

The dangers of condescension in the GM debate

The following is an editorial summary.

The UK's Environmental Secretary Owen Patterson has been calling for the UK to become a global leader in the development of GM crops. His latest pro-GM speech was given yesterday, June 20, at the Rothamsted Research Institute. Patterson's vision of a pro-GM UK would be reversal of the country's extremely stringent stance on GM crops and foods.

Unfortunately, write's Paul Nightingale, deputy director of the [Science Policy Research Unit](#) at the University of Sussex, his "'deficit model' approach [to the GM issue] is deeply flawed. Such deficit model thinking assumes that if we explain the science, the people will change their minds about a technology." This, argues Nightingale, only serves to make those wary of genetic modification feel condescended to.

His warning — "If you want to get the pro-science, technically sophisticated UK public to change its mind on GM, don't imply they're stupid" — may have implications in other countries like the US or any number of African nations where the debate over GM crops is still raging.

Read the full story here: [The GM slow motion train wreck](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Pateron calls for GM-led agricultural revolution](#)," Farmers Guardian
— *Read more about (and watch a video of) the Environmental Secretary's speech at Rothmasted here.*