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PRESS RELEASE

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Natural health watchdog aims to trigger balanced GM crop debate

Article published today by ANH-Intl founder in *New Statesman* Centenary Issue

Natural health watchdog, the Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl), today releases an article by its founder, Robert Verkerk PhD, in the *New Statesman's* Centenary Issue – its biggest ever. The article intends to help stimulate proper, balanced debate on the subject of genetically modified (GM) crops.

UK Environment Minister Owen Paterson, the UK government's newly appointed Chief Scientific Advisor Sir Mark Walport and the European Commission's Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Anne Glover are all fervent supporters of GM crops. With politicians and sections of the scientific establishment seemingly desperate to force the British public to drop its resistance to genetically modified (GM) crops, ANH-Intl believes that a genuine debate, with balanced information, is urgently required.

"Paterson, Walport and Glover are asking the British public, as well as industry and politicians, to get behind GM crops on their say-so", says Dr Verkerk. "They seem to expect the public to act like sheep and to simply believe it when governments and government scientists tell them that GM crops are necessary to beat the impending world food crisis. However, they provide little or no evidence to support their case".

Dr Verkerk's one-page statement in the Centenary Issue of the *New Statesman* will be circulated to politicians and industry leaders in the UK and throughout Europe. It will also be available in newsagents around the UK for around 6 months.

The article explains that great scientific uncertainty exists with respect to both the benefits and risks of GM crop technology, contrary to what the public is often told.

Dr Verkerk asserts that, *"Key facts about GM are often not disclosed to the public or politicians. This includes grave concerns about the technology among some of the world's leading ecologists, the lack of evidence for the potential of GM crops to alleviate hunger or poverty and the absence of evidence for consistent improvements in yields or reduced agricultural inputs."*

"Promoting natural and sustainable healthcare through the use of good science and good law"

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Also withheld from the public, and now revealed in Sir Gordon Conway's new book *One Billion Hungry*, is the fact that nearly all major crop developments that have improved yields, drought resistance, insect or pathogen resistance – even in recent years – have been the result of non-GM plant breeding techniques.

The *New Statesman* Centenary Issue is now on sale and Dr Verkerk's article appears on page 74, the first page at the beginning of Chapter 3, 'A Radical Century'.

ENDS.

Contact

For further information, please contact Dr Robert Verkerk via the Alliance for Natural Health International office in Dorking, Surrey, UK; tel +44 (0)1306 646 600, info@anhinternational.org.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Link to 'Inside The Centenary Issue' of New Statesman:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/staggers/2013/04/inside-centenary-issue>

Link to ANH-Intl Media Pack, covering pro-GM claims and referenced counter-arguments on world hunger, and the health and environmental effects of GM crops:

http://anh-europe.org/sites/default/files/130715-ANH-MediaPack-GM_FIN-1.pdf

About Robert Verkerk PhD

Founder, executive and scientific director of Alliance for Natural Health (ANH) International (www.anhinternational.org) and ANH Europe (www.anh-europe.org), and Scientific Director of ANH-USA (www.anh-usa.org)

Robert Verkerk PhD is an internationally acclaimed scientist with over 30 years experience in the field of sustainability, specifically as it relates to agriculture and healthcare. He has a Doctorate and Masters degree from Imperial College London, where he also worked as a postdoctoral research fellow.

In 2002, he founded the Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl), an independent, not-for-profit research, educational and advocacy organisation with an international remit to protect and promote natural and sustainable healthcare using 'good science' and 'good law'. As executive and scientific director of ANH-Intl, Dr Verkerk has directed legal actions to protect the right to natural health within European national courts as well as the European Court of Justice. Scientifically, he has exposed the limitations of classical risk analysis as practiced by government authorities and is a recognised pioneer in the development of novel, scientifically rational risk and benefit analysis approaches.

The ANH-Intl presently has regional offices in both the UK and USA, affiliate organisations in New Zealand and Norway, and collaborates with integrative medicine practitioner organisations around the world.

As a director of ANH-Intl's sister organisation, ANH Consultancy Ltd, Dr Verkerk has helped numerous US businesses to enter the complex EU market, while also defending the right to continue sale of products provisionally classified as unlicensed drugs or unauthorised novel foods by European regulatory authorities.

Dr Verkerk has authored some 60 papers in scientific journals and conference proceedings and contributes regularly to magazines and other popular media. He is an accomplished and inspirational speaker and communicator on a wide range of issues relating to sustainability.

About the Alliance for Natural Health International

www.anhinternational.org

Alliance for Natural Health International is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to protecting and promoting natural and sustainable healthcare using the tools of 'good science' and 'good law'. It is an international alliance of consumers, practitioners, doctors, scientists and lawyers, as well as specialist natural health enterprises, all with a common goal of optimising human health using, as far as possible, approaches that are compatible with human physiology and our genetic backgrounds.