New Mexico.
22. Be it further resolved that we seek to engage youth in the continuation of the traditions of growing traditional foods, sharing scarce water resources, sharing seeds, and celebrating our harvests.
23. Be it further resolved that we reject the validity of corporations' ownership claims to crops and wild plants that belong to our cultural history and identity.
24. Be it further resolved that we believe corporate ownership claims of landrace crop genomes and patent law represent a legal framework for the justification of the possession and destruction of stolen cultural property.
25. Be it further resolved that we object to the seed industry's refusal to label seeds or products containing GE technology and ingredients and demand all genetically modified seeds and foods containing GE ingredients in the State of New Mexico to be labeled as such.
26. Be it further resolved that we consider genetic modification and the potential contamination of our landraces by GE technology a continuation of genocide upon indigenous people and as malicious and sacrilegious acts toward our ancestry, culture, and future generations.
27. Be it further resolved that we object to the cultivation of GE seeds in general but especially within range of our traditional agricultural systems that can lead to the contamination of our seeds, wild plants, traditional foods, and cultural property.
28. Be it further resolved that we will work with each other, local, tribal, and state governments to create zones that will be free of genetically engineered and transgenic organisms.

Declaration of Seed Sovereignty drafted by the Traditional Native American Farmers' Association (TNAFA) and the New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA).

29. Be it further resolved that we will also work together to address other environmental abuses that contaminate our air, soil, and water quality that certainly affects our health, the health of our seeds and agriculture, and the health of future generations.
30. Be it further resolved that the undersigned traditional farmers representing various acequia, Pueblo, tribal, and surrounding communities will create, support, and collaborate toward projects and programs focused on revitalization of food traditions, agriculture, and seed saving and sharing.

This Declaration was drafted by the NMAA and TNAFA in collaboration with Tewa Women United and Honor Our Pueblo Existence, organizations that comprise the New Mexico Food and Seed Sovereignty Alliance. A version of the Declaration became a Memorial in the 2007 NM Legislative Session. In 2008 the Legislature passed SB 60 to give \$1 million to NMSU for the genetic engineering of chile. The Alliance supported Farmer Protect legislation that failed to pass in the 2009, 2010, & 2011 Legislative Sessions. More information on the Declaration can be found at:

www.lasacequias.org
www.tnafa.org
www.youtube.com/GrowFarmers

More information on Farmer Protection and other efforts can be found at:

www.SaveNMSeeds.org