

Talking Biotech: Missouri's Mel Oliver on the myth of GMO terminator genes

In the first part of the podcast, Florida high school students were interviewed about biotechnology. These students had just completed a certificate program in biotech.

Discussions of biotechnology risks and benefits frequently cite “terminator genes” as a reason to oppose the technology. Genetic use restriction technology (GURT), colloquially known as terminator technology or suicide seeds, is the name given to proposed methods for restricting the use of genetically modified plants by rendering second generation seeds sterile.

There is widespread misinformation surrounding terminator gene technology. One fear perpetrated by anti-GMO activists is that these plants could contain genetic information that could spread sterility to humans or to non modified plants, leading to an ecological disaster. Another and totally contrary claim is that GMOs contain this terminator technology to force farmers to buy seeds from one season to the next.

There is absolutely no science to support these claims. And in reality, although terminator genes do exist, they have never been commercialized. The inventor of the terminator technology, Mel Oliver, described why the technology was devised and how it could be appropriately used.

Also, Chelsea Boonstra and The Boonstra Report.

https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/061_Oliver.mp3

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