

How the 'Poison Potato' impacted the GMO debate

In the late 1960s, researchers from the US Department of Agriculture, Penn State University and the Wise Potato Chip Company collaborated to breed the "Lenape" potato. This new breed soon became hugely popular with potato chip manufacturers, due to the fact that it had the perfect combination of sugar and starch to produce the thin, crispy golden brown potato chips that we know today.

But the Lenape potato's biggest legacy might be its impact on the GMO debate. After the new breed was introduced, the USDA found that it contained heightened levels of solanine, an alkaloid that helps protect the potato against pests that is also slightly toxic and harmful to humans.

The Lenape potato shows that risk and uncertainty is not just associated with genetically modified crops, but crops that come from conventional breeding as well. According to [a new article on Boing Boing](#), "there's actually a lot more risk and uncertainty with conventional breeding, than there is with genetic modification. That's because, with GM, you're mucking about with a single gene. There are a lot more genes in play with conventional breeding, and a lot more ways that surprising genetic interactions could come back to haunt you."

Read the full, original story here: [The case of the poison potato](#)

Additional Resources:

- ["Here's A Good Reason to Stop Eating Potato Chips,"](#) Challenger Community News
- ["Eating one pack a day is like drinking FIVE LITRES of cooking oil a year: The frightening truth about crisps,"](#) Daily Mail