

## Faith-Based Investors Target RR Sugar Beets

Source: Capital Press  
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A group of religious investors called the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) has called on U.S. food companies to avoid using sugar from genetically modified (GM) "Roundup Ready" sugar beets. The GM beets will be sold to U.S. farmers on a widespread basis for the first time this spring. The ICCR says that it is a coalition of nearly 300 faith-based institutional investors representing more than US\$100 billion in invested capital. ICCR's web-based campaign has targeted 63 different restaurant, food, beverage, and candy companies. The list includes well-known brands such as Campbell Soup, Kraft, Sara Lee, PepsiCo, Wendy's and McDonald's. "Our message is simple: Don't mess with sugar," said Leslie Lowe, ICCR director of energy and environmental programs during a recent call-in news conference. Luther Markwart, executive vice president of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association, said that U.S. regulators "know this crop inside and out" and have approved it. Markwart criticized the practice of some GM opponents of calling sugar from Roundup Ready beets "Roundup Ready sugar or genetically modified sugar." "The sugar beet is genetically modified to be resistant to glyphosate, but the sugar that's extracted is the same," Markwart said. He added that most of the companies that ICCR is targeting already produce food from other GM crops, including Roundup Ready crops. Margaret Weber, coordinator of corporate responsibility for Adrian Dominican Sisters, said that many food companies might choose to label products containing GM ingredients if they could, but the U.S. does not segregate GM commodities from non-GM commodities. "This prevents choice for companies and it prevents choice for consumers," Weber argued. The article can be viewed online at the link below.

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