Poor farmers — especially those in developing countries who grow food for themselves and their families — have the most to lose if Terminator seeds get the go-ahead.

Many farmers in poor countries can’t afford (and don’t want) to buy seeds each year. They grow and save seeds that have been developed to thrive in local soils and climates. This means they can grow a range of crops to feed their families and sell any surplus in local markets.

Terminator seeds are seeds that are genetically modified to become sterile after the first planting. The biotech seed companies say this will stop genetically modified seeds from contaminating other crops. But the Terminator gene could itself spread to other seeds, making them sterile — with catastrophic consequences for farmers, biodiversity and the environment.

Terminator seeds could spell an end to the practice of saving and reusing seeds — and to taking control of meeting their own food needs out of farmers’ hands.
Poor farmers — especially those in developing countries who grow food for themselves and their families — have the most to lose if Terminator seeds get the go-ahead.

Many farmers in poor countries can’t afford (and don’t want) to buy seeds each year, so they save, swap and share seeds that have been developed over generations to thrive in local soils and climates. This means they can grow a range of crops to feed their families and sell any surplus in local markets.

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‘Zombie’ seeds — a form of Terminator seeds that can be ‘brought back to life’ by treating them with a chemical — are just as bad for peasant farmers. With terminator or ‘zombie’ seeds, farmers have to buy new seeds or chemicals for every crop — making them poorer, and the big seed companies richer.

Terminator seeds could spell an end to the practice of saving and re-planting seeds — and so take control of meeting their own food needs out of farmers’ hands.
Poor farmers - especially those in developing countries who grow food for themselves and their families - have the most to lose if Terminator seeds get the go-ahead.

Many farmers in poor countries can’t afford (and don’t want) to buy seeds each year. Instead, they save, swap and share seeds that have been developed over generations to thrive in local soils and climates. This means they can grow a range of crops to feed their families and sell any surplus in local markets.

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Terminator seeds could spell an end to the practice of saving and reusing seeds - and take control of meeting their own food needs out of farmers’ hands.

Say no to Terminator seeds!
Dear ______________________________________ MP

I am concerned that Terminator technology - a form of genetic modification of seeds that makes them sterile after the first planting - could threaten the rights and livelihoods of over 1.4 billion poor farmers throughout the developing world.

These farmers depend on farm-saved seeds to grow food for their families. Terminator genes could contaminate their crops, passing on sterility genes and resulting in significant yield losses. Terminator technology could also force farmers into economic dependence on external seed sources, and ultimately make world hunger and poverty worse. (You can find out more about these concerns at www.progressio.org.uk/terminator)

I ask you to write on my behalf to the UK government expressing my concerns about the potential commercialisation of Terminator seeds by multinational seed companies. Please urge the government to do all in its power to persuade the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (at its next meeting in May 2008) to maintain and strengthen its moratorium on the development of Genetic Use Restriction Technologies such as Terminator.

Please write on my behalf to the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for International Development.

Yours sincerely

(signature)
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The United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) says Terminator seeds should not be sold unless worldwide studies proves they pose no threat to people or the environment. These studies have not been carried out, but the biotech seed companies are still pressing ahead, encouraged by the readiness of many countries – including the UK – to turn a blind eye to the ban.

To stop Terminator, it’s crucial that the next CBD meeting (in May 2008) strengthens the ban so that countries like the UK cannot ignore it. Please make your voice heard – write to your MP now!

The ‘say no to Terminator seeds’ campaign is inspired by the livesimply project - a call to Catholics and people of goodwill to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. Find out more about livesimply at www.livesimply.org.uk
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