



Are These Our Neighbours?

People for and against the use of genetically modified foods

God said, "See I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth..., you shall have them for food."

Genesis 1:29

God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good
Genesis 1:31

Reasons for use

Make the product grow faster, bigger or more resistant to pests.

Modified plants and animals may increase yields. They may grow well on marginal land, thus aiding the poor and increasing food supplies for a still exploding world population.

Definition:

Food containing ingredients which have had their genetic structure changed.

Background

Mankind has been modifying plants and animals to improve quality and quantity since the beginnings of agriculture about 8000 years ago.

Today's alternative happens in the laboratory with the genes of an organism being 'cut out' and then 'pasted' into another organism.

Some estimate that already 30,000 different foods are modified or contain modified food ingredient.

Countries in Europe have put temporary restrictions on development and importation. (Stores display clearly that none of their products have been genetically modified.)

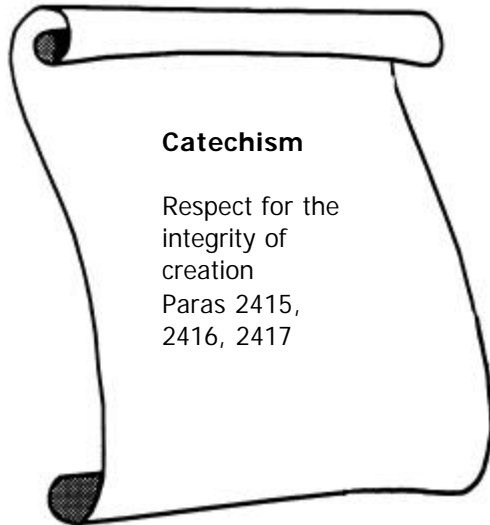
Problems

1. The modification that mankind has done over the ages have all been done within the same species. They were not achieved through radical alterations to their basic structure - a process into the unknown.
2. Under present conditions modified plants and animals are more likely to improve the profits and power of the already rich and powerful nations and corporations than improve the lot of the poor and needy.
3. Patenting and contract control of new strains of seeds, plants and animals by corporations present the ugly possibility of new forms of agricultural serfdom.

Some Responses (there are others)

Christian stewardship strongly suggests we insist on additional long term testing to be done by completely independent authorities, e.g. government.

Enough food is being produced, but it is not distributed in a fair way.



Catechism

Respect for the
integrity of
creation
Paras 2415,
2416, 2417

“Large farmers are the only ones to benefit from GM technology .”

Christian Aid

“GM crops are another major attack on the genetic base of world agricultural stability.”

***Dl: Hugh Spencer
(Australian Tropical Research Foundation)***

Reference Sources

Naked Ape to Super Series, CBC Radio series on tape, David Suzuki.*

Selling Suicide: farming, false promises and genetic engineering in developing countries, Christian Aid, England *

Star Phoenix Paul Hanley weekly columns on the environment *Canada in Organic Growers*

Earthcare Connections, Humboldt (306) 682-2407

Websites: Some possibilities -greenpeace.org/ earthcare.sk.ca/ foodbiotech.org/ agwest.sk.ca/

* available in Social Justice Office

Speaker Resource

The bio technology centre on U of S campus

National Farmer's Union

Earthcare Connections

Saskatchewan Organic Growers

Discussion

1. Are our fears without base?
2. What are the benefits to the health of our nation?
3. Have genetically modified foods any benefit to farmers here, to farmers in the developing world?
4. What is the role of government in protecting the safety of its people's health and well being?
5. What proof is there that the corporate giants are in control of the food prices?

Action Suggestions

1. Invite members of the rural community and groups to be part of your discussions.
2. Investigate the problems of various changes in producing GMO foods as this is a rapidly unfolding dimension of trade and of corporations taking control of the food chain.
3. Be prepared to contact economic and political leaders to hear the differing viewpoints.