

'The End of Plenty' author Joel Bourne, Jr: No GMO 'damages' but 'no great benefits'

By 2040, the world's population is predicted to rise to nine billion. More than 800 million people are malnourished. Another two billion are short of essential micronutrients, which affect health. A billion more consume too many calories and are obese.

What can be done? In his new book, "The End of Plenty: The Race To Feed A Crowded World," Joel K. Bourne Jr., a former senior editor for *National Geographic*, travels from India to China and Africa to find answers.

Speaking from his home in North Carolina, he explains how biofuels distort food prices; how Iran offers an unlikely model for reducing population; and why the world needs a Pink Revolution.

[GMOs](#) are either hailed as a silver bullet to end world hunger or a Pandora's box that will wreak havoc on nature. Where do you stand on the debate?

In my plant breeding classes at NC State, in the '80s, the plant breeders were beside themselves with the potential of this new technology. [Norman Borlaug](#) dreamed of taking the rhizomes from legumes like soybeans and peanuts, which can take nitrogen from the atmosphere, and transfer them to grains like wheat, rice and maize, so that poor farmers around the world could grow these crops without heavy investment in nitrogen.

All these promises came out of this technology, but what did we get? We got two blockbuster traits: resistance to RoundUp herbicide, which the manufacturer, Monsanto, also makes; and the [Bt transgene](#), a soil bacterium that will kill [lepidopteran insects](#) like corn rootworm or European corn borer, which are major agronomic pests.

The great fear that GMOs would cause catastrophic environmental or human health damages has not appeared. But neither have the great benefits.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [How Will We Feed a World of Nine Billion People?](#)