

Cornell survey: Anti-GMO activists favor environment over feeding starving poor

How effective has the war on science by Greenpeace, Union of Concerned Scientists and their progressive donor base been?

Very effective. Effective enough that even when reading about the Irish Potato Famine of 1850, which caused millions to suffer and die, an alarming number would let many perish if it meant using science to prevent it.

Among 859 U.S. grocery shoppers, half the subjects in an [online survey](#) read the story of the 1850s Irish Potato Famine, learning the potential impact of fungal *Phytophthora infestans* on potato and tomato crops today. The other 400-plus pondered a generic plant disease, with no mention of specific crops or historic famines.

People who cared more about the environment were less concerned about threats to crops and insuring a secure food supply. People who cared more about keeping people from starving were pro-GMO. Self-assessed familiarity with genetic modification had a positive relationship on the likelihood that genetic modification was viewed favorably. What really stuck out? People against genetic modification were concerned about the ‘fairness’ of decision-making rather than whether or not people ate.

“Stories of the Irish Potato Famine were no more likely to boost support for disease-resistant genetically modified crops than were our generic crop-disease descriptions,” said Katherine A. McComas, professor and chair of Cornell’s Department of Communication in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who oversaw the survey. “Preconceived views about risks and benefits of agricultural genetic engineering – and perceptions about the fairness and legitimacy of the decision-making process – these things matter most.

“If you think genetically modified crops are dangerous ‘ Frankenfoods ’ and/or that crop disease is best controlled with chemicals – if you suspect federal regulators care more about Big Ag’s interests than your family’s, thus the whole game is rigged – plaintive tales of historical famines won’t change your mind about genetic modification for disease resistance.”

Read the full, original article: [Would You Prevent The 1850 Irish Potato Famine If It Meant GMOs?](#)