

PBS's John Hockenberry challenges Vandana Shiva on GMO misstatements

The Takeaway host John Hockenberry interviews anti-GMO activist Vandana Shiva on Monsanto, Bt cotton and global trade, pesticide use, farmer suicides, health risks, and industrial agriculture.

She was at her most cogent speaking about the success of Indian cotton exports over the last decade:

JH: What do you make of the success on cotton production in India that is a result directly of genetically engineered seeds?

VS: Unfortunately, that too is not true. The Cotton Research Institute of India, which is the premiere institute, has done studies.

JH: But the World Trade Administration says that India is one of the biggest producers of cotton, and that was never the case even 10 years ago.

VS: No, that's not true. India was the biggest producer of cotton. Through history we domesticated cotton. We got freedom through Gandhi spinning cotton. We lost cotton through the colonialism when cotton based on slavery shifted to the U.S. Then during the civil war cotton production moved back to India. During the 10 years, pre-GMOs, was 10 years when the U.S. was subsidizing cotton up to \$4 billion a year.

This was the subject of the collapse of the Cancun meetings of the World Trade Organization because the Africans said you are killing us with these subsidies. These subsidies became the issue of dispute in the WTO. Brazil won the case against the U.S. and as long as the subsidies were in place a lot of dumping was taking place, which meant that countries like India couldn't export. When it's the subsidy factor and the trade factor that was changed, India could start exporting again.

JH: So the success...

VS: The success is actually the removal of the subsidy distortions.

JH: Nothing to do with the GMOs...

VS: Nothing to do with the GMOs at all. And where we have increased cotton production is because we have increased acreage. And it's the same story with the green revolution. India produced more rice and wheat, but we increased acreage of rice and wheat, and have had debates with the Borlaug Foundations that we have shown that the land and irrigation explain the increase in production. The idea of miracle seeds and chemicals and now miracle GMOs is covering up the real roots of where production increases.

Read full original transcript: [Vandana Shiva & the Anti-GMO Debate](#)