

# Reason Magazine: Bans, Borgs and Bad Luck



By Hank Campbell — January 7, 2016



Credit: StarTrek.com

Writing at *Reason*, Ron Bailey [dissects some worrying trends](#) [1] and then highlights some insight on cancer which, I am proud to say, [came from us](#) [2].

One worrying trend for environmental activists remains genetically modified organisms (GMOs). I think the GMO hysteria is basically over because it is off-patent, so the big argument that anti-science cranks have used against them -- "we are not anti-science, we're just against any science that is corporate" -- has evaporated. Anyone can produce GMOs so it is not a Monsanto issue, it is exposed as an anti-science issue, especially when they next hypocritically go after RNA interference (RNAi) [after calling mutagenesis organic](#) [3].

But when anti-science groups issue statements like that Venezuela has "one of the world's most progressive seed laws," your watermelon environmentalist (green on the outside, red on the inside) radar alarm probably goes off. EcoWatch says just that, and they love the Venezuelan government, which writes about agriculture couched in phrases like "eco-socialist agriculture." It is the ideal for western elites who embrace their own interpretation of socialism and don't really care if poor people have food to eat.

Cancer is always a mystery, which is why it remains a mystery that we have spent so much money in a supposed War On Cancer, when every legitimate researcher knows it can't be cured. A recent mystery is how early in 2015 cancer we found cancer to just be bad luck -- genetics, or Mother Nature sent high-energy cosmic rays to cause a mutation, like she does in her version of genetic modification in food -- but then later we said that cancer has a strong environmental component and was not bad luck.

Well, we were right both times. While claims about glyphosate or sausage as a carcinogen can just be dismissed as United Nations committees conflating hazard and risk, cigarettes are the real deal. We simultaneously argue for both because that is what the data show, and we are driven by the data. Ironically, environmental groups instead manipulate those same studies -- if smoking can cause cancer, they will claim, so will aspartame or GMOs.

But that's the conundrum being in science media, as trusted guides for the public. Explaining

science is hard, because it is a process, whereas for Natural Resources Defense Council, or enablers at SourceWatch and Mother Jones, it is easy to manufacture fear and doubt, because science is an end result and the process ends when they have a study that matches the preferred outcome of their donors and advertisers.

So that covers bans and bad luck, where does the Borg come in? For that, you have to go read [Venezuela Bans GMOs, Utopia via the Borg Collective, and Cancer: Bad Luck or Environment?](#) <sup>[1]</sup> by Ron Bailey.

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[1] <https://reason.com/blog/2016/01/06/venezuela-bans-gmos-utopia-via-the-borg?source=acsh.org>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2015/12/cancer-causation-battle-bad-environment-not-bad-luck/>

[3] <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/10/20/mutagenesis-one-way-europeans-wish-it-was-1936-again/>