

## The GMO debate can finally begin

Last Thursday, Mark Lynas simply stated, in measured and scientific terms, that he had changed his mind. It is a measure of the sorry state of many environmental debates that such a calm statement before a polite audience of academics would cause such a ruckus. Lynas says at the end of his speech that “the GM debate is over.” That may overstate the case; the real importance of Lynas’s speech is that it in fact allows the debate to begin.

As Lynas argues quite convincingly, until now the arguments over GM foods were based not in science but in ideology, or worse, aesthetics.

Strip away the dogma, and we must confront the evidence. Are GMO crops harmful to human health? Can they increase yields and thus reduce pressure to clear more land for farming? Do the economics of developing new crops make sense, and can we develop sound regulations for their use? These are the questions we must address, often crop by crop, place by place. This is where the debate must go; sweeping generalities will not help us.

Let’s not allow our beliefs and values to divide us. Lynas’s talk and website were swamped with some embarrassingly vitriolic and harsh criticism — because he opened a debate. That should never be the case. We are all stronger if we embrace science even when it surprises us by overturning some of our beliefs, and we are all stronger if we respect one another’s views.

**View the original article here: [Mark Lynas and the GMO Debate](#)**