

CATO GMO debate: Should we regulate based on 'responsible research' or health and safety criteria?

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The Cato Institute's Marion Tupy hosted a January 20, 2016 debate on "[GMOs and the Future of the Global Food Supply](#)" featuring Monsanto Chief Technology Officer Robert Fraley, a [World Food Prize laureate](#); and [Jennifer Kuzma](#), a professor in the Genetic Engineering and Society Cluster at North Carolina State University.

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"In the nearly 20 years that these products have been on the market," Fraley declared, "they have delivered numerous benefits to growers and the environment and have not had a single documented instance of harm to human or animal health." ... Fraley suggested that the audience would be surprised to hear that Monsanto actually favored labeling foods made with ingredients from biotech crops.

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Kuzma quickly challenged the notion that biotech crops are safe. With evidence? Not really. She suggested that taking genes "out their natural context" might have deleterious effects. She darkly noted the concomitant rise of biotech crops with increasing food allergies and cases of irritable bowel syndrome. Suggestive, no? Actually, research has identified [no instances](#) of food allergies being provoked by modern biotech crops—and interestingly, the [incidence of irritable bowel disease](#) appears to be higher in Europe where growing biotech crops is banned.

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... Kuzma does not think that regulation of biotech crops is adequate. Instead Kuzma favors "responsible research and innovation." ... Kuzma dismisses the current paradigm for evaluating new technologies as a "sound-science, values-ignored system" and she wants to put in its place a governance scheme that is "values-respected, science-informed."

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... governance of innovation, according to Kuzma, should include assessments of ethical affronts, economic impacts, psychological well-being, and cultural disruption. And who should do the considering? Well, of course, it should be done democratically and through wide consultation with stakeholders. (Stakeholder: someone who has an opinion.) What could possibly go wrong with a regulatory—sorry, "governance"—system that eschews reliance on relatively objective criteria such as health and safety effects?

Read full, original post: [Responsible Research and Innovation: A Concept Worse than the Precautionary Principle](#)