

## Raszka Shelley

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**From:** Jeanne Chouard <chouard.jeanne@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2013 2:02 PM  
**To:** Rancier Racquel  
**Subject:** Local agriculture control vital for local economies! No on SB 663

SB 663 will have detrimental effects on local economies throughout Oregon. Each county should continue to have the right to regulate agriculture as it relates specifically to each county's geography, economic development and unique businesses that thrive in every Oregon county. For example, here in the Rogue valley, local family farmers are working to pass an ordinance to ban the growth of genetically-engineered crops in an open environment which are threatening small and organic farms ability to stay in business. Huge biotechnology companies, here in the Rogue valley it's the Swiss company, Syngenta,(ironically Syngenta is banned from growing genetically-engineered crops in Switzerland) are leasing farmland to grow genetically-engineered crops. Pollen from these crops drifts to nearby family farms and gardeners whose farmers and gardeners do not want genetic contamination from the drifting pollen. Organic farmers CANNOT sell their produce or their seed if it has been contaminated by GMO plants grown in the same area. And, the organic farmer has to pay the cost of genetic-testing to determine if contamination occurred. Family and public school gardens are currently being threatened by contamination. In the Rogue Valley, several Farmer's Markets make a significant impact in building up our local economies--but without the backbone of local small family farms and local organic farms, the Farmer's Markets will not exist. There is a huge potential for growth in organic and non-gmo production as more and more Americans are choosing to buy natural foods. Whole-foods recently announced a policy of requiring labeling of all products containing genetically-engineered food. Our local farmers here in the Rogue Valley are excited about expanding their markets and being able to fill the demand for natural food. But, if genetically-engineered crops are grown without limits here in the Rogue Valley, the small family farmers who grow natural and organic crops will not be able to sell their crops as free from genetic manipulation. Ultimately, this is a decision the people of the Rogue Valley need to make through a ballot measure.

The people of Southern Oregon deserve the right to vote on this upcoming ballot measure and decide for themselves in limiting genetically-engineered crops in the Rogue Valley is important for our local economies, health and way of life. Additionally, throughout Oregon, each county should be allowed to vote and institute laws. Agriculture affects us all--not just those who own land. What happens on a farm in your community affects all the families in that community. This is why Oregonians deserve a voice and the ability to pass local laws and policies must be preserved.

SB 663 is being pushed by the biotechnology corporation, Monsanto, to ensure that their genetically-engineered products can be sold throughout Oregon. The Oregon Farm Bureau receives 25 percent of their funding from Monsanto. Monsanto's primary business is the pesticide industry. The Oregon Farm Bureau is not the voice of small Oregon family farms and the growing and thriving organic farm businesses in Oregon. Please vote NO on SB 663 and let the people of Oregon decide what's best for Oregon communities.

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