

## Why Bangladesh's GMO eggplant success angers anti-GMO activists

This blog was written by Kevin Folta, chair of the horticultural department at the University of Florida. Kevin hosts a [Talking Biotech](#) podcast each week, which the GLP posts each Monday. This week's podcast focused on the success of GMO brinjal (eggplant) in Bangladesh.

Bt brinjal is a transgenic eggplant with a natural protein gene inserted that naturally repels or kills many pests. The protein is found in the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which has been sprayed on organic crops for more than a century because of its effectiveness and harmlessness to humans and other crops. Bt brinjal is genetically inoculated to resist the endemic pest called fruit and shoot borer, and therefore requires drastically less pesticides than is conventionally applied by farmers. This is South Asia's first GMO food crop, and has been developed in the public sector for distribution to resource-poor smallholder farmers.

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In general, the anti-GMO world has left me alone. I don't find much negativity about [my] podcast online . . . So imagine my surprise when I posted [this week's podcast](#) on the Bt Brinjal (eggplant, aubergine). The response was angry and vitriolic. . .



What is happening here is amazingly obvious. . . . these folks are really angry because the Bt Brinjal [which was developed in part by the Bangladesh government and whose seeds are sold to mostly poor farmers at a controlled price let's all of the air out of their balloon]. Free seeds, poor farmers, less insecticides, better products.... where's the downside?

. . . [I]f this story becomes widely told, it represents the end of their war on science. It is an example of how the technology should be used— for the betterment of human health and the environment.

They are having a remarkably hard time arguing with that.

So what happens when ideologically bent opinion can't argue based on evidence? It becomes an *ad hominem* effort to trash the messenger. . . .

. . . . [W]hen the technology they oppose serves others, they are caught between acknowledging that it is doing good and abandoning their sacred belief that this technology can do no good— ever.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Eggplant Podcast Sparks Angry Response](#)**