

Anti biotech activists claim that “GM ‘cure’ threatens to be much worse than any agricultural disease”

OPINION: Do we go in to battle with nature or choose a path that respects our ecosystem?

“I KNOW an old lady who swallowed a fly” — we all know the song from our childhood, but what can it possibly tell us about genetically modified crops?

Well, unaware of the fact herself, the old lady was actually getting a rather harsh lesson on Severeid’s Law. Attributed to the late American journalist, Eric Severeid, the law states that the chief cause of problems is solutions; a fact to which I’m sure the “old lady” would attest as she attempted to swallow the horse, which killed her of course.

To see how Severeid’s Law relates to our farming systems and, in particular, genetically modified organisms, it is useful to take a look at the world’s longest-running experiment on GM crops, United States agriculture. They began in the US by swallowing the metaphorical fly: degrading their soils and biodiversity through decades of intensive farming.

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