

# Mexico's GMO Corn Ban

This eBook examines Mexico's GMO ban, revealing evidence of a strategic approach to gradually introduce GMOs that mirrors patterns seen in other countries, often employing "following the science" rhetoric to override public opposition.

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**GMO Debate**  
A critical perspective on eugenics

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Dr. Ignacio Chapela in his classroom.

# The "Immoral GMO 🌽 Maize" Chapela Affair

# Mexico's GMO Ban


## A Case Study in Corruption and Strategic Deception

In December 2020, Mexican President [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#) signed a decree to ban genetically modified corn by 2024, sparking a significant trade dispute with the  United States. However, a closer examination of Mexico's GMO policies and history reveals a complex web of corruption and strategic maneuvering that calls into question the true motives behind this ban.

To understand the current situation, we must first look back to the early 2000s and the case of [Dr Ignacio Chapela](#), a Mexican professor and GMO scientist. The "*Chapela Affair*" provides crucial context for Mexico's apparent shift in GMO policy.

In 2001, Dr Chapela and his research team published findings in *Nature* showing that GMO corn had contaminated native Mexican maize. What followed was a coordinated campaign of threats, intimidation, and attempts to discredit Dr Chapela's research.


The Mexican government's response to Dr Chapela's work reveals a deep-seated commitment to enforcing GMO adoption in the country. As reported by [GMWatch.org](#):

*The official Biosafety Commissioner took him to an empty office room where he was told that he "was creating a really serious problem, that he was going to pay for. The development of GMO crops was something that was going to happen in  Mexico and elsewhere."*

*Dr Chapela: 'So you are going to take a revolver out now and kill me or something, what is going on?'*

Dr Chapela was offered a place on a secret scientific team, including representatives from Monsanto and DuPont, to "*inform the world about GMO*". When he refused, the threats escalated:

*"He brings up my family", recalls Dr Chapela. "He makes reference to him knowing my family and ways in which he can access my family. It was very cheap. I was scared. I felt intimidated and I felt threatened for sure."*

This incident demonstrates the lengths to which officials were willing to go to suppress research critical of GMOs and enforce their adoption in  Mexico.

# The Current Ban: A Strategic Deception?

**G**iven this history of corruption and strong-arm tactics in favor of GMOs, Mexico's current ban on genetically modified corn for human consumption requires scrutiny.

Several factors suggest that this ban may be part of a longer-term strategy to ultimately introduce GMOs more broadly:

- ▶ **Selective Ban:** While Mexico has banned GMO corn for human consumption, it continues to feed GMO corn to 🐭 animals. This market represents a significant portion of corn consumption, with 79% of Mexico's corn imports from the U.S. being GMO corn for animal feed.

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- ▶ **"Following the Science" Rhetoric:** In its public defense against U.S. accusations, Mexico claims to be "*following the science*". This language mirrors strategies seen in other countries where GMOs are first introduced for animal feed, tested for a decade, and then approved for human consumption when '*proven safe*' by science, often under new names like "*New Genomic Techniques*" (NGTs), "*precision breeding*" or "*GMO 2.0*".

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- ▶ **Historical Context:** The threats and intimidation against Dr Chapela continued until just a decade before the current GMO ban. This recent history of intense commitment to enforcing GMO adoption in Mexico raises questions about the sincerity of the current ban.


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- ▶ **Lack of Consistency:** The discrepancy between banning GMOs for human consumption while allowing them for animal feed lacks logical consistency if the concern is truly about the safety or environmental impact of GMOs.

## A Global Pattern of Deception

**M**exico's approach bears striking similarities to strategies employed in other countries, both in Europe and Africa. The pattern typically unfolds as follows:

- ▶ Cater to public and moral concerns by introducing a GMO ban for human consumption while continuing to feed GMO to animals.
- ▶ A decade-long period of "testing" and acclimation while humans already indirectly consume GMO-contaminated food through GMO-fed animals.
- ▶ Science declares a new type of GMOs 'safe' and people are pressured to 'follow the science'.

In the  UK, where public GMO opposition had been strong, it was revealed that 80% of the meat in the country was already tainted with GMO animal feed before attempts were made to deregulate 'new GMOs' (precision breeding). The UK government is now framing the move towards deregulation as "following the science", despite 85% of responses to a public consultation being against deregulation.

 Italy presents another striking example. While the country banned GMOs with profound public emotion as a basis, its extensive use of GMO animal feed and GMO fertilizers was so extensive that surface drinking water in regions like Lombardia and Po-Veneto became heavily polluted with GMO fertilizer. This reveals a strategic intent: while publicly catering to moral considerations against GMO, Italy has been quietly feeding GMO to animals on a massive scale for decades.

## Conclusion

**M**exico's GMO ban, when examined in the context of its history with Dr Chapela and its inconsistent policies allowing GMO corn for animal feed, appears to be part of a strategic long-term plan to introduce GMOs more broadly in  Mexico. The discrepancy between banning GMOs for human consumption while allowing them for animal feed lacks logical consistency if the concern is truly about safety or environmental impact.

The "*follow the science*" rhetoric employed by Mexico in its public defense against U.S. accusations is a clear indicator that the strategy observed in other countries is at play here. This language mirrors approaches seen elsewhere, where GMOs are first introduced for animal feed, tested for a decade, and then approved for human consumption when "*proven safe*" by science, often under new names like "*New Genomic Techniques*" (NGTs), "*precision breeding*" or "*GMO 2.0*".

This pattern of deception, seen across multiple countries, raises serious concerns about the integrity of agricultural policy decisions and the potential for corruption driven by massive financial interests in GMO technology.

Here's an excerpt of the "*Chapela Affair*" on [GMWatch.org](https://www.gmwatch.org):



'I don't want to be a martyr by any means, but I cannot avoid now realising that this is a very, very well concerted and coordinated and paid for campaign to discredit our GMO research.' **Dr. Ignacio Chapela**



He [Government official] makes reference to knowing my family & ways he can access my family. It was very cheap. I was scared. I felt intimidated and I felt threatened for sure.

The official Biosafety Commissioner took him to an empty office room where he was told that he 'was creating a really serious problem, that he was going to pay for. The development of GMO crops was something that was going to happen in Mexico and elsewhere.'

Dr. Chapela replied: 'So you are going to take a revolver out now and kill me or something, what is going on?'. Then the Biosafety official offered Dr. Chapela a deal: he could become part of a secret scientific team of top scientists that informed the world about GMO. He could meet his team members in Baja, California. Two scientists from Monsanto and two from DuPont.

Dr. Chapela refused: 'Well that is not the way I work, and I wasn't the problem, and the problem is GMO'. Then events took a very sinister turn. 'He brings up my family', recalls Dr. Chapela. 'He makes reference to him knowing my family and ways in which he can access my family. It was very cheap. I was scared. I felt intimidated and I felt threatened for sure. Whether he meant it I don't know, but it was very nasty to the point that I felt "why should I be here, listening to all this and I should leave".'

The threats intensified against Dr. Chapela, who received a letter from an agricultural under-secretary, saying that the government had 'serious concerns' about the 'consequences that could be unleashed' from his GMO research. Moreover the government, would 'take the measures it deems necessary to recuperate any damages to agriculture or the economy in general that this publication's content could cause'

Dr. Chapela believes that the approach was not surprising, as the Agriculture Ministry itself is 'riddled with conflicts of interest. There are just working as spokespeople for DuPont, Syngenta and Monsanto'.

Just over two months later, Dr. Chapela's team published their GMO research in Nature.

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### (2009) 🌽 **Immoral Maize – account of Chapela affair**

This is far and away the best account of the Mexican maize scandal and the campaign by Monsanto and its supporters to discredit the Berkeley researchers, David Quist and Ignacio Chapela.

Source: [GMWatch.org](http://GMWatch.org) (PDF backup)



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