

# **Regional trends and regulations favouring corporate domination of agriculture**



2017

# Policy changes : displacing farmers and increase dependency

- Farmers, small farmers particularly, continue to face challenges for allowing them to continue produce food for everyone.
- Increasing interest over farmland in the past decade for example triggered policy changes in many countries to enable smooth transfer of land from the hand of small farmers to large corporations. Review of land law that GRAIN did in 2015 shows similar trends in many Asian countries.





In 2016, we noted there are 491 land deals covering over 30 million hectares spanning 78 countries.



# Farmers' seeds: what at stake?

Farmers who were never asked or consult in the process are forced to watch from the sidelines as their local varieties are being genetically modified, locked up with patents and turn over to transnational seed companies.

*“In the past 50 years, peasant agriculture has donated **2.1 million** varieties to gene banks around the world. In the same time, seed companies have contributed just **80,000** varieties” –*

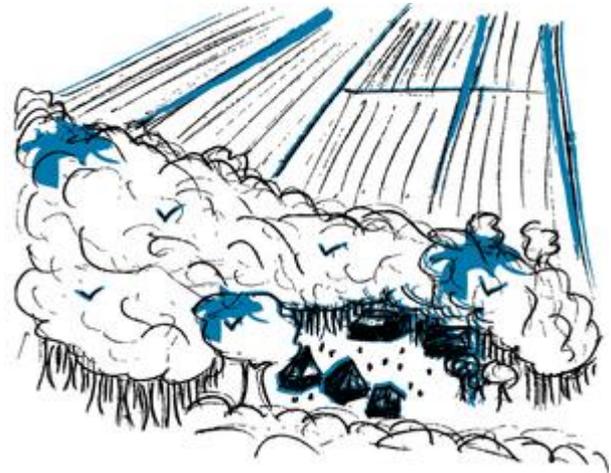
Via Campesina, GRAIN, ETC, 2013

# **Trade agreements effects on farmers and agriculture**

- Mega-regional trade deals like RCEP and TPP are big threats to small-scale farmers' control over their land, seeds and livestock in Asia-Pacific.
- TPP and RCEP is expected to create powerful new rights and lucrative business opportunities for food and agriculture corporations under the guise of boosting trade and investment. What will this mean for food and farmers in member countries?

# 1. Land will be grabbed

Investment and Service chapter on RCEP could have a decisive impact on access to land. Under national treatment, investors from other RCEP states would be given the same treatment as domestic investors, have the same rights to purchase farmland as domestic investors. Including the ability to own farmland for a service-related purpose.



The stakes are high because companies and investment funds have been aggressively [buying up farmland](#) as a new source of revenue in the last years. In the RCEP countries alone, [9.6 million](#) hectares of farmland have been acquired by foreign companies since 2008.

## 2. Seeds will be privatised, GMOs may proliferate



Leaked drafts of RCEP's intellectual property chapter show countries like Japan and South Korea pushing for all RCEP states to adopt "UPOV 1991", a kind of patent system for seeds. Under UPOV 1991, farmers are generally not allowed to save seeds of protected varieties.

Implications: makes seeds and livestock more expensive and takes away farmers' right to freely reproduce them. Reduces life and culture to a commodity that corporations can own and control.

If RCEP following TPP as in many part of the text, it will also requires all signatories to allow patents on inventions "**derived from plants**", which the biotech industry says means GMOs.

# Impacts for farmers and consumers of amending the Plant Varieties Protection Act

Seeds will become

**200-600%** more

**expensive** as the rights of corporations are extended along with expanded patent protection, reducing farmers rights in saving seeds for replanting.



BIOTHAI  
21/03/2016



**More expensive food** – production costs will go up while **food diversity will suffer.**

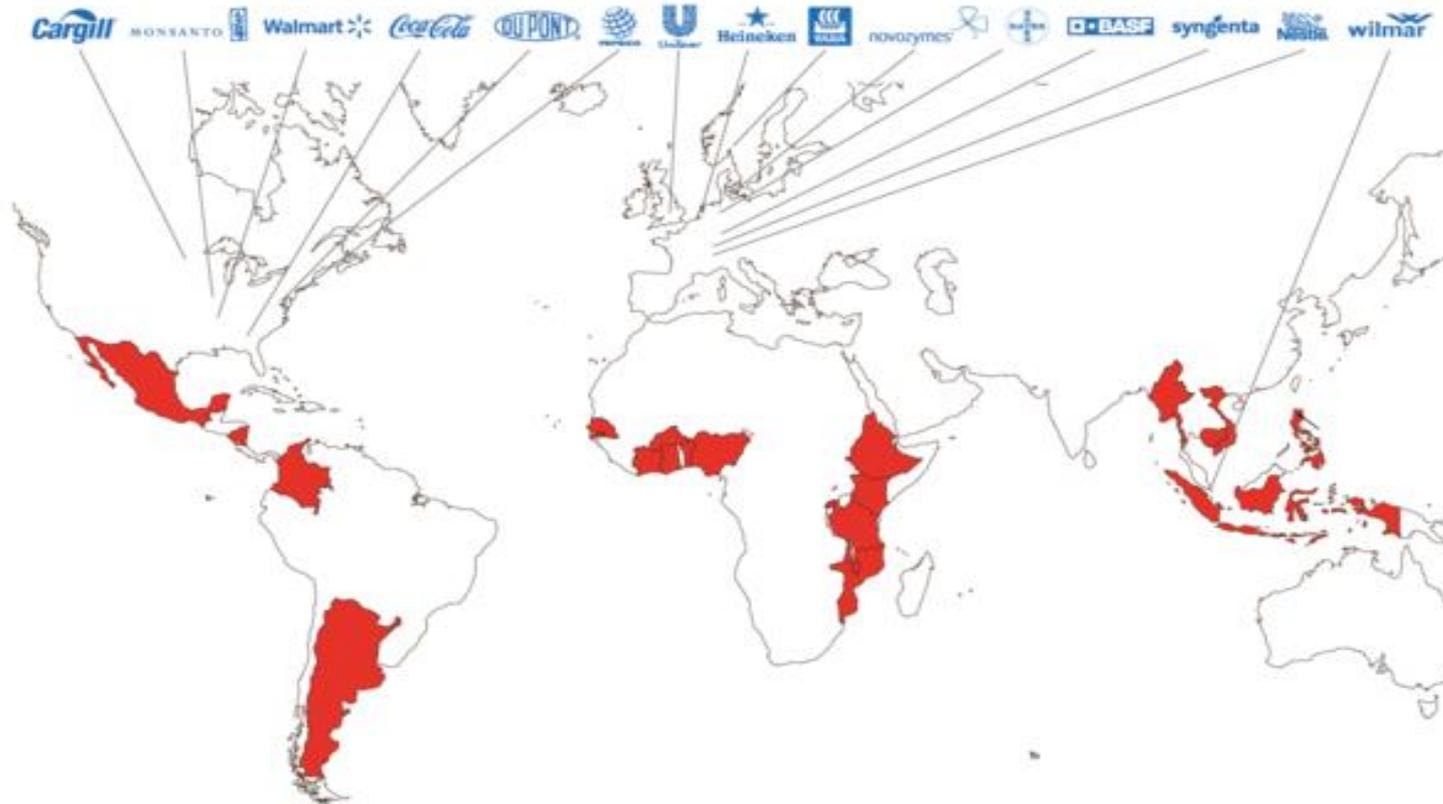
**Seed diversity will suffer**

- Corporations favour seeds that can be grown in monocultures
- Farmers can't collect seeds for planting in the next season or for swapping with their neighbours

**Giant corporations will extend their seed monopolies**– small scale plant breeders will have greater difficulties in accessing seeds

**Giant corporations will be able to use plant varieties without sharing benefits** - the general definition of indigenous plants will be changed so corporations don't have to pay in those cases

# GROW Asia – new vision of corporate capture through PPPs



**Grow countries and year programme launched:**

**Grow Latin America:** Mexico (2011), Nicaragua (2016), Argentina (under development), Colombia (under development)

**Grow Africa:** Benin (2015), Burkina Faso (2014), Côte d'Ivoire (2014), Ethiopia (2012), Ghana (2012), Kenya (2011), Malawi (2014), Nigeria (2014), Mozambique (2014), Rwanda (2011), Senegal (2015), Tanzania (2011)

**Grow Asia:** Cambodia (2015), Indonesia (2011), Myanmar (2013), Philippines (2015), Vietnam (2011)

- **What is GROW Asia?**

part of the New Vision for Agriculture, an initiative of the World Economic Forum (WEF) launched in 2009 and is led by 31 of the WEF's "partner" companies involved in the food business, whether in agriculture, food processing or retail.

- 90% of these companies are based in the US and Europe.
- Yet the New Vision for Agriculture and its Grow programme is focused entirely on Latin America, Africa and Asia—the main growth markets for the global food industry
- Under a logic of “public-private partnership”, the multinational agribusiness companies fostering close ties with governments in order to increase their control over markets and supply chains.
- While claiming to promote food security and benefit small farmers, Grow's focus on a small number of high-value commodities exposes the programme's real objective: to expand production of a handful of commodities to profit a handful of corporations.

# GROW Project Vision

Vision

20 - 20 - 20

20%

YIELD  
INCREASE

- Enhance farmers' knowledge in best practice management
- Provide access to technology, access to finance
- Introduce new, more resilient crop types



20%

CO2 EMISSION  
REDUCTION

- Sustainable intensification agriculture and efficient use of production inputs
- Improve land use to reduce deforestation and peat land degradation



20%

POVERTY  
REDUCTION

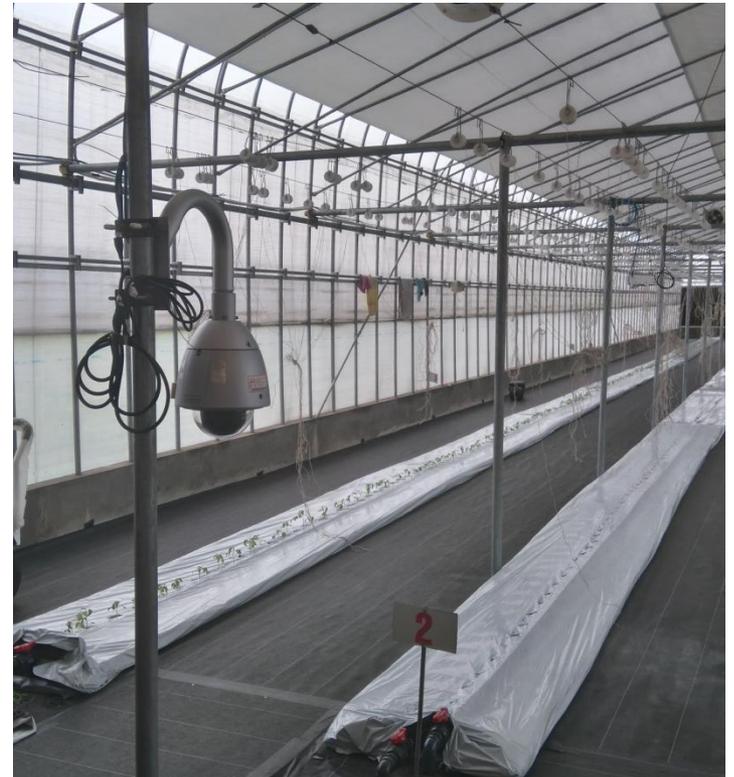
- Standardize contracting to ensure off-take and prices
- Enhance farmers' knowledge in post harvest technique



Grow's primary goal is to mobilise corporate investment for new forms of contract farming, re-packaged as “inclusive agribusiness”.



Climate smart agriculture  
model farm developed by  
Fujitsu supported by JICA in  
Vietnam





**THANK YOU**

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