

Gareth Howell – Written Evidence (LUE0011)

The arguments against the use of the GM (genetically modified) crops patented by Monsanto, have virtually been forgotten, but their purpose in being the right shape for the gigantic seed planting machinery now in use, has not.

The business of farm machinery is now a very substantial business of its own, without being involved in land tenure, or freehold ownership at all.

The size of the field, mainly for maize, is extremely large, and has become imperceptibly huge, since the 1950s, when I was a child. Then there were 5 acre fields, with what are now considered to be tiny tractors doing several different tasks over several days. Today the mega-machine does the seeding, after four different necessary procedures to make the seeding perfect.

Maize is the main battery dairy farm feed. It may be grown several miles from the battery.

The dairy battery farm owners learned from the poultry battery farm experience of the 60s-70s to exercise the most careful security to prevent prying eyes, of the animal rights variety. There are frequently 500 cows in the battery, the movements of which are monitored from calving to milking to carving up the 5-6 year old animal, which does not produce enough milk after its new calf has been taken from it. Some of these animals rarely see the blue sky above them, much like the chicken flocks, which never do.

This would not matter except for the fact of Maize production, as I have said, frequently 10-12 miles away from the munching cow. This has an effect on rural village life (and contrary to belief, there are still country people living in country villages) that is very damaging, the size of the hoppers and pulling tractors, again being very large indeed, on very narrow country roads, which we do all have as much right to use.

The picture you show of arable farm land will soon have no hedges at all. It will be a vast prairie for maize production. Crop rotation may be a thing of the past, at great cost to the health of the soil.

Wild plant and animal life is all but extinguished by the loss of that habitat.

Pressure groups for RSPB (Birds) for wild flowers, for badgers, for the wonderful deer (which the farmer will pretend are vermin, and then have for a fine lunch on Sunday) even for the rabbit should be carefully heard. Before long birds will ONLY be garden birds.

I was prosecuted recently for objecting to a new property developer neighbor, destroying birds and their nests during the nesting season, by the score.

He believes that there is no such thing as wildlife. If birds cannot live in the hedgerow, and are permanently destroyed in the garden, then many species will be exterminated.

It is easy to complain about the Brazilian Matto Grosso, when exactly the same is being done in the lost lanes of Great Britain, the pot calling the kettle black!

Gareth Howell
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