Genetically engineered foods: politics vs. science. Can science actually win?

By ACSH Staff — November 12, 2013

Let’s give a big ACSH shoutout to Kevin Bonham, whose November 8th blog in Scientific American superbly pointed out why the intersection of science and ideology can be a dangerous place.

His piece entitled "GMO Labeling, I-522, and Why This Debate Sucks for Progressive Scientists Like Me." is a brilliant examination of multiple facets of the GM foods debate, in which he concludes that despite his political beliefs (very liberal), he will go with the scientific evidence not political dogma when it comes to this controversial issue.

He begins, "I’m a granola (and dirt)-eating, tree-hugging, liberal/progressive. If I was called by a pollster asking about the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), I’d be counted among the folks that disapprove, but only because I think it doesn’t go far enough (I’m for single-payer, but I could have settled for the public option). I think we should tax the rich at much higher rates, expand social safety nets and reign in corporations. I support local farmers and shop at Whole Foods."

All that said, to me, science matters more than ideology.

ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom comments, “It is rare and refreshing to see someone stand up to the anti-GM movement (despite his political beliefs) that liberal non-scientists would consider to be blasphemy.

Bonham also does an excellent job of informing non-scientists that, not only are GM foods safe, but they are all different, and can thus not logically be lumped together: The simple fact is that there is no evidence that GMOs, as a blanket group, are dangerous. There’s a simple reason for this: not all GMOs are the same. Every plant created with genetic technology contains a different modification. More to the point, if the goal is to know more about what’s in your food, a generic GMO label won’t tell you. Adding Bt toxin to corn is different than adding Vitamin A to rice or vaccines to potatoes or heart-protective peptides to tomatoes.

We strongly urge you to read this provocative and informative blog.

Links