

Nanotechnology and Justice

The implications of converging technologies for the Poor, Marginalized and Dispossessed

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ETC: Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration

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1:00 to 2:30 pm, 206 Old Horticulture Bldg

Nanoscale technology, with billions of dollars of corporate and government funding, is regarded as the next technological wave – set to upturn social relations, food and healthcare systems, global trade and even what it is to be human. While breathless societal promises are made for Nanotech, the history of new technology waves doesn't bode well for the underprivileged in society: the rich and powerful tend to ride the new waves, shaping their outcomes and profiting en route, while the poor and marginalized are often swamped by the impacts of new technologies - unable to adjust to rapid disruptive change. In the area where nanotech meets food and agriculture these disparities may well be most pronounced and controversial since agriculture provides meaning, self determination and security for billions of poor farmers worldwide. The recent history of powerful new agricultural technologies (agrochemicals, the green revolution and biotechnology) suggest that unless a radically different approach is taken to innovation, nano-led changes in our food fields could worsen inequalities and threaten livelihoods.

The Institute for Food and Agricultural Standards at MSU has received NSF funding to consider the social and ethical dimensions of Agrifood Nanotechnology. The university community and general public are encouraged to attend to hear about this three-year project and how they may participate in its upcoming activities.

For further information please call 432-0317, or feel free to browse our project website: <http://www.msu.edu/user/ifas/nano/nano.html>