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**MONSANTO ABANDONS  
“ROUNDUP READY” GENETICALLY ENGINEERED WHEAT**

**ST. LOUIS** – In a surprise move, Monsanto Corp. announced today it will defer “all further efforts” to introduce “Roundup Ready” wheat, citing the genetically engineered wheat’s lack of acceptance among wheat farmers and foreign consumers. In a press release issued this morning, the biotech giant announced plans to focus on development of new genetically engineered traits for corn, cotton, and soybeans, while discontinuing all breeding and field-level research of “Roundup Ready” genetically engineered wheat.

“This underscores what we’ve been saying for years: There’s no consumer demand for genetically engineered wheat,” said Circle wheat farmer Helen Waller, a member of the Northern Plains Resource Council. “Our customers don’t want it, and we’re not interested in planting what we can’t sell.”

At issue is a strain of hard red spring wheat genetically engineered to be resistant to the herbicide Roundup, which is owned by Monsanto. Roughly 60% of Montana’s hard red spring wheat is exported, primarily to Asian buyers who have repeatedly indicated that they will not buy genetically engineered wheat.

A study by Dr. Robert Wisner – a leading grain market economist at Iowa State University – found the introduction of genetically engineered wheat within the next two to six years could devalue Montana’s wheat by one third and result in a loss of 50% of Montana’s export markets.

“Monsanto’s decision to drop Roundup Ready wheat is a sigh of relief for Montana,” said Waller. “Northern Plains has devoted tremendous resources to protect our wheat markets. Our volunteers – myself included – have logged hundreds of miles and hours to advocate for protection of Montana’s \$800 million wheat industry. It’s good to know that our markets aren’t in immediate danger.”

Over the last two legislative sessions, Northern Plains and other organizations pushed for a slew of bills to address possible impacts to Montana’s wheat industry. Only one – a non-binding resolution declaring the 2003 Legislature’s intent that genetically engineered wheat not be commercially introduced until there’s a market for it – passed into law.

Northern Plains is a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montana citizens to protect water quality, family farms and ranches, and Montana’s unique quality of life. Copies of Monsanto’s press release and Dr. Wisner’s study are available at [www.northernplains.org](http://www.northernplains.org).