

Scientists fight back against call for moratorium on gene-drive research

It sounds like the plot of a science fiction novel: Scientists discover how to eradicate an entire species. Environmentalists want to stop the research. A United Nations committee invites experts to an online forum to consider the facts.

Behind the scenes, the scientists organize to present certain information. The environmentalists find out and get access to the scientists' personal emails and dump them on the internet.

But it's not fiction. It all happened — the first skirmish in a battle over what could be one of the most powerful technologies ever developed.

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That brings us to the great email dump last week. Scientists around the world were stunned when dozens of their personal emails suddenly appeared in the public domain — released by an environmental activist who obtained the documents through U.S. freedom of Information laws.

The emails reveal a Canadian public relations firm, Emerging Ag Inc., recruiting scientists to participate in an online UN gene-drive forum and notifying them when to jump into the discussions.

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The emails do reveal a co-ordinated effort to mobilize scientists to defend their research turf, an effort that is funded by deep philanthropic pockets. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has paid \$1.6 million US to Emerging Ag for a three-year program to manage the scientists' network, including setting up a website and organizing meetings.

Read full, original post: [Scientists mobilize for a fight over powerful gene-editing technology](#)