

Black Swan author's paper on precautionary GM food risks indulges in "fear mongering"

Recently, a [paper](#) on the precautionary principle in relation to genetically modified foods has been making rounds in the anti-GMO social media circles. One of the authors is statistician Nassim Nicholas Taleb, who has previously written books such as *The Black Swan* on the impact of low-probability events. The other two authors are physicist Yaneer Bar-Yam, and politician-philosopher Rupert Read. They attempt to develop an improved version of the precautionary principle in an effort to undermine the usage of GM crops.

What can a thinly veiled anti-GM paper written by a physicist, a politician and a statistician teach us about the risks of genetically modified foods? Unfortunately, it is just more of the same illusionary sophistry common among anti-GM activists.

Predictably, the authors quickly descent into anti-Monsanto fearmongering, apparently oblivious to the fact that counterparts exists in the traditional plant breeding industry. The authors claim that they do not want to pay for the "errors by executives of Monsanto". What about the errors caused by the executives of multi-national corporations that deal in seeds from traditional plant breeding?

GM technology causes smaller, more precise and more well-known changes than traditional plant breeding, and they are much more stringently regulated. Thus, GM crops are safer than conventionally bred crops. If you accept conventional crops, then you must also accept GM crops.

Read the full, original article: [Choking the Black Swan: GM Crops and Flawed Safety Concerns](#)