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Researchers Welcome University of Manitoba's Nomination for International Biopiracy Prize, Launch Free Download of Research Film

Winnipeg, MB – March 8, 2006 – Researchers at the University of Manitoba are pleased that their employer has been nominated for the Captain Hook Award, for suppressing their research on the risks of genetically modified crops. Intended to expose “the greediest, most offensive and dangerous biopirates from across the globe”, the award recipient for 2006 will be named by the Coalition Against Biopiracy at this year’s international meeting of the Convention on Biodiversity, taking place March 13-17 in Brazil.

U of M researchers Dr. Stéphane McLachlan and PhD candidate Ian Mauro, and independent videographer Jim Sanders expect the recent nomination will further their already successful campaign to make their publicly funded, farmer-focused research video, “Seeds of Change: Farmers, Biotechnology and the New Face of Agriculture”, available to a popular audience. Made as part of a larger, comprehensive research program examining the risks associated with biotechnology in agriculture, *Seeds of Change* was suppressed for three years by the U of M administration. Simultaneously, university administrators courted biotech giant Monsanto and succeeded in convincing the company to relocate its Canadian headquarters to the campus industrial research park.

Canadian Association of University Executive Director Jim Turk has likened the *Seeds of Change* case to the landmark case of academic freedom in Canada, that of Dr. Nancy Olivieri at the University of Toronto. Similarly, Dr. Mae-Wan Hoe, co-founder of the Institute of Science in Society, has compared this case to those of Dr. Ignacio Chapela at Berkeley and Dr. Arpad Puzstai at Aberdeen, whose critical voices were compromised by the biotech industry in the US and UK, respectively.

With the aid of the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the National Farmers Union, the *Seeds of Change* filmmakers launched a successful public campaign to pressure the university administration into allowing the film’s release. Since the long overdue premiere of *Seeds of Change* last fall, the film has screened in dozens of cities in North America, and was recently made available around the world for free viewing and download at www.seedsofchange.org.

For more information: www.seedsofchange.org and www.captainhookawards.org

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