

Nina Fedoroff, Kevin Folta, GLP's Jon Entine push back on organic-led attack on biotech academic research

A group opposing genetically modified organisms—[U.S. Right to Know](#)—is targeting scientists, demanding they release email exchanges with biotech companies. But prominent scientists and journalists are speaking, out saying this broadly-worded document request demand amounts to an attack on science motivated by ideology not facts.

For its part, USRTK—which is funded almost entirely by the activist Organic Consumers Association—claims its motives are in the public interest:

The state Freedom of Information Act requests are an effort to understand the dynamics between the agrichemical industry's PR efforts, and the public university faculty who sometimes are its public face. ... "We taxpayers deserve to know the details about when our taxpayer-paid employees front for private corporations and their slick PR firms," said Gary Ruskin, executive director of USRTK.

The public records requests filed by U.S. Right to Know covered correspondence to and from professors who work for publicly-funded universities and agrichemical companies such as Monsanto, as well as to and from PR firms such as Ketchum or Fleishman Hillard, and to and from trade associations such as the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Council for Biotechnology Information. The requests are not an effort to obtain any personal information or academic research involving the professors.

In a wide-ranging discussion, Josh Zepps, the host of HuffPost Live, addressed the document demands and the parallels with Climategate, in which scientist emails, collected through FOI requests, were selectively released to make it appear that climate scientists were ideologically motivated, when the complete release of the documents showed the opposite was the case. His guests:

- Nina Fedoroff (Washington, DC) Professor of Biology, Penn State; Senior Science Advisor, OFW Law
- Kevin Folta (Gainesville, FL) Professor of Horticultural Sciences, University of Florida ; Genetically Modified Food Specialist
- Jon Entine @JonEntine (Cincinnati , OH) Executive Director, Genetic Literacy Project ; Senior Fellow, UC Davis World Food Center