

Wheat industry will survive Oregon's GE strain

The following is an edited excerpt.

After news broke that a genetically engineered strain of wheat had been found in Oregon, a reporter asked me if this was the wheat industry's equivalent of mad-cow disease.

Um, no. Mad-cow disease, also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, is a fatal neurodegenerative disease in cattle that killed 144 people in Britain and another 44 elsewhere, closed a few foreign markets to American beef producers for years and completely changed how cattle-feeding and beef-slaughtering was conducted.

The genetically engineered trait found in a single field in a single county in Oregon, on the other hand, was certified as safe in 2004 by the Food and Drug Administration. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any of the genetically engineered grain entered commercial channels.

None of this, however, diminishes the short-term impact of the Oregon find.

Read the complete story here: Wheat industry will survive Oregon's genetically engineered strain