

Audio: Ray Bowman interviews Bruce Chassy and GLP's Jon Entine on republished Seralini GMO study

If at first you don't succeed, find another publisher. That seems to be the philosophy of Giles-Éric Seralini, as his once-discredited and heavily criticized biotech study, withdrawn last November from the journal *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, reappeared this week in the German publication *Environmental Sciences Europe*. GLP executive director Jon Entine and professor emeritus of food science and human nutrition at the University of Illinois Bruce Chassy weighed in on the topic and other issues in the politics of biotech and the marketing of fear on Ray Bowman's Food and Farm on America's Web Radio.

What's different this time around than the first article that was pretty thoroughly discredited?

There's really not a lot of difference between this article and the retracted one, Seralini obviously took a body blow and as did the campaigners against genetically modified foods. His cancer rat study was held up as the definitive study showing that there could be serious health problems from genetically modified foods. The scientific community and independent oversight agencies reviewed it and it was really savaged, even before the retraction.

With the retraction from the other journal, this kind of dropped off the table for a while in some circles. But still there's that undercurrent out there that no matter what will return to Seralini and start using it as their basis for all their arguments.

He's the poster boy for the anti-GMO argument. He's a molecular biologist, he had a distinguished academic career so he is a credible scientist who I think has just gone off the rails. He reached such a high profile in doing this anti-GMO study that he's got a lot that he wants to promote, and the anti-GMO movement needs a science figure to lead the charge. They need some scientific credibility and he gives them at least a thin patina of that, whether he's able to convince the murky middle, the large population that isn't really sure how they feel about these things, is questionable at this point.

And I guess that's the big question for the future, is how much of an impact could that have on people who are undecided at this point?

I would say none, to be really candid about it. But this is a long, heated battle; people are divided not on science and facts, they're divided on emotion. It's understandable to some degree because food is so personal to each of us.

Chassy was one of the first to call for the retraction of the Seralini study. This is a similar conversation to what we were having about one or two years ago, isn't it?

Well, I think the conversation is actually a little bit different this time. I don't see that there's been a big reaction to this, that it's created the kind of stir that it did last time. It's not news, it's two years old.

That's kind of the whole point, isn't it?

They actually have some data that they held back last time, and they rewrote their paper to respond to a lot of the criticisms. However, their response wasn't very strong.

When the experiment doesn't have the statistical power to allow you to make a conclusion changing the purpose of the experiment, which was actually what they did – they said, well this wasn't a cancer study, that's why we didn't have fifty animals, this was another kind of study, a feeding study, and that's why we only had ten animals in the control group. Well, you can't after the fact decide that the study's a different kind of study and it's OK to have a smaller control.

There were very poor explanations and excuses. ... I think the consequences were this time, most everybody said, well, this is the same old stuff. I don't think the media has picked up on it the way they did the first time, and even then, the media response was fairly restrained, actually, given the inflammatory nature of the way they announced the work. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

Additional Resources:

- [“Republished retracted Seralini GMO corn rat study faces harsh criticism from scientists,”](#) Genetic Literacy project
- [“If Seralini’s study is valid, he should be able to publish it in legit journal,”](#) Biology Fortified