

People do not agree about genetic engineering of crops

People are concerned about some issues related to genetically modified crops. These range from whether or not genetic modification of living things should take place at all, to whether the promise of genetic modification to feed the increasing population of the world is achievable.

At the end of this activity you will:

- understand some of the issues about genetically modified crops that concern Australians;
- clarify your own values on some or all of the issues involved.

You will need:

- access to the internet
- information on canola from *Biochemistry online*.

What to do:

1. Work in a small group of 6 people.
2. Each person selects one of the resource articles listed below in 'Resources' and reads it.
3. Each person then takes 2 minutes or less to explain to the other members of the group what the article says. No questions should be asked at this time.
4. When all articles have been explained, each person has an opportunity to ask up to two questions about any of the articles.
5. Think about what your group has read and ask yourself whether you are not concerned, mildly concerned or very concerned about genetic engineering of crops.

What to do with your information:

Biotechnology Online School Resource

Increasing the public's general awareness of biotechnology and its uses, through the provision of balanced and factual information explaining the technology, its applications, and regulations to safeguard people and the environment.

For further information contact the Gene Technology Information Service on freecall **1800 631 276**.

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The information you have read could be used as source material for a debate. Possible topics for the debate include statements that:

- genetic engineering techniques have revolutionised Australian agriculture for the good;
- genetically engineered crops are dangerous to the Australian environment;
- genetically engineered food is safe to eat;
- genetically engineered crops will produce food more cheaply; and
- butterflies win over boll weevils any day.

Resources:

Monsanto Statement on Bt Corn: Environmental Safety and a Recent Report on the Monarch Butterfly

http://www.biotech-info.net/monsanto_on_btcorn.html

Managing Bt* resistance

http://genetech.csiro.au/research/cotton/fitt_bt_final_short.htm

Risk Research: Transgenic Insect-Resistant Crops Harm Beneficial Insects

<http://www.biotech-info.net/beneficials2.html>

Cotton with built-in pest protection

http://genetech.csiro.au/research/cotton/cotton_with_build_short.htm

Natural pesticides

http://genetech.csiro.au/research/cotton/akhurst_bt_final_short.htm

The science of gene technology: benefits and risks

<http://genetech.csiro.au/debate.htm>

Gene Technology : community views for and against

<http://genetech.csiro.au/debate2.htm>

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