

## Nassim Taleb ducks out of debate on GMO safety

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

Nassim Taleb. . . NYU statistician extraordinaire, has ducked out of a debate with me that had been arranged by the *Journal of Markets and Morality*. The topic of the debate was to be, “Do GMOs [genetically modified organisms] present cause for moral concern?”

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But since my essay responds pretty directly to the claims made in Taleb’s anti-GMO working paper, let’s go ahead and debate anyway.

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Banning biotech crops under the pretense of implementing a “non-naive” version of the precautionary principle would be a great moral wrong. Such a ban would deny access to the significant known benefits that modern biotechnology is already providing to human beings and the natural world, all based on wholly unjustified assertions that these crops one day will somehow produce catastrophic “ruin.”

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Taleb and his colleagues want to impose their supposedly non-naive version of the precautionary principle . . . . Biotech crops, they claim, pose a systemic risk of global ecocide.

. . . . Taleb and his colleagues just assume that producing and growing modern biotech crops is [an activity that will produce total ruin], then trivially predict a GMO apocalypse. There is a lot of hand-waving about the dangers of global connectivity and dose response relationships. . . but they provide no justification for their assumption of biotech disaster. Unwarranted dire assumptions in; unjustified devastating consequences out.

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“For [genetically modified] crops to be part of the solution, biosafety assessments should not be overly politically-driven or a burdensome impedance to delivering this technology broadly,” the ecologist Peter Raven has [cogently argued](#). “Biosafety scientists and policy makers need to recognize the undeniable truth that inappropriate actions resulting in indecision also have negative consequences. . . .”

**Read full, original post:** [GMO Alarmist Nassim Taleb Backs Out of Debate. I Refute Him Anyway](#)