

Challenging the idea that the world's farmers have been bought by 'Big Ag'

Accusations that if you say anything good about biotechnology, then you must be getting paid by the multi-nationals, frustrates Canadian researcher Stuart Smyth, who was in South Australia recently to talk about his research into genetically-modified crops and their impacts.

"They can't be paying all 18 million farmers using GM crops globally," Mr Smyth said. "Every developing country using GM crops has experienced at least one advantage, if not all, of increased yield, reduced chemical use and fewer pesticide poisonings. There are more than 1000 peer-reviewed scientific publications that quantify the economic, environmental and human health benefits of GM crops, which refuted environmentalist claims about the dangers of GM crops. Science is now pushing back against environmental misinformation campaigns."

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Mr Smyth was a keynote speaker at the Growing SA conference in Hahndorf – a guest of Grain Producers of SA and the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia – discussing his research as Agri-Food Innovation chairman at the University of Saskatchewan, a position partially supported by industry sponsors such as Syngenta, Bayer CropScience and Monsanto.

"This is how research is done in the 21st century – a partnership between public and private sectors," Mr Smyth said. "The private sector is interested in the research needs, but they don't control any of the research outcomes."

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