

## Talking Biotech: Monsanto's Fred Perlak talks efficacy, safety of insect resistant GMO crops in agriculture; Kevin Folta answers questions about use of insect resistant GMO

If you tell a stranger that something called “delta endotoxin” is as close as it gets to a miracle, they’d likely respond in one of two ways. They’d either want you to seek counseling, or find out if they can get it injected into their faces. Humans have love-hate relationships with toxic compounds, and delta endotoxin, or “Bt toxin” is no exception.

Today on the podcast it is a pleasure to talk to Monsanto's Dr. Fred Perlak. Dr. Perlak worked with Bt from the beginning. From understanding its role in insect physiology to identifying the gene, to helping introduce it to plants, he knows this topic as well as anyone. We discuss history and applications.

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This natural protein is toxic to a specific suite of pests, namely caterpillars that consume ag crops. It has been understood for decades and is widely used in organic farming.

It also is the protein used to protect corn and cotton from insect damage, and now is being used in eggplant in Bangladesh. The use of this natural insecticide has massively cut the use of broad-spectrum insecticides.

Follow Dr Perlak on Twitter [@FredPerlak](https://twitter.com/FredPerlak)

On the second half of the podcast, Kevin Folta answers questions raised by listeners about the safety and efficacy of using *Bacillus thuringiensis* gene in insect repellent GMO crops in agriculture. Is it safe? How does it affect monarch butterflies and bees? Is it killing them? What about an organic alternative?

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Visit Kevin Folta's Talking Biotech site [here](#).