

**E-MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS**

To date, the e-mail responses to this debate have represented both sides of the argument. However, very few have raised significant points not already covered by the official contributors. Those that have appear broadly in favour of the technology.

Edited portions of two such responses are presented below:

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"The advent of agriculture radically changed our world. Usually the benefits are asserted, but increasing evidence is accumulating to suggest that agriculture and domestication may have created the ideal environment for the spread and evolution of numerous problems which present huge challenges to us today. All technology comes at a price, the challenge is to maximise the discount.

Genetic manipulation is an extension of old breeding practices .... (but with) the advantage of greater .... precision. ....eventually we will be compelled into (using) this technology. The mathematical physicist Freeman Dyson once wrote of a story his uncle told him during his youth: once you have the technology you cannot go back. It will be used, the challenge is the best benefits\costs ratio.

Any human endeavour in its infancy will be prone to error. .... To demand a quantification of possible costs is unreasonable. We cannot know these things in advance. Science cannot provide certainty, only best estimates. I suspect this fear of genetic manipulation has more to do with one's personal philosophy than it does about the nature of science and technology. How many of us would be here today is our forebears had decided not to pursue certain avenues because the possible costs were too great?"

**John Hasenkam**

*johnhkm@logicworld.com.au*

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A second contributor addressed the use of GM crops in food products:

"(All foods containing material from GM crops should be labelled. Customers) will then have (the option) to choose. Much the same has been done for the use of chemical fertilizers (and organically grown produce). Yes (those choosing to avoid GM products) may pay more, yes they may miss out on some good things, but that will be their choice. The market will produce items that are not genetically engineered if there is sufficient demand."

**Donald L. Coppock**

*orlab@winthrop.org*

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Contributions to this debate from readers are encouraged, by e-mail only, please, to [debates@nature.com](mailto:debates@nature.com).

The rules are simple: contributions should be short and to the point. The moderator reserves right to select contributions to be posted on the site, and to normal editing for style, sense, length and, of course, good taste.



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