Yale professor dissects flawed anti-GMO commentary in New England Journal of Medicine

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis.

A recent commentary published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) by Philip J. Landrigan and Charles Benbrook uses extremely strained logic and misrepresentation to question the safety of GMO foods and argue for labeling.

The primary logical flaw in their argument is equating GMOs with the use of herbicides. They write:

> Herbicide resistance is the main characteristic that the biotechnology industry has chosen to introduce into plants.

GM technology is a technique that can be used to introduce a variety of traits. It is not inherently tied to herbicide resistance.

Questions about GM technology should focus on GM technology, not the consequences of one particular application of the technology. Their argument is the equivalent of opposing metallurgy because the technology is used to make bullets.

Landrigan and Benbrook falsely equate GMOs with herbicides, and falsely create alarm about non-existent risks of GMO, while downplaying the fact that there is no specific risk to the technology itself. Are their concerns about herbicides legitimate, however? Yes and no.

Landrigan and Benbrook claim that use of herbicide resistant GM crops has lead to an increase in herbicide use. This, however, is misleading.

They compare herbicide use today with five years ago, but total herbicide use has not increased compared to pre-GMO level. Farmers were using more toxic herbicides long before GMOs.

Many commenters noted that Benbrook disclosed no conflicts of interest. Meanwhile:

> Benbrook was formerly the research director of The Organic Center, which is funded by the organic industry and is now officially part of the Organic Trade Association.

In the anti-GMO narrative, having any connection to a biotech company is a fatal conflict of interest, while a connection to the organic food industry, no matter how close, is not a conflict at all.

Read full, original post: Anti-GMO in the NEJM