

## Talking Biotech: GMO Bt eggplant helps poor Bangladesh farmers cut insecticide use

In the west it is occasional table fare, yet in many parts of Asia it is a daily staple, the eggplant, known as the “brinjal” in Asia and the “aubergine” in Europe, is one of the amazing success stories of genetic engineering.

Farmers in Bangladesh and India rely on doses of old-school insecticides to protect their crop, up to 80 a season, and not always with appropriate protection equipment. The problem is insects that bore into the plant and into the fruit, destroying a crop. One solution has been the use of the bacterial protein known as “Bt”, only that the plant produces itself to protect it from insects. It is the same protein used in corn and cotton in other countries, including the USA. The new eggplant lines have been wonderfully accepted, and excellent profits from this technology, while making safer produce.



The story is told by Dr. Tony Shelton, professor of entomology

with Cornell University in Geneva, NY. The story has captured the interest of many, including science journalist and filmmaker Dr. Hidde Boersma. Boersma has a Ph.D. in microbiology, and appreciates the potential contributions of genetic engineering. He has captured the story of the eggplant in a beautiful documentary called *Well Fed*. The documentary tells the story of the farmers that grow the plant, and the well-fed Europeans that change their attitude toward the technology when they see the beautiful ways it can benefit people.

Website for Dr. Tony Shelton [here](#)

Website for Dr. Hidde Boersma [here](#)

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