

Do researchers need to engage, teach consumers more in GMO debate?

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The lack of progress on agricultural applications [of transgenic animals] can be attributed to a scarcity of both public and private funding sources, and the absence of a clear path to market. Starting in the mid-2000s, the annual USDA request for grant applications included the following ominous text, *“Applications whose primary aim is to improve the efficiency in the production of clones or transgenic animals through manipulation of the nucleus will no longer be accepted by the Animal Genome program”*. This directive continued for almost a decade. There has likewise been little private sector interest in taking transgenic food animals. . . through an expensive and unpredictable regulatory process. In the absence of any approved food animal applications, there has been little support or market pull for transgenic animals from the livestock breeding sector.

. . . .

In the first chapter of “Transgenic Animals in Agriculture”, Dr. Jim Murray, UCD wrote, *“Our role as scientists, consumers, and regulators is, in part, . . . to ensure that the consuming public understands the processes to the extent that they can accept government approval of such animals in the food chain.”*

I would argue that less progress has been made in this area. . . . Dr. Joy Mench, UCD . . . warned, *“In the past scientists have tended to isolate themselves from these debates. This posture needs to change. Scientists need to become full and fully informed participants in the debate about the ethical effects of the technologies that their work is instrumental in developing. Otherwise, consumer confidence in science and scientists may well be lost.”*

. . . .As a community, we need to push for sensible regulatory reform.

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