

# GMO OMG

a film by  
**JEREMY  
SEIFERT**



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Contact us:  
[info@gmofilm.com](mailto:info@gmofilm.com)

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Who controls the future of your food? *GMO OMG* explores the systematic corporate takeover and potential loss of humanity's most precious and ancient inheritance: seeds. Director Jeremy Seifert investigates how loss of seed diversity and corresponding laboratory assisted genetic alteration of food affects his young children, the health of our planet, and freedom of choice everywhere. *GMO OMG* follows one family's struggle to live and eat without participating in an unhealthy, unjust, and destructive food system. In *GMO OMG*, the encroaching darkness of unknown health and environmental risks, chemical toxins, and food monopoly meets with the light of a growing global movement to take back what we have lost. Has the global food system been irrevocably hijacked? Is there still time to reclaim its purity, protect biodiversity and save ourselves?

## LONG SYNOPSIS

*GMO OMG* tells the story of a father's discovery of GMOs through the symbolic act of poor Haitian farmers burning seeds in defiance of Monsanto's gift of 475 tons of hybrid corn and vegetable seeds to Haiti shortly after the devastating earthquake of January 2010. After a journey to Haiti to learn why hungry farmers would burn seeds, the real awakening of what has happened to our food in the US, what we are feeding our families, and what is at stake for the global food supply unfolds in a trip across the United States and other countries in search of answers. Are we at a tipping point? Is it time to take back our food? The encroaching darkness of unknown health and environmental risks, seed take over, chemical toxins, and food monopoly meets with the light of a growing resistance of organic farmers, concerned citizens, and a burgeoning movement to take back what we have lost.

By the simple act of feeding ourselves, we unwittingly participate in the largest experiment ever conducted on human beings. Massive agrochemical companies like Monsanto (Agent Orange) and Dow (Napalm) are feeding us genetically-modified food, GMOs that have never been fully tested and aren't labeled. This small handful of corporations is tightening their grip on the world's food supply—buying, modifying, and patenting seeds to ensure total control over everything we eat. We still have time to heal the planet, feed the world, and live sustainably. But we have to start now!



## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### JEREMY SEIFERT Director / Writer / Editor

In 2010, Jeremy completed his debut film, *DIVE!*, *Living Off America's Waste*. Initially made with a \$200 budget, a borrowed camera, and a lot of heart, *DIVE!* went on to win 22 film festivals worldwide. In 2010 with the release of *DIVE!*, Jeremy began the production company, Compeller Pictures. He is now a filmmaker and activist, traveling the country and speaking on humanitarian and environmental issues. Jeremy's second film, *GMO OMG*, tells the hidden story of the take over of our food supply by giant chemical companies, an agricultural crisis that has grown into a cultural crisis. He has once again found the heart of the project in his own journey and awakening. Jeremy and his wife, Jen, live in North Carolina with their three children, Finn (7), Scout (4), and Pearl (2).

### JOSHUA KUNAU Producer / Executive Producer

Josh's introduction into film production began with the award-winning film, *DIVE!*, which won at 22 film festivals around the world and even screened at the US capital. *DIVE!* continues to awaken people to real change around the issues of food, hunger, and the environment. Josh studied law at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, and after working as an attorney for a few years in Colorado, he decided to follow his love for film and desire to bring forth issues of truth and justice. His ability to rally disparate people around a single cause and inspire renewed devotion and determination makes him an invaluable component to making a film with such a controversial subject. Josh lives in Denver, Colorado with his wife, Kate.

**ELIZABETH KUCINICH** Executive Producer

Elizabeth Kucinich is a sustainable organic food and vegan advocate. She is a champion for the environment, human and animal rights, and has lived and worked in some of the world's poorest subsistence farming communities in India and East Africa. Now based in the USA, she is the Director of Government Affairs for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, promoting prevention over cure, nutrition over drugs, and human-relevant research and training over the use of animals. Elizabeth serves on the board of the Rodale Institute, Sean Penn's J/P HRO and the Hestia Gaea Foundation. She lives in Washington, DC with her husband, former US Congressman and two-time Presidential candidate, Dennis Kucinich.

**JILL LATIANO HOWERTON** Executive Producer

Jill Latiano Howerton is an actress turned activist. Her passion has always been health and environmental issues, and following her marriage to actor Glenn Howerton of It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia and the birth of her son, Miles, Jill began combining her love of the arts and living a healthy lifestyle. Most recently, Jill produced celebrity PSAs for California's Prop 37 in collaboration with Food & Water Watch and Funny or Die, which included Danny DeVito, Dave Matthews and Bill Maher. In addition, Jill started her own blog, The Daily Tonic, to advocate for healthy eating, informed pregnancy and nontoxic, conscious living.



**ROD HASSLER** Cinematographer

Rod originally studied journalism in college, but after filming a short documentary about the miseducation of lower class Florida middle school students under the No Child Left Behind Act, he shifted his focus to visual, narrative-driven pieces. Documentaries he has filmed include: Manny Marquez, PSYCHOPATH and Kristin Bauer, OUT FOR AFRICA. Originally from Minnesota, Rod lived in Los Angeles for six years shooting television shows for NBC, CBS, E!, and VH1, as well as numerous music videos and commercials. He currently resides in Philadelphia, PA with his wife, Saige, and son, Floyd.

**TERRY YATES** Editor

A graduate of Michigan State University and native of Detroit, MI, Terry has become a master of many trades by serving as editor, post production supervisor, associate producer, and visual effects coordinator over the past four years in Los Angeles. Recently he honed his editing skills, working on Alma Har'el's critically acclaimed documentary, BOMBAY BEACH, winner of "Best Documentary Feature" at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival. He's also made a few forays into the narrative world with credits including, DEADHEADS, a worldwide released zombie/comedy film directed by the Pierce brothers.

**DANIEL S. MCCOY, C.A.S.** Location and Post Audio

Dan was keen on selling organic certified food back in 1995 while attending Recording Arts School near Pasadena, CA. His career path in Film/TV Sound lead his passions for sustainability to such meaningful projects as AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH and JAMIE OLIVER'S FOOD REVOLUTION. A foodie with a family, working on this film has been a perfect manifestation of food justice for him!

## PALACEWORKS Motion Graphics and Design

Palaceworks is a multi-disciplinary design studio located in Los Angeles. They have designed titles and film posters for numerous films, from big budget studio blockbusters to arthouse gems. They have a studio in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles where they spend way too much of their time. Their work can be seen at [palaceworks.net](http://palaceworks.net).



## CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR JEREMY SEIFERT

### What motivated you to make GMO OMG?

After finding out a little about GMOs, and being especially curious about why hungry farmers in Haiti would burn these seeds, I wanted to make a film to say to my friends and neighbors out there, my family, my community, my endlessly diverse fellow Americans: Chemical companies are feeding you and your family. They don't care if it's good for you or bad for you. They fought to keep their GMOs labeled, so you wouldn't know and couldn't choose. If they have their way, everything will be genetically modified, so they can patent and own food, controlling every aspect of it, and eliminating your choice. Is this the kind of world you want to bestow to your children?

### What do you think the average consumer can do to avoid GMOs and correct the current problem?

Finn, my seven-year-old son (six at the time) says it so well in the film. We're sitting together in the tiny garden we had in Los Angeles, and he says to me that if people stop buying GMOs, then the stores won't carry them and the companies that make them will just go away. That's it! If we act on the knowledge we have and do what we know in our hearts is right, real change is possible. Every time we eat something we're investing in someone or something, a way of being and interacting with the Earth. We have to ask ourselves: Do I want to be a nurturer or an exploiter?

### There are two sides to every debate, what would you tell the naysayers who are in support of major companies like Monsanto and GMOs?

You may support them, but they couldn't care less about you. Because, at the end of the day, these companies aren't concerned about you or the earth, about sustainability and farmers, they care about profit. Whatever they can do to secure more profit, they will do. They spend millions convincing us, and the farmers they are bleeding dry, that we need them and that they have our best interest at heart. It's propaganda, not science. And if the naysayers naysay these facts as my own fiction and the passions of a misinformed dunce, I would point to the hard facts about GMOs turning up every day around the world. No increased yield, no drought tolerance, no flood resistance, no sustainability, not practical or affordable for smallholder farmers in most places in the world. The growing evidence cannot be ignored. Unless, in fact, the naysayers are really blind believers unwilling to face the truth.



## **Following the worldwide success of FOOD, INC., what do you think differentiates GMO OMG from the conversation/debate portrayed in FOOD, INC.?**

Food, Inc. showed the American people our broken food system, and shed light on the business that food has become at the expense of farmers and our health. It briefly introduced GMOs and the fact that Monsanto has sued farmers for patent infringement, but I don't think anyone really got it. GMO OMG helps people get it in an unforgettable way. The film hones in on the ignorance common to us all: no one knows what a GMO even is, much less that we're eating them every day. GMO OMG also goes beyond the information-driven documentary style and takes the viewer on a journey with a father and his family as they learn the truth and struggle to incorporate it into their lives.

## **What are some of the difficulties you and your team faced during production, and how did you overcome them?**

The first shoot was in Haiti, and I put that trip on credit cards and borrowed money. I had to go, and I couldn't wait around and try to raise money to do it! I believed that I had to be there and listen to their stories, and that in doing this, I would know what to do next with the film. So, from this you might be able to decipher that one of the difficulties the team had to endure from the very beginning was dealing with a crazy person following his heart, with no detailed plan or budget, and certainly no money!

On a technical level, our budget limited us along the way and brought about difficulties that I think were sometimes wonderful opportunities to do things very simply or creatively. In Haiti, we had the worst camera slider (like a pocket dolly), and had to drive around Port-au-Prince for two hours looking for Pledge furniture polish, because the slider was so sticky and jerky. Miraculously, we found some in a tiny grocery store.

## **What would you like audiences to take away from GMO OMG?**

I have been saying to all involved from the very beginning that this film needs to reach people who don't know anything about GMOs, and who most likely don't really care about what they eat, other than whether or not it tastes good. I want to reach the linebacker in Alabama, the grandma in Wisconsin, the dealer in Vegas, the candy-munching, pop-drinking high school students across the country, the farmers bullied into growing unnatural crops, and the bulk of us that are addicted to cheap food because it is cheap.

Who can argue with the fact that we have a right to know and a right to choose? That's tapping into the very roots of what makes this country tick, and what I would consider a healthy sort of patriotism that is being assaulted by these greed-driven companies who corrupt the very government that we have elected to serve us. Audiences should watch this film and feel duped



by chemical companies and our own government, and they should walk away demanding labels and hungry for more information. And beyond all of that, I hope that I may have planted a little seed inside that part of us which has become so atrophied, our sense of wonder. The same wonder that fills my son, Finn, when he looks at a seed and knows what it's capable of, and really sees the beauty. If we become lovers of the good, the bad stuff won't have a place.

## **What is a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)?**

The World Health Organization Defines a GMO as: Organisms in which the genetic material (DNA) has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally.

The most common genetically modified crops are: Corn, Soy, Canola, Cotton, Sugar Beets, Alfalfa, Papaya, Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash.

GMOs are in nearly 80% of all processed foods in the United States and the most common ingredients consist of:

High-Fructose Corn Syrup, Soy Lecithin, Amino Acids, Aspartame, Ascorbic Acid, Sodium Ascorbate, Vitamin C, Citric Acid, Sodium Citrate, Ethanol, Flavorings ("natural" and "artificial"), Hydrolyzed Vegetable Protein, Lactic Acid, Maltodextrins, Molasses, Monosodium Glutamate, Sucrose, Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP), Xanthan Gum, Vitamins, Yeast Products.

Over 60 countries require labeling of GMOs, including Russia, India, and China. In the United States, GMOs are not labeled on the federal or any state level, despite the fact that 96% of Americans polled want mandatory labeling of GMOs.



## **CREDITS**

Written , Directed, and Produced by  
JEREMY SEIFERT

Produced by  
JOSHUA A. KUNAU

Executive Producers  
ELIZABETH KUCINICH  
JILL LATIANO HOWERTON  
JOSHUA A. KUNAU

Cinematography by  
ROD HASSLER

Music by  
JUBILEE SINGERS

Edited by  
TERRY YATES  
JEREMY SEIFERT

Sound by  
DANIEL S. MCCOY, C.A.S.

Graphics and Animation by  
PALACEWORKS

Associate Producers  
NISHA NAMORANDO VIDA  
TIMMY VATTEROTT  
DANIEL S. MCCOY

Consulting Producers  
STEPHANIE SOECHTIG  
LAURIE DAVID

Featuring (in order of appearance):  
CHAVANNES JEAN-BAPTISTE  
KEN ROSEBORO  
MICHAEL ADAM  
SAMMY JUNIOR, III  
JAMES BURKHOLDER  
BILL BEAM  
GENE LOGSDON  
DON GRIMES  
JEFF MOYER  
MARK "COACH" SMALLWOOD  
DIANE WHEALY  
CONGRESSMAN DENNIS KUCINICH  
HANS HERREN  
ANDREW KIMBRELL  
VANDANA SHIVA  
BILL MCKIBBEN  
CARY FOWLER  
BELL TORHEIM  
GILLES-ERIC SERALINI, PH.D.  
DESIR IPHONISE