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If you oppose GMOs (genetically modified food) are you condemning millions to death by starvation?

Sunday, July 07, 2013

This appeared in the June issue of Fortune Magazine

"Why the March on Genetically Modified Food Hurts the Hungry"

You can find the article online at:

money.cnn.com/2013/05/23/news/economy/genetically-modified-food.pr.fortune/index.html

[3/05/23/news/economy/genetically-modified-food.pr.fortune/index.html](http://money.cnn.com/2013/05/23/news/economy/genetically-modified-food.pr.fortune/index.html)

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[rtune/index.html](http://money.cnn.com/2013/05/23/news/economy/genetically-modified-food.pr.fortune/index.html)

(Edit: It was just pointed out in a comment that you can't read the whole article online without a Fortune subscription. Seems rather short-sighted on their part if they want to make a point to a larger audience. I'll try to add a few of their main points at the end)

You can also find rebuttals online such as

"Why Nina Easton is Wrong about Genetically Modified Crops"

www.floatingpath.com/2013/06/11/why-nina-easton-is-dead-wrong-about-genetically-modified-crops/

[3/06/11/why-nina-easton-is-dead-wrong-about-genetically-modified-crops/](http://www.floatingpath.com/2013/06/11/why-nina-easton-is-dead-wrong-about-genetically-modified-crops/)

[-dead-wrong-about-genetically-modified-crops/](http://www.floatingpath.com/2013/06/11/why-nina-easton-is-dead-wrong-about-genetically-modified-crops/)

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I've been interested in this topic since I first learned of the initiatives to label GMO foods. According to the first article, labeling is a bad idea since

"...labels on foods with GM ingredients will falsely and unnecessarily alarm consumers in part because the pro-label lobby has been pushing the notion that the foods are unsafe, untested, and unnatural"

Perhaps Sparkers are already aware of the Fortune article. It was published on May 23rd. I was in Europe then, where GMO products are banned.

I thought I'd just throw this out there for the collective wisdom of the SP community.

Edit#2: Quotes from the Fortune article (since they won't let you read the whole article online without a subscription)

What's cast as a fight against GM crops looks more like an elitist war on the world's poor.

...technological improvement in food production has defined large-scale human economic progress since the 1700s (US AID director)

Technology such as GM seeds save lives, especially as climate change eats into crop yields

Activist websites brim with unfounded scare tactics...

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Edit#3: One more quote from the Fortune article

"Poor farmers in India, China, and West Africa have been pulled out of poverty because of their ability to grow pest-resistant GM cotton. Water efficient maize grown in East Africa is protecting the livelihood of farmers-and the lives of people-during the onslaught of drought"

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TEXASFILLY

It all comes down to the almighty dollar and the corporate power of the big boys in D.C. I've been researching GMOs for a while and there is nothing good to be gained by the U.S. masses. Obama has already thrown us under the bus with the "Monsanto Protection Act" that prohibits Monsanto being hauled into Federal courts. ACK! This is just another blatant example of corporate greed cloaked in "feed the world." The reality is that we have enough food to feed the world, it is a matter of distribution. And from this, the organic community can name their price if one is inclined to eat safe, natural foods. Just my thoughts~ thanks for sharing yours. BB~

2751 days ago



PATTIEMCD

Thanks for starting this post and to all the input from my fellow sparklers. I know what I'll be reading up on this evening.

2804 days ago



KANSASROSE67

Growing up on a farm and still living in a rural community and involved in ag, I see misinformation on both sides of this issue. Genetically modifying crops in a lab is just a speeded-up version of the kind of crossing and hybridization that humans have been doing for centuries. That part doesn't worry me.

The aspects that do concern me:

- 1) Roundup-Ready crops have increased the use of herbicides. Although they are supposed to be safe, I'm not a huge fan of chemical use, period. On the other hand, this no-till farming that leaves crop residue in the field reduces soil erosion, and reduces soil compaction and fossil fuel consumption because fewer trips are made through the field.
- 2) I fear that we losing important genetic diversity as fewer and fewer different varieties are grown commercially.
- 3) Large corporations control the GMO process and have even sued farmers who save their own seed. I don't ever think having such vital aspects of food production controlled by corporate interests is a good idea. In fact, it scares me a lot. You can be sure that shareholders will profit much more than either farmers or consumers.

These issues are complicated and often misunderstood by the average consumer, who is far removed from agriculture in our modern society. Thanks for starting the discussion!

2894 days ago



FANGFACEKITTY

How is something that is genetically modified "natural"?

I prefer to avoid GMOs. I am not looking forward to returning to the US in a few years where I will have no idea if the foods I am eating are GMOs or not because of the lack of labeling. It is enough to make me wish I could be food self-sufficient.

2898 days ago



MARYJEANSL

I personally do oppose GMOs. However, I believe everyone should have the choice whether to buy them. If they are so great, and so safe, then convince people - convince *me* if you can. I am willing to listen to arguments on both sides. But by not letting people make a choice, by refusing to label, then you are actually convincing me that there is something to hide. What I have learned by my reading is that massive - and I mean MASSIVE amounts of herbicides are sprayed onto the GMO crops, and, at least partly, absorbed by them. No thank you, I don't care to have some Roundup with my coffee.

And, in addition, why do so many European countries forbid them? Why is it that ingredient lists even in processed foods in Europe are way shorter than in the US, and almost never contain ingredients that sound like they came from a chemical plant?

2898 days ago





MOOSLADY

Isn't one of the biggest issues with GMO crops, not their own genetic make up per se but the level of pesticide/herbicide residue they carry due to farmers being able to use larger amounts to control weeds and pests? Then there is the issue of lack of bio-diversity in farming of late, so many issues in agriculture. That said, saying controlled GMO crops from which third world farmers can't save seed and must buy from the parent company every year, is so much better than before is rather like saying that sharecropping is so much better than slavery. OK, sure, but shouldn't we be aiming a little higher?

2898 days ago



CD13252816

Why are we still debating the merits of GMO food? Why would anyone eat engineered genes? If they were meant to be there then they would occur naturally. Keep up the good work. This topic



is never overplayed. We all need to know what we are eating...not what's eating us.

2898 days ago



DESERTJULZ

I don't buy that viewpoint at all. If GMO foods are so fantastic, why do so many very forward thinking, first-world countries ban them?

2898 days ago



WOLFKITTY

I don't think that this article touches on how quickly those countries and poor farmers become dependent on the GMO seeds (which can NOT propagate on their own).

I think there's a lot of technology that helps everyone. Advances assist people all across the world, but there is a cost.

A label in America is not going to stop GMO companies from selling their seeds in India, China, and Africa. And if the "real" problem is that the label will deter people who falsely believe that GMOs are harmful, then the focus needs to be on providing evidence that they are not, and educating people. Regardless, people deserve the chance to make a CHOICE.

People still choose to smoke cigarettes, eat donuts, and even eat out in restaurants when the calorie count of their cheesecake is more than what's advisable for a whole day's worth of consumption.

I think there is misinformation on both sides. For some reason, people of this world are so unmoved that it takes extremes to get them to care. It's sad.

2898 days ago



DR1939

It is too easy to get on one side or the other of complex issues such as these. That kind of either/or thinking gets us into trouble. The most pertinent example of this is the elimination of the use of DDT to kill mosquitoes because the bird population was seriously impacted. Sounds like a really smart thing, right? Well, because we did not couple it with a good program of mosquito eradication children, as well as adults, in many countries are dying at record rates from malaria. (If this disturbs you, you can help by donating even a small amount to Against Malaria at <http://www.againstmalaria.com/nets.aspx>). GMOs fall into some good, some bad. Stem-cell research, not buying child-labor products--these are not absolutely right or wrong. BTW, I love George McGovern's solution for the child-labor problem. These children work because their families need the money to buy food. He, along with a Republican Senator whose name I can't pull up now, instituted a food in the schools program around the world, including the US. If you go to school, you get your lunch. This is still a major international program, even in countries such as North Korea. It also is one of those that people often believe we should eliminate because we spend too much money on foreign programs.

2898 days ago



MERRYMARY42

I know and I straddle the fence on this one, I believe that corn has been genetically modified since I was a kid, we de-tasseled corn for money for school clothes in the summer and it was for hybrid corn companies/I am sure we get alot of GMO foods daily, so I agree with Leslie, I too try to follow the money, and quite often I go the other way

Thought provoking

2898 days ago



COCK-ROBIN

Very interesting!

2899 days ago



MISCHAKEO

I wonder really in our daily consumption of modern foods..how many of the foods that we are eating that have not been modified..even the produce we eat may be from a healthy plant that has been bred to last longer...to say nothing of the meat industry with its unhealthy breeding practices. Ideally it would be nice to offer the poor countries the same quality of grains that Americans are eating..

2899 days ago



LANNIEMANUEL
 interstering
 2899 days ago



WATERMELLEN
 Very thought-provoking . . . and akin to the ethical dilemma of third-world clothing manufacture by people who are working in unsafe conditions for pennies a day . . . but who would have no jobs at all but for the Western world's insatiable demands for lowest cost fashion.
 2899 days ago



FITFOODIE806
 Who are the "hungry"? The poor children in Africa that we see on commercials? Sustainability, education, and class warfare are bigger threats to the hungry than GMO seeds there. Or do they mean the hungry, poor children in America? The ones that live in food deserts, that have little to no access to fresh produce, GMO or not.



At this point, the companies need some type of defense. This one is weak.

Thank you for sharing. Your posts always make me think.
 2899 days ago



LESLIE871948
 I love to watch talks on TED, and there are several there about food matters. Also since I tend to lean in the direction of "follow the money" when I read reports of any kind, but especially research, I am a skeptic. Connecting food labels to world hunger? Please. Of course you cannot read the entire article on my computer without subscribing to Fortune magazine. I don't know about the health or not health of GMO's, but I choose local grown food from the farmers market here because I do know about logic. There is a TED talk at the moment by a physician who is researching diet that is not funded by the sugar producers or any other profit making org. who mentions among other things that toxicity is dose related. It just seems logical to me that as the dose increases of many substances that are mild toxins, our bodies might have a problem with that. 2 tylenol extra strength pills are not a big deal. 22 cause liver damage. If a person eats nothing but things that COME with labels ... Or things grown using roundup? There are other creative things to feed the hungry that don't involve huge profits for large corporations
 2899 days ago



NANNABLACK
 THANK YOU!
 2899 days ago



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